

**Press Release to Accompany the Publication of the Internal Audit Service’s “CIG Telephone Communication Responsiveness” and “CIG Email Communication Responsiveness” Audit Reports**

21 September 2020

In 2019, the Internal Audit Service (IAS) published a report titled “CIG Telephone Communication Responsiveness”, which revealed that the majority of calls (84%) made to 150 Government (CIG) telephone numbers were answered before the fourth ring. The report further stated that all calls were “generally handled in a professional manner”.

While an answer rate of 84% is respectable, the report also noted that calls to 13 CIG telephone numbers either went unanswered or the telephone number was not operational. Additionally, 15 of 22 voicemail messages left resulted in no call back.

As the CIG works toward its goal of becoming a world-class civil service, these types of reports/results are useful in highlighting areas for improvement. Although 84% is good, world-class demands a much higher percentage. World-class necessitates that we look at and rectify the issues with the 13 telephone numbers that were not answered or were invalid, and implement standards for responding to voicemail messages.

The CIG is pleased to report that, in July 2020, a dedicated Contact Centre was established to manage incoming calls to the main government telephone number (949-7900). As at the 11<sup>th</sup> September (i.e. nine weeks since establishment), the Contact Centre has received 7,391 calls, which works out to a rounded average of 821 calls per week or 164 calls per business day. The average “service level percentage”, which is a measure of efficiency in handling calls, is 93.7%. Over the period, remarkable progress has already been made, with the average time to answer calls dropping from 30 seconds in week one to 12 seconds in week nine. Additionally, an added benefit of the Contact Centre was the formation of “ring groups”, a mechanism that routes calls to one of four or more persons within a Ministry or Department until the call is answered.

Given the success of our first official Contact Centre, the Government plans to establish additional dedicated contact centres for the Needs Assessment Unit, Customs and Border Control, and the Department of Vehicle and Driver’s Licensing.

To address the issue of unanswered queries and failure to return calls, call takers/advisers in the Contact Centre have been trained to take the information of callers and return calls once the required information has been obtained or the query resolved. In some cases, advisers may provide callers with a dedicated telephone number to call if the call is not accepted by the Department they are being transferred to.

A similar piece of work, the “CIG E-mail Communication Responsiveness” audit, was also conducted by the IAS. The audit sought to determine response times by the various departments and agencies with email addresses published on CIG websites and/or in the 2019 Find Yello Cayman Islands Directory. That audit concluded that “the majority” of entities responded in a timely fashion, with the average response time being just over 6 hours. However, the report also

indicated that over one-third of the 128 tested contact points provided no response, which again falls short of our goal and highlights the need for additional improvements.

One of the Government's five goals under the 5-Year Strategic Plan, and the goal to which both audits map, is to "Deliver an Outstanding Customer Experience". This goal involves a number of elements, including training and empowering front line staff, collecting data and focusing on process improvements by re-engineering systems and developing online services. Already, 700 civil servants – those referred to as our "Customer Service Ambassadors" – have participated in day-long customer experience workshops. Additionally, the CIG has already delivered telephone etiquette training and will continue to deliver it as necessary.

The CIG is now working on another initiative to create customer service champions in each ministry or department. These individuals will act as the de facto complaints managers who ensure that all cross-silo issues which impact on customers are dealt with. They will also champion a customer-centric culture in the department by modelling the required behaviours and supporting others to do the same.

As part of delivering outstanding customer service, the CIG, through the E-Government unit has and will continue to seek new, more efficient ways of doing business, such as taking entire services online (for example British Overseas Territories Citizen applications, police records and aspects of DVDL's service delivery). Not only will this enhance customer experience, but it will also reduce reliance on more traditional methods of accessing CIG services, such as in person or via telephone.

The Government has also instituted measures, namely the deployment of "Happy or Not" terminals, to capture and respond to customer feedback in departments with high volumes of walk-in customer traffic. In the last two years, the Government's Happy or Not kiosks have registered responses of "happy" or "very happy" for over 90% of all customer interactions. These results demonstrate our commitment to, and progress in improving the customer experience. This is particularly evident when compared to the results of a 2016 poll conducted by a local media house, which showed that only 9.6% of the 417 persons polled felt that the customer service provided by the Government was "excellent" or "good".

Additionally, the CIG is pursuing initiatives to better understand what is stopping us from getting closer to 100% customer satisfaction. We are doing this by gathering information through customer journey surveys to determine the "pain points" for customers and then building this information into new process maps which are being created simultaneously. This will eventually lead to a better overall customer experience.

The CIG will continue to make additional improvements as new information comes to light, such as that brought to our attention by these Internal Audit reports. We are committed to delivering an outstanding customer experience; hence, we are receptive to any feedback that assists in bringing to fruition our goal of becoming a world-class civil service.