



Travel Card Unit – Update on Performance and digital enhancements

Date of meeting 6 March 2020

Date of report 18 February 2020

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to update the Joint Committee on performance of the Travel Card Unit and advise the committee of digital enhancements to support TCU admin processing.

2. Background

Typically, TCU admin is cleared within two weeks of receipt. TCU admin processing times are closely linked to call volumes. When processing times are extended, call volumes increase significantly, leading to prolonged wait times and higher abandon rates. To manage customer expectations it is vital that admin processing times are kept to an absolute minimum.

This can be difficult with a small team, particularly during times of absence which can be particularly challenging. The period from Easter to the end of the summer can lead to a build-up of admin workloads resulting in extended processing times and increased call volumes.

At the beginning of October admin workloads were approaching critical volume and the team was struggling to maintain control. Processing times were approaching six weeks across all admin tasks with a backlog growing day by day. As a result call volumes were escalating and customers chasing progress increasing. This created a situation where the team were engaged attempting to respond to call volumes and not able to focus on clearing the increasing admin workloads.

An action plan to address the admin backlog, bring processing times down to a manageable timeframe, and reduce inbound call volumes was required.

During this time a tender process was implemented to identify potential technology partners to help TCU process high volume requests such as replacement cards more efficiently. The aim is to reduce the pressure on the team through the introduction of automation and customer self-service options using digital solutions.

3. Action Plan

The following action plan was implemented:

- Isolate and quantify the backlog.
- Focus TCU on business as usual.
- Hire additional temporary staff to focus on admin backlog.
- Closely manage performance and track productivity.

It was established:

- All outstanding admin over two weeks old was considered in 'backlog'.
 - 1800 admin items placed in 'backlog'.
- Admin work under two-weeks old was considered 'business as usual' (BAU).
- BAU admin that exceeded two-weeks would be added to backlog.
- TCU would focus on calls and BAU admin with the aim to maintain BAU at two week turn-around.
- Two temporary team members recruited for 12 weeks to clear the backlog.
- Revised admin process implemented focused on clearing by process rather than date received in order to improve efficiency.

4. Performance Results

- Admin Processing
 - Backlog eliminated within twelve weeks
 - BAU processing times cut from over six weeks to less than one week and maintained at less than one week since end of January.
 - New reports developed providing detailed view of outstanding workload volumes and processing times, allowing early intervention should processing times drift.
- Call Handling Performance
 - Inbound call volumes reduced by 35% from 11531 received in Period 8 to 7536 in period 11 and on target to maintain the reduction in Period 12.
 - Average Speed of Answer reduced and maintained from a peak of more than 26 minutes in October to less than one minute from mid-January. This has been maintained into the current period.
 - Call abandon rates reduced from 43% in Period 8 to 5% in the current period.

5. Digital Update

The tender process initially failed to achieve a response. Market review identified that whilst there is an active market-place our needs were considered small scale and unattractive to most providers. This presented the opportunity to engage with potential partners directly who were capable of supporting smaller scale implementations. Noble Systems Limited was identified as a suitable partner with capability to provide solutions to automate the

replacement card process as well as provide a customer self-service solution for renewal enquiries.

The aim of this project is to reduce the workloads associated with these two high-volume activities. Replacement card requests make up 50% of calls received by TCU. Renewal enquiries make up 30% of telephone enquiries. It is anticipated a large proportion of calls currently handled manually by the team will be serviced and processed automatically. This will free the team up to focus on more complex telephone enquiries and admin tasks and deliver greater efficiencies and improvements to customer experience. Consequently the risk of a backlog situation reoccurring is reduced.

6. Next Steps

Admin productivity and call handling performance will be closely managed to maintain the current levels.

The project to implement digital enhancements for replacement cards and renewal enquiries will begin in February and expected to deliver results within 12 weeks.

7. Committee Action

The committee is asked to note the contents of this paper, the progress made in reducing admin workloads, improving the customer experience and that future digital enhancements are planned to improve the service further.

8. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>A review of the scheme will be completed in 2019/20</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Improved customer experience achieved via efficiency gains and performance improvements.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>Mitigations to minimise the risk to card holders.</i>

Name Valerie Davidson
Title Treasurer

For further information, please contact *Tony Jones, Contact Centre Manager on 0141 333 3656.*