

SECTION 3: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES

- 3.1 Public reporting
- 3.2 Introducing a quality management approach
- 3.3 Establishing a customer orientation
- 3.4 Ensuring a right of redress
- 3.5 A particular initiative in setting standards: The Passport Agency
- 3.6 A particular initiative in introducing performance indicators : local government

3.1 Public reporting

Public Reporting is taken to be synonymous with open government – the extent to which governments report to the public at large details of policy, performance and information held.

The context for change

In the U.K., a White Paper, setting out government policy and proposals to increase openness, was published on 15 July 1993. Its proposals included the following:

- A code of practice on the release of government information with policy announcements, and access to information, subject to certain exemptions. Government performance against the Code would be policed by the Ombudsman (Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration), who can report to Parliament if he* agrees with a complaint that the Code has been breached;
- There should be a statutory right of access to health and safety information held by government;
- There should be a statutory right of access, by the subject, to personal records held by government;
- There should be selective introduction of amendments to existing Acts, which prohibit disclosure of information – to insert the test that disclosure would cause actual harm.

The primary reasons for these developments are:

- to improve decision-making;
- to provide greater background information for government decisions;
- to assure the public that key facts are not being concealed.

At the same time, the Government aims to retain confidentiality of sensitive information that they have a duty to protect. The Government is keen to make real advances in openness, as a contribution to a more informed democracy.

*The current post holder is male.

This fits in with increased transparency on performance, through the publication of targets etc, for public services. The Citizen's Charter is also promoting increased openness about the reasons for government decisions taken.

Implementing change

In the U.K., the code of practice envisaged in the July 1993 White Paper came into effect in April 1994. Codes of practice for local government and the National Health Service will follow. The two new statutory rights will require legislation – subject to the availability of Parliamentary Time.

The results of the Code should begin to come through as departments become familiar with procedures and with the sorts of information that can and cannot be released. The Ombudsman will develop "case law" which will make interpretation of the Code of Practice easier.

A basic outline of the method of change in the United Kingdom might be as follows:

- launch policy and invite reactions;
- receive comments during consultation period;
- identify areas of concern over implementation;
- provide guidance material and training for staff who will be dealing with applications and for senior staff who will have to make the more difficult judgements;
- possible attitude training to ensure that more information is released as a matter of course;
- consider publicity material for new schemes of applying for information. Make sure it is in plain language and easily understood;
- monitor take-up and problems.

Supporting material

White Paper on "Open Government", Cm.2290, HMSO, ISBN 0-10-122902-x, £11.00, 1993

3.2 Introducing a quality management approach

Quality Management may be defined as:

"Continuously meeting the agreed customer requirements throughout the organisation at the right cost. Customer satisfaction every time."

There are many other definitions. But what is essential is to see Quality Management as an on-going process, with no middle or end, continuously striving for excellence, and aiming to get things right, first time, every time. Quality does not necessarily mean an expensive, elaborate or luxurious service. It means a product fit for its purpose, reliable and giving value for money. Quality Management has to be led strongly from the top. Customers are defined not simply as the public, but the person next in line to us, in our own department or a neighbouring one.

The first move towards introducing quality systems as such in the U.K. Government came in February 1985 with the announcement of the "Next Steps" initiative. This emphasised a development in the management of service to the public and set in hand the creation of several Agencies to handle much of the work involving service to the public. There was renewed emphasis on customer service and quality management, identifying the competencies required by staff. They would be increasingly exposed to public accountability and organisations would be much more easily made or broken by the reputations gained by the quality of service of their staff.

The context for change

Quality Management originated in the private sector, particularly in the field of manufacturing, where lapses in quality meant customer complaints, waste of materials and products and increased costs in putting them right. It is much more difficult in the public sector to define a product, particularly in policy areas. The main emphasis within government will be upon those areas where a service is provided to the public. However, policy areas can also participate in quality programmes provided that sufficient thought is given to the matter by the managers concerned.

In general, the public has come to expect higher standards of service and particularly from private businesses. The absence of an easily definable product and of a profit motive, and the relative security of government employment have all been disincentives towards achieving quality in the public sector. However,

recent years have seen a noticeable change within the public sector and significant efforts are being made to improve services – to good effect.

The Citizen's Charter initiative has also played its part in emphasising the citizen's right to expect a reasonable level of good service from all public sector employees and has given added weight to the importance of achieving high quality results first time round.

The Charter Mark is an award for excellence in delivering public service. It was first announced in the Citizen's Charter White Paper in July 1991. The first 36 awards given under the scheme were presented by the Prime Minister in 1992. Winners included schools, hospitals, government Agencies, police services etc. The aim of the awards is to promote high standards of information and openness, choice and consultation, courtesy and helpfulness.

Implementing change

As one of the first steps in improving the awareness of customer service and quality, the Cabinet Office proposed a pilot "action learning" project, to be spread over nine months, to enable self-nominated departments and agencies to explore and implement their own strategies and actions in response to the Next Steps emphasis on the delivery of service. The overall aim of this project was to support a small number of pilot projects to improve the quality of customer service with a view to:

- demonstrating for their business the key steps in implementing customer service improvements;
- demonstrating for their business the preconditions to effective customer service training;
- capturing the lessons learned for the benefit of departments and Agencies more widely.

The participating organisations formed a consortium to take forward this work and to maximise the lessons learned in the process. The work was jointly funded by the Training and Development Division of the Cabinet Office and members of the Consortium.

Following this successful initiative, the participating departments went on to introduce quality systems elsewhere in their organisations. Also, other departments and Agencies introduced their own quality systems, either on an independent basis or drawing on the experience of Consortium participants. In some departments,

senior managers set aside time to participate in a quality seminar, at which the aims and benefits of quality systems were discussed.

Key elements in establishing quality systems have included the following:

- researching *customers' perception* of service and their degree of satisfaction with it;
- the need to establish *measures* of quality of service which then enable one to set realistic *standards* derived from customers' priorities;
- measuring the effective *delivery* of the service;
- once standards are reached, setting *higher standards* for the organisation to achieve reviewing the setting of higher standards for the organisation to achieve;
- continually *monitoring satisfaction* and dealing with any problems that cause the levels to drop.

Quality Management is closely related to a number of other topics. Apart from the "Next Steps Initiative" and the Citizen's Charter there are links with:

- ***Human Resource Management***
Leadership and team-building are particularly important. There needs to be support and commitment to the initiative from the very top. Staff need to be enthused with a vision of the whole organisation and its purpose as well as the concept of giving a service from one's own area. In organisations embarking on customer service and quality initiatives, the role of the manager was likely to change to one of facilitator, coach and counsellor.
- ***Training and Development***
Management and leadership training are important to ensure that quality principles are fully understood at all levels of management. There is much to be gained by those who have experienced a quality programme sharing with those who are coming to it afresh. Concepts such as customer care and providing a service need to be very thoroughly put over to staff and explained.
- ***Performance Management***
There needs to be an emphasis on quality within performance management so that the contribution of individual staff is recognised and monitored. Outputs need to be specified and measured.

- ***Organisational Change***
Quality systems may often lead to flatter pyramids within organisations and there can be a substantial element of change if long-established procedures are to be made more efficient. There should be reward systems for staff empowered to take decisions at lower levels.
- ***Workforce Reductions***
The improved results available through quality systems may possibly, but not necessarily, lead to a reduction in the manpower necessary to achieve the desired results.

For a quality initiative to be successful it is important to:

- establish a baseline from which to review progress;
- define quality for the organisation;
- identify the objectives and priorities of the organisation and of its customers (Customers are not just the public, but all individuals and organisations with whom there are dealings);
- ask customers what their needs are (the organisation may not be able to deliver what they want) in establishing the perception of levels of service provided;
- involve people at all levels: senior managers' commitment is crucial, but staff must also be involved;
- ask for help: those who have introduced quality already will be pleased to assist and encourage, but the help of professional external consultants and facilitators will probably also be needed to introduce a quality programme properly;
- a quality initiative should be ongoing, with the organisation continually striving to excel.

Costs will vary according to the scale of the project. Inevitably, there will be the cost of training to introduce managers to the quality concept and of providing them with back-up reading or video materials. There will be costs in lost productive time as staff are introduced to the quality initiative and attempt to put it into effect, but these should be largely cancelled out by more efficient and more productive working methods in the future. There will also be the cost of surveys of customer needs and ultimately of customer perception of the level of improvement.

Additional record-keeping will be necessary in order to monitor performance carefully and analyse the results against various criteria.

Skills primarily involve managers who are prepared to commit themselves seriously to the quality initiative. Top management commitment must be unswerving and must be maintained over a long period of time. Those best equipped to lead quality initiatives at all levels will be enthusiasts with a vision for true customer service, rather than those who are defensive or prefer to maintain the status quo. It is important to involve staff in the change process and not impose it on them.

Key *stakeholders* include top management and managers at all levels. A quality initiative will often have one key manager appointed to ensure that it stays on course.

Obstacles largely centre on inertia, especially in middle management, and difficulties in persuading staff of the true concept of giving a service. Some will still feel that they are entitled to their job as of right and will hotly defend any attempt to change it.

Generally a one- to two-year period is needed to introduce a proper quality initiative in any organisation. During this period, it should be possible to change staff attitudes if necessary, to determine objectives and customers' requirements and to set some sort of system in train. However, it may well take a further two to three years before the quality system has bedded down and is yielding its full benefits.

Supporting material

With HMSO into TQM – Her Majesty's Stationery Office, from HMSO Publicity (PU23), St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich NR3 1PD

3.3 Establishing a customer orientation

The United Kingdom Government has made the customer-orientation of public services a priority through the Citizen's Charter, launched by the Prime Minister in July 1991. The Charter is a ten-year programme of radical reform to raise the standards of public service and make them more responsive to their users. Because of the very wide coverage of the Citizen's Charter, this entry cannot be exhaustive, but highlights some of the main elements of the Government's programme.

There are six principles which the Government believes should underlie all public services:

- ***Standards***
Setting, monitoring and publishing explicit standards for the services that individual users can reasonably expect. Publishing actual performance against these standards.
- ***Information and Openness***
Full, accurate information readily available in plain language about how services are run, what they cost, how well they perform and who is in charge.
- ***Choice and Consultation***
The public sector should provide choice wherever practicable. There should be regular and systematic consultation with those who use services. Users' views about services, and their priorities for improving them, should be taken into account in final decisions on standards.
- ***Courtesy and Helpfulness***
Courteous and helpful service from public servants, who will normally wear name badges. Services available equally to all who are entitled to them and run to suit their convenience.
- ***Putting Things Right***
If things go wrong, an apology, a full explanation and a swift and effective remedy. Well publicised and easy-to-use complaints procedures, with an independent review wherever possible.
- ***Value for Money***
Efficient and economical delivery of public services within the resources that the nation can afford. Independent validation of performance against standards.

The context for change

The Government believes that the citizen should be able to count on good public services and that taxpayers have the right to expect that the money they provide is spent to optimum effect. Limited resources to fund services were also a key factor. The Government believes that consumers of public services are entitled to the same high standards of service that the best private sector organisations provide. But if services are to be delivered more efficiently within available resources, there have to be changes and improvements.

Improved standards of service can only be delivered if structures, systems and attitudes within public services are focused on results. Alongside the Charter is a huge programme of managerial change aimed at making public services fitter and readier to deliver what is wanted.

The Citizen's Charter is a ten-year programme, but already there are significant developments. There are now 38 published individual Charters, covering some of the main public services. Others will follow. This means that in these areas the public now has – often for the first time – published standards of service, information on performance, complaints procedures and ways to obtain redress. The Charters will be reviewed and improved year by year. Among the Charters in operation at the moment are:

- Patient's Charter;
- Parent's Charter;
- British Rail Passenger's Charter;
- Courts' Charter;
- Benefits Agency Customer Charter;
- Job Seeker's Charter;
- Taxpayer's Charter;
- London Underground's Customer Charter;
- Child Support Agency Charter.

Through these and other Charters, the citizen can increasingly put pressure on those responsible for providing services to deliver them to the promised standard, rather as commercial competition puts consumer pressure on the performance of private firms. In some cases, new laws have been passed, for example to make sure that Citizen's Charter principles are applied to the privatised utilities, that comparative information about local authority performance is published, and to strengthen inspection arrangements in schools.

Implementing change

The Citizen's Charter is beginning to bring about a marked improvement in service to the public in many areas. For example, the original two-year maximum waiting time for hospital operations has now been reduced to 18 months. Public services accept that their performance is under scrutiny and the Citizen's Charter has a nationally accepted high profile. Whilst in many cases in the past there were pockets of excellence within the public service, all services are now expected to strive to achieve the standards of the best.

One of the most critical requirements is for unswerving, long-term commitment to the concept of customer service. The United Kingdom's Citizen's Charter had Prime Ministerial backing from the outset and even then needed to be regularly re-energised from time to time to keep it in the public eye and to maintain the pressure on service providers to keep up the momentum. The Charter principles are based on common sense and reasonable customer expectations but nevertheless there is a tendency in any large organisation for such worthy aims gradually to lose impact unless there is determined pressure to keep them alive.

Essential to success is the commitment and enthusiasm of those on the 'front line' who have to deliver the improvements. At any level of resources efficiency and effectiveness can improve the quality of what is delivered. The Citizen's Charter programme is in that sense resource-neutral. It involves reorientating and reprioritising existing resources, not the injection of new sums of government money.

Key stakeholders include senior Ministers, Chief Executives and officials in the organisations and departments concerned. However, at the end of the day, it is the individual local official providing the service upon whose performance everything else depends. He or she is the key player.

The U.K. introduced the Citizen's Charter in 1991 and many individual Charters were up and running within one or two years. The Citizen's Charter programme is, however, intended to run for ten years, during which there will be many further developments and improvements.

Supporting material

- (i) The Citizen's Charter, HMSO CM 1599, ISBN 0-10-115992-7, £8.50, 1991
- (ii) The Citizen's Charter, First Report, HMSO CM 2101, ISBN 0-10-121012-4, £8.50, 1992

- (iii) The Citizen's Charter, Second Report, HMSO CM 2540, ISBN 0-10-125402-4, £12.50, 1994

3.4 Ensuring a right of redress

Public sector bodies have always had complaints handling procedures of some type or another, but they have not always had a high profile, nor have they been particularly user-friendly.

The U.K. Government introduced the Citizen's Charter in 1991, with a view to improving all aspects of public service to individuals. One of the aspects particularly addressed by individual departments and organisations was improving the mechanism under which customers could register complaints and obtain redress.

The context for change

The Government is concerned that complaints procedures should be well publicised and easy to use. They are also anxious to ensure that all public services act swiftly and effectively when standards are not met or when things go wrong. Moreover, research has shown that people that wish to find out about public services or make a complaint often do not know how or where to start. They may approach MPs, Ministers and departments, whereas better help might be given by the service itself. People need someone to give them information quickly and reliably about where to go and whom to contact to get their enquiry or problem resolved. This led to the introduction of Charterline.

An effective complaints and redress procedure is seen as essential to making the public service, including local authorities, more responsive to customer needs.

Implementing change

Good complaints systems should be:

- *effective*, aimed at solving the problem and providing at the very least a satisfactory explanation, an apology or some form of redress;
- *readily accessible* to users of services;
- *simple to operate*, with clearly set out procedures and responsibilities;
- *speedy*, with time limits for dealing with complaints;

- *objective*, with provision for an independent means to investigate complaints if necessary;
- *confidential* – people's privacy should be protected;
- *integrated* with the organisation's management information systems.

The Government also intends to set up a Complaints Task Force to look at whether public services' complaint handling is in line with these principles. The Task Force will advise on setting up and improving complaints systems. It will also, if appropriate, identify whether more is needed in the longer term to provide more satisfactory ways of resolving individuals' problems with public services.

The Government is piloting a telephone helpline – "Charterline" – to help people who find it daunting or frustrating to get information from large bureaucracies. Charterline is an advice and information service. It gives:

- information about the Citizen's Charter and about the other charters and statements of charter standards that have been published;
- contact numbers to help people find out more about public services;
- contact numbers for making complaints about services.

If the pilot is successful, Charterline will eventually cover all public services nationwide.

Where internal complaints procedures fail, there must be an external route for taking things further. On behalf of the citizen, Ombudsmen already deal with complaints of alleged injustice caused by maladministration by central government, the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities. Individuals may approach the Ombudsmen through their Member of Parliament if other attempts at redress have failed.

The essential aim is that the redress procedure should be well publicised and easy to use. Steps to achieve this include:

- review existing complaints machinery;
- research customer perception of existing system;
- analyse areas for improvement;

- encourage participating departments and organisations to propose ways of improving their redress facilities;
- departments etc. launch improved system;
- review operation of system after agreed period and make improvements;
- publish results of redress procedure, highlighting successes and undertaking to deal with weaknesses.

Costs are impossible to predict. They will naturally depend on the volume of complaints and the ease with which they can be dealt with. Almost certainly, however, addressing and dealing with complaints will lead to fewer errors in the future and an improved level of service which will more than compensate for the cost of running the redress procedure.

As far as skills are concerned, staff engaged in complaints procedures clearly need to be tactful and helpful in their dealings with the public. This may well take some degree of training, on (readily available) specialist customer-care courses, which itself will be an expense initially. The Government considers that the investment will however be amply repaid.

Stakeholders include Chief Executives of Agencies, heads of departments and organisations but in particular the individuals responsible for handling the day-to-day complaints. It is upon these individuals that the perceived image of the organisation rest.

3.5 A particular initiative in setting standards: The Passport Agency

This entry focuses on one organisation – the United Kingdom Passport Agency – as an example of an area in which stringent and demanding standards have been set and where they have been met with conspicuous success.

The Passport Agency (formerly called the Passport Office) issues over three and a half million (new, renewed and amended) passports per year to U.K. citizens and handles many thousands of enquiries. Traditionally, it was an area of the Civil Service that was criticised for its slow and uncommunicative service and a somewhat remote and austere image. Since 1988, when the service was computerised, and particularly since Agency status in April 1991, the service has been transformed. The result is that customers now receive passports within a maximum of 20 working days and a number of other important standards are publicised and in general attained.

The context for change

The Agency's major objective is to provide the best possible service for all of its customers. In practice, this means providing a fast and efficient passport service, which takes account of varying customer needs. Considerable efforts have been made to improve the quality of service provided and this was recognised in 1992 with the award of a Charter Mark. This has proved a considerable impetus to the programme of customer service.

Implementing change

The Passport Agency has two key targets:

- a customer service target;
- a financial target.

Both of these are agreed by Ministers, are reviewed annually and are set out in the Corporate and Business Plans.

The key customer service target is to process straightforward, properly completed passport applications within specific periods of time. In 1993-94 the target is to process these applications within a maximum of 20 working days in the period of

peak demand between January and June; 15 working days in July and August; and 10 working days at other times of the year.

The key financial target is to reduce costs in real terms and for 1993-94 this relates to a reduction of three per cent in the overall cash operating unit cost, compared with the previous year's outturn. The Agency also has targets for dealing with correspondence and for waiting time for personal callers in all of the Passport Offices, of which there are six in the United Kingdom.

Performance against targets is monitored continually through internal management reports derived from the Agency's financial and management information system. These reports are reviewed regularly by the Director of Operations, in association with managers of individual passport offices. The Agency also conducts regular surveys of customer opinion – over 54,000 customer survey questionnaires have been issued since 1991 – with the return showing a very high level of satisfaction with the service provided. Individual passport offices also hold local customer surveys about the quality of service provided for personal callers.

Aside from the formal targets, the Agency has made great strides to improve its service to the public, in accordance with the principles of the Citizen's Charter. In particular, name badges have been introduced for all staff who meet the public in the course of their work, and standard clothing will be offered for those staff working on the public counters from early next year. Considerable improvements have also been made to the reception and other facilities for the public over the last two years to ensure that customers are inconvenienced as little as possible. Special facilities have been established as part of the Agency's commitment to meet the needs of customers with disabilities.

Comprehensive customer-care training has also been provided for staff who have regular face-to-face contact with the public. Priority is now being given to improving the telephone enquiry service and a number of other major initiatives are taking place with the aim of speeding up the handling of customer enquiries.

A pre-requisite for the success of the Agency has been the development of its service to staff. It has devolved personnel management responsibilities to regional offices. Training officers have been appointed in each office to oversee and expand the programme of staff training and to encourage staff to make the most of the training opportunities. In particular, with the help of consultants, they have run a series of courses in each office to help managers with production line management techniques. Communications with staff have also been greatly improved, with the establishment of a very successful Agency house journal and the introduction in December 1992 of a comprehensive team briefing system. Industrial relations have improved markedly since Agency status, being centred on the Passport Agency

Whitley Committee and its three sub-committees on accommodation, personnel and equal opportunities.

A considerable amount has already been achieved, and further developments are planned to improve management and customer service. This includes developing an effective complaints procedure for the public and establishing a consultative panel of passport users, including the travel trade. The Agency is continuing to make efforts to even out passport demand – the demand in the autumn and winter months being considerably less than that in the remainder of the year. These developments are part of the policy of trying to ensure maximum use of staff time.

The Agency make continuous efforts to monitor and improve management at both senior and local level. As part of this process, regular monthly meetings are held between the Director of Operations and regional managers. Adjustments have also been made within staff complements with the appointment of an operations manager within each office to ensure that the Agency's targets and standards are met.

The clear prerequisite must be a commitment and determination to set and raise standards and to improve the service until those standards are met or exceeded. It is necessary to decide at an early stage which targets are the most important. The Passport Agency addressed the following areas:

- service to customers – by post;
- service to customers – by phone;
- service of customers – personal visits;
- customer satisfaction;
- detecting passport fraud;
- wastage;
- efficiency (passports per staff member);
- financial performance.

In all these areas, the Agency has set targets which are set out in the 1993 Corporate Plan.

Skills necessary to bring about this change naturally involve the clear and unswerving commitment of the Chief Executive and his management team. They are among the key stakeholders in the operation, but so are the staff who carry out the day-to-day operations. It is clearly important for everyone within the organisation to be enthused about and committed to delivering the highest standard of service to the public.

Turning round the Passport Agency's service has taken some five years. The Agency's timescale for making significant demonstrable progress is ongoing and it is certainly its intention to make further improvements in the years ahead.

The success of the Passport Agency in reaching the standards that it has set itself results from the close attention given to management matters and the service provided to both customers and staff.

3.6 A particular initiative in introducing performance indicators: local government

This entry focuses on the arrangements devised by the Audit Commission for comparing the performance of local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland under the Citizen's Charter "Performance Indicators" legislation. The Audit Commission is the body which audits Local Authorities and Health Authorities. Its remit covers only England and Wales; the Scottish Accounts Commission has similar powers in Scotland but have produced a different set of indicators. This entry concentrates on experience in England and Wales.

The first Citizen's Charter White Paper "Raising the Standard" included a commitment to publish league tables of performance for local authorities. This became enshrined in the Local Government Act 1992, which empowered the Audit Commission to require local authorities to publish information on standards of performance achieved over a range of indicators. In the current financial year, there are 77 indicators in all. In future years, more may be added to the list.

The Audit Commission first consulted with groups of citizens, and carried out extensive consumer research into which areas of local authority services most concerned them. They then met with groups of consumer representatives, professional experts and local authority representatives to develop indicators which were meaningful, which were practicable to measure, and which would enable comparisons to be made between different authorities, and over time.

The indicators are published in December each year, and authorities must start collecting the information the following April. This gives authorities time to set up the necessary systems for gathering the information required.

Authorities then measure their performance against the indicators during the financial year, before publishing the results in a local newspaper. The Audit Commission will then publish the results nationally.

The context for change

The keystone of the Citizen's Charter is the need for an informed public. Without meaningful, yet simple, information about the quality of our public services, we cannot expect citizens to make informed judgements about the choice of either individual services or the service providers themselves. By publishing national comparisons of local government performance, the standards which the best local authorities have attained will set a benchmark to which others can aspire. Poor

performers will be forced, both internally and by citizens, to improve the quality of their services to the Charter Standard.

In most cases, the performance of local authorities is being measured against locally determined targets. The Government does not see it as its function to set national targets of performance centrally, but instead to provide a consistent measure of performance to enable local residents to make informed decisions about the effectiveness and efficiency of their own local authority.

Implementing change

The first steps were for the Audit Commission to consult with citizens to find out which areas of local authority services interest/concern them and for local authorities to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to collect the information required.

Information was collected by local authorities during 1993-94 and will be published in local newspapers, probably in early 1995. This is a rolling programme, enabling citizens to judge performance over time. After the local information has been published, the Audit Commission will publish national comparisons of performance, so that citizens will be able to compare the performance of their own Council against others of a similar type or background. External pressure from citizens for local authorities to raise their standards of service delivery may not be achieved for some years to come. However, early evidence suggests that local government in general is reacting favourably to the discipline of the Citizen's Charter and the Commission's performance indicators. Local authorities are examining their managerial procedures and practices, and are making their services more responsive to the real needs of the local community.

Supporting material

Citizen's Charter Indicators, "Charting a Course", Audit Commission, HMSO 1992, ISBN 0-11-886093, £6.00