

## PORTSMOUTH VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE

### ANNUAL REPORT 2008-9

#### Successes

- Devised and launched two new cycle trails for Portsmouth.
- 100% of visitors were satisfied with the quality and speed of service they received when surveyed over August Bank Holiday.
- Annual Christmas event at the Hard successful with an increase of 38% for visitors and 75% for sales.
- Successful Charter Mark Annual Assessment and pre-Assessment for new Customer Service Excellence Standard.
- Runners Up in the Tourism South East ExSEllence awards – TIC of the Year category.
- Helping the local economy - sales for local attractions, events, transport and accommodation to a value of around £87,000.

#### Enquiry Figures

##### General enquiries

Personal callers	131,336
Telephone	29,184
Postal and Fax	4,959
Email	5,380

##### Enquiries in direct response to main marketing campaign

17108

##### Total enquiries

**187,967**

##### Website hits

**223,290**

Our enquiries were down 4% on the previous year, most notably in the second half of the year as the recession took hold. Enquiries are already on the increase for 2009 -10. The average cost per enquiry in 2008/9 was 62p (This represents an increase of 2p, around 4% from last year).

#### Customer Pledges – how we performed against our standards.

**1. Ensure up to date information is available on accommodation, attractions, events, travel and other amenities to help you make the most of your time here**

*98% of visitors at our Annual Survey were satisfied with the range of information available and 94% were able to obtain the information they required*

**2. Provide an excellent customer service, answering your query promptly, efficiently and politely.**

*100% of visitors surveyed during our Annual Survey were satisfied with the service they received.*

**3. Provide information and services by a range of methods i.e. in person, by mail, email, online and by telephone – including recorded information out of hours.**

*Satisfaction rates high for each method of service delivery – between 96% and 99%.*

**4. Work with partners to provide a mutually beneficial, co-ordinated service**

*Ticket sales and accommodation reservations on behalf of local partners generated income in the local economy of around £87,000*

**5. Answer your email enquiries within 24 hours maximum, within 3 hours when possible**

*97% answered within 24 hours, 57% within 3 hours*

**5. Despatch information requested by post within 3 days of your initial enquiry**

*92% of customers surveyed received a response within 3 working days.*

## **6. Provide a comprehensive accommodation booking service and other value added sales such as event, travel and attraction tickets.**

*99% of visitors at Annual Survey satisfied with range of services available. 3,967 ticket sales made and 560 accommodation bookings.*

## **7. Keep you informed of what the Information Service is doing, including new services and improvements**

*Quarterly Newsletter sent to local businesses and groups. Visits made to local schools, businesses and community centres discussing the services we provide. Special consultation / open day held offering 10% discount to encourage new customers to find out more about the service. All information on website at [www.visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk)*

## **Customer complaints and improvements**

We have a comprehensive complaints procedure and try to learn from complaints received by improving our service. We also welcome customer comments through a range of consultation. During 2008/9 we received the following complaints:

- Complaint regarding potentially misleading information about ticket sales and parking from Southsea Centre – apologised and improved the relevant information.
- 3 complaints from customers who had received unfranked mail and had to pay postage – identified that this was a problem with the franking machine, apologised to customers, explained the reason for the error and purchased new franking machine.

## **Improvements to the Service following Customer Suggestions**

- Worked with a local business to provide cycle hire from June 2008
- Improved our Millennium Promenade handout
- Added to our merchandising range – including car stickers from Easter 2008
- Investigating public Internet access

## **Some of the many improvements to the Service following Staff Suggestions**

- Reduction in amount of paper used / recycled
- Improved display areas and internal signage in line with Portsmouth City Council branding
- Added postcodes to information sheets to aid customers using Satellite Navigation systems
- New banner for Hard Information Centre to increase awareness
- Number of new events held in the Centres in 2008 including Halloween ghost story time and improved Christmas event.

## **Some examples of customer feedback**

'Gosh Portsmouth - you are AMAZING!! Many thanks ...I've done the survey but there isn't a category high enough for you - such a speedy, helpful reply!'

'I am just writing a quick note to say thank you to the staff at the VIC....It is their positive attitude, willingness to help and friendliness that will give such a good impression to anybody coming to the town for the first time. Well done!'

May I thank you for your excellent service in finding me the accommodation I was looking for the other day

'Thank you very much for your mail. Congratulations for your services! I could not believe my eyes. Your reply came so quickly and with detailed answers to all my questions.'

'What a terrific service!!! An excellent response, including plenty of information about the local eating places.... Most Visitor Centres that I contact are not very helpful, but you have gone the extra mile.'