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Customers



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Better customer outcomes

The Arrow Global Group operates a hybrid business model with an in-house collections operation complemented by a panel of Arrow ‘Approved Partners’. This model allows Arrow to make use of the skills of market-leading specialist partners to provide a service, which complements our internal capability. Understanding our customers’ needs is vital for our operations. It is an evolving process and one which secures positive engagement over the customer account lifespan. In order to develop a comprehensive approach to this, we must at all times, work within the remit of the regulations set by the regulators in all of the geographies we operate in, including the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Portuguese Securities Market Commission (CMVM), Dutch Authority for Financial Markets (AFM), Banca D’Italia and the Central Bank of Ireland, when treating customers fairly and with the appropriate level of forbearance.

Our aim is to establish affordable and sustainable repayment plans with our customers, which enables them to rehabilitate their credit history and ultimately gain access to mainstream financial products. We work closely with our customers, colleagues and specialised servicing panel to help us to understand our customers’ circumstances and to respond accordingly. Through our investment in leading customer-service platforms, we are able to ensure that all of our customers receive a best-in-class service.

Customer centricity

In the UK, we undertook a major research project, ‘Debt Britain – The Changing Landscape in 2018’ to further enhance our knowledge of customers in personal indebtedness in the UK. This helped shape our understanding and drove our desire to implement changes to our processes, giving customers more confidence and clarity around their finances.

These changes include investment in our induction and training programme to ensure front-line conversations support our Purpose to build better financial futures, and this sees new collections colleagues attend an 18-day New Starter Programme. The induction programme provides training on regulation, systems, processes and customer communication. Our external panel of service providers must comply with a set of minimum standards, which place fair and transparent customer treatment at the forefront of our expectations. This is tested in our extensive Quality-Assurance programme.

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International customer forums in 2019

In Portugal, we rolled out a comprehensive and tailor-made Customer Communication training programme for all customer service employees. The programme includes theory, role play and 1:1 coaching and feedback sessions. The concepts covered in the training are being reinforced and embedded through a refreshed Quality-Assurance programme, delivering our best in class service.

In Ireland, we have a dedicated Business Excellence Team, whose role is to monitor the activities of the Irish business to ensure the operation deliver on its commitment to ensure positive outcomes for our customers, and recommend changes to people, procedures or technology, where warranted.

Handing back control is very important for our customers in the Netherlands, and to do this we have developed easy-to-use self-service portals. The customer can not only get an up-to-date account status, but also make repayments, change their personal information, including their bank account details, and, if necessary, contact us or file a complaint.

Vulnerable customers

In the UK, we work closely with local organisations to discuss Mental Health Case Studies, which continues to support our managers and employees in understanding mental health issues and what this means to our customers, employees and our Group. We hold regular ‘lunch and learn’ sessions for all colleagues to ensure this is embedded in our culture and is included in everything that we do. Our managers and agents will conduct regular CARE call calibrations, so that CARE situations can be discussed in an open, honest and safe environment to ensure that we are doing the right thing by our customers. This also gives us an opportunity to celebrate our successes.

In Ireland, we have a dedicated vulnerable case manager, who is specifically trained and manages the vulnerable portfolio and all interactions with customers who may require an alternative approach while managing their financial difficulties. We feel that this is important as we hope to create a positive and supportive culture of relationship management for customers during difficult times, as the dedicated vulnerable case manager is fully aware of the issues and can make appropriate recommendations to service their accounts. In addition, escalation of accounts to management for risk assessment or removal is conducted through a vulnerable monthly forum, which ensures we continue to apply best practice approaches and consider various points of view when making decisions.

In the Netherlands, behavioural credit scores are combined with operational data to help the team identify, and then help, vulnerable customers. This focus on preventative arrears management, also extends to budget coaching, that sees our colleagues visit customers in their own homes to help plan realistic and affordable repayment plans.

Looking ahead to the future, in 2019 we will be assessing our frameworks for identifying and supporting vulnerable customers across all our geographies, with the aim to leverage best practices and to standardise our approaches to the highest levels of excellence. We are revising our customer policies across the Group to ensure we work towards the highest standards, which in some geographies means we go above and beyond the local regulatory requirements. Below are some examples of the work we are already doing across the Group.

Voice of the customer

The introduction of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys (CSAT) across our panel of specialist service providers has enabled us to utilise feedback provided directly by customers. This has provided a tool for customers to voice their opinions on the treatment they have received, and it has enabled the business to have a unique independent insight into the customer experience. This has highlighted key areas for improvements to ensure that the customer is treated to the best possible service.

Last year, we conducted an extensive piece of market research to understand how, when and why our customers want to engage with us. Of particular focus was our web portal and the content and layout of our mail correspondence. These changes have now been implemented, in line with recommendations provided by our customers.

Our customer portals lead the way in the industry, putting control back into the customer’s hands. Similarly, the changes made to our mail correspondence inform the customer of what their situation is now, and what options they have to address.

We are now leveraging the learnings from this UK led market-research initiative to upgrade communication collateral and portals across all of our geographies.

Customer forums

This year, we piloted the creation of a Customer Committee in the UK. Supported by a bespoke MI suite, this committee drives the delivery of customer outcomes throughout the organisation – not just in front-line areas. The Committee is guided by senior leaders within the organisation, who can drive changes to ensure customers are treated fairly and responsibly. In 2019, we will host two international customer forum conferences. Here customers will be invited to attend to provide further insight to our colleagues. Finally, we have developed a customer-focused scorecard, which is prepared monthly and scrutinised by our board. This includes key-performance indicators, such as complaint volumes, customer-service levels and customer satisfaction scores. These performance indicators are reported and consolidated from all of our collection platforms across the Group.