



PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO. 23
Answered on 24th July 2024
Fourth Meeting 2023-2024 Session - Third Sitting

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
ASKED BY

HON. ROY M. MCTAGGART, MP - ELECTED MEMBER FOR THE
CONSTITUENCY OF GEORGE TOWN EAST

TO

THE HON. ANDRÉ M. EBANKS, MP - MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
FINANCIAL SERVICES & COMMERCE AND INVESTMENT, INNOVATION & SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

QUESTION:

Can the Honourable Minister state whether the new Department of Financial Assistance is meeting the performance targets which the Minister told the House he had set for it?

ANSWER:

The Department implemented Zendesk in February 2024 to better support the new Client Care Team (“CCT”). This launch marked a new era for our client service capabilities, enabling the CCT, with a staff complement of four persons, to operate with optimal efficiency. The CCT was launched in August 2023 to facilitate seamless interaction between clients and Financial Assistance Officers. By processing requests and facilitating timely responses, the team ensures effective resolution of client concerns. Zendesk has provided the Department with the tools necessary to ensure that our client interactions are seamless, efficient, and satisfactory. Zendesk is a cutting-edge Client Relationship Management (“CRM”) system that revolutionizes the way the department manages and optimizes call centre operations, email communications, and online interactions, including through its instant chatbot feature. Utilising advanced Artificial Intelligence (“AI”), Zendesk instantly comprehends common client concerns, efficiently routes tickets, and provides our team with actionable insights and suggestions. This sophisticated platform comes equipped with AI-powered tools designed to streamline service workflows, empower officers to resolve issues more quickly, and effortlessly scale our knowledge base.

By implementing this system for the first time, we now have comprehensive data to analyse client interactions and feedback. By reviewing this data, we can continually refine our processes, achieve targets for key performance indicators, and ensure that the Department meets and exceeds client expectations. This represents a significant investment in improving the client experience for those who are accessing financial assistance.

Outlined below are key performance indicators (“KPIs”) being measured by the Department in the implementation of Zendesk:

1. Initial Response Time: Respond to at least 90% of urgent inquiries within 24 hours and less urgent enquiries within 48-72 hours.
2. Resolution Time: Establish a first-contact resolution rate of 70% or higher to minimise client follow-up needs.
3. Wait Time for Support Agent: Maintain an average hold time of less than 5 minutes, while taking account of the sensitivity and urgency of client inquiries and target at least 80% of calls to be answered within a hold time of 3 minutes or less.

Between February and June 2024, the CCT successfully resolved 5,513 tickets. In resolving these tickets, they were able to achieve the first two targets set, and continue to work towards achieving the third. The first target was to ensure that 90% of urgent inquiries were answered within 24 hours and less urgent enquiries within 48-72 hours. The Department has surpassed this target significantly. On average, from February to June, 91.4% of all tickets were answered within one business day. This demonstrates the Department's commitment to providing timely assistance and addressing urgent concerns with efficiency and dedication.

The second target was to establish a first-contact resolution rate of 70% or higher. This metric is crucial as it measures the Department's effectiveness in resolving issues during the initial interaction, thereby enhancing client satisfaction and reducing the need for follow-up communication. The Department has excelled in this area as well, achieving an impressive 96.5% first-contact resolution rate. This means that clients who are enquiring about financial assistance are able to be supported and have their concerns resolved without having to speak to multiple people and continue to follow-up.

The third target focused on reducing the average hold time to under three minutes for 80% of calls received and answering all calls within 5 minutes. By gathering this data, we were able to determine that the Department receives an average of approximately 350 calls per week. The Department has achieved an average response time of 1.13 minutes when answering calls; however, calls that are in the queue while the CCT is occupied with other clients are abandoned in an average time of 3.19 minutes. Further, they are receiving the most calls between 10a.m. to 1:00p.m. During this time, the Department is receiving more calls than they are able to answer within the targeted timeframe.

By integrating innovative solutions into social development, we are now able to make data-driven decisions and develop solutions instead of relying on estimations. By gathering this data, the Department is considering staggering lunch times for the CCT, and is also encouraging clients to contact them outside of those peak hours for faster service. The Department remains committed to minimising wait times for those seeking assistance will continue to evaluate options to ensure timely response, including encouraging more online applications.

An additional target that the Department captures is client satisfaction, which speaks volumes about the effectiveness of our services and the dedication of our team. An impressive 93% average in the "Happy or Not" rating from January to June 2024 reflects the positive experiences and high level of satisfaction amongst those we serve. This remarkable rating is a testament to our continuous efforts to enhance service delivery, address client needs promptly, and ensure that every interaction contributes to a favourable outcome. It underscores the success of our initiatives, such as the implementation of Zendesk and the full staffing of the CCT, in achieving and maintaining high standards of client care.

While the Department has achieved remarkable success, there remains room for improvement. Leveraging technology allows us to identify deficiencies and address them proactively. For the first time in the Department's history, we have access to comprehensive data that empowers us to analytically determine the best strategies for improvement. This shift marks a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to optimising service delivery and meeting the needs of our clients more effectively.

In summary, the Department's implementation of the CCT and Zendesk have continued to be successful. We commend the Department's achievements in answering urgent inquiries, resolving issues at first contact, and working towards maintaining a swift response time. These accomplishments reflect their dedication to providing exceptional service and support to the public when delivering financial assistance.