

Guideline



Best Practice Guidelines for Staff Training on 2-4-6 Cheque Clearing Timescales

November 2009

Introduction

The 2-4-6 and 2-6-6 changes to cheque clearing timescales were introduced in November 2007. They set a maximum time limit of two, four and six working days - after paying in a cheque to a bank account - for value, withdrawal and fate. For savings accounts the maximum time limit for withdrawal is longer (six days), known as 2-6-6.

These changes have brought real benefits to customers in terms of increasing clarity and providing certainty but it appears that bank and building society staff are unable to give out the correct information on cheque clearing timescales when asked by customers.

In a recent external review into customer-facing staff understanding of 2-4-6, there was found to be considerable confusion resulting in inconsistent information being given to customers. With this mind we have put together these guidelines that can help improve staff, and therefore customer, understanding of the 2-4-6 clearing timescales.

4-point PEER training plan for 2-4-6 (Prepare - Educate - Evaluate - Reinforce)

1. Prepare:

A range of training material is available for bank staff to use:

Branch counter leaflets

It is recommended that any bank customer who makes a face-to-face enquiry about 2-4-6 should be given printed information, such as a leaflet, explaining the timescales.

Industry-wide consumer and business customer leaflets about 2-4-6 are available from www.chequeandcredit.co.uk. If you would like to customise these with your own organisation's branding, the artwork is available on request from info@chequeandcredit.co.uk. Consider making the leaflets downloadable from your website.

Cheque Checker

The 'Cheque Checker' is an online tool that calculates 2-4-6 timescales. By entering the date that a cheque is paid in and clicking the calculate button, the relevant 2-4-6 dates for that cheque are displayed. The checker is free to use at www.chequechecker.co.uk. Banks or building societies can include a link to the cheque checker on their website.

Laminated reference card

A laminated card could be used as a useful, desk-top reference, and could include extra information on:

- Those accounts that offer better timescales for interest and withdrawal than two working days and four working days.

- When 2-4-6 timescales start for cheques that are paid in via different ways (e.g. at a branch counter, cash machine or by post) - all could have different start dates depending on when the respective cut-off time is.

Scripted responses to phone requests

Staff could use a scripted response to phone requests about 2-4-6, or customers should be given clear guidance as to where they can find the information for themselves.

Staff intranet

Having a 2-4-6 page on a staff intranet can act as a useful place of reference for customer-facing staff. Electronic copies of other related material, such as an advice leaflet or reference card, can be placed here, as well as a link to www.chequechecker.co.uk.

2. Educate:

As well as providing bank staff with physical resources, it can be useful to run brief training sessions to help staff understand and remember the timescales. Three-minute animated films that simply and clearly explain the 2-4-6 and 2-6-6 timescales - available to view at www.chequeandcredit.co.uk - can form the focal point of these sessions.

The animations can also be put onto your staff intranet - we can email them to you, or supply them on a memory stick. Contact us on info@chequeandcredit.co.uk.

3. Evaluate:

It is good practice to evaluate the effectiveness of any training initiatives, and check staff understanding of 2-4-6, on a regular basis. An internal mystery shopper exercise is one way to do this. Or, if you use quality managers to check branch operational standards, you could introduce specific 2-4-6 questioning of staff to help check their understanding.

4. Reinforce:

Where and when possible remind counter staff of the timescales:- run refresher training sessions; highlight the information on your intranet; show the animated film at team meetings; publish relevant information in your staff newsletter.

Cheque and Credit Clearing Company

The Cheque and Credit Clearing Company (C&CCC) is a non-profit making, membership-based industry body, which has managed the cheque clearing system in England and Wales since 1985, and in all of Great Britain since 1996 when it took over responsibility for managing the Scottish cheque clearing as well. In addition to clearing cheques, the system processes bankers' drafts, building society cheques, postal orders, warrants, government payable orders and travellers' cheques. The C&CCC also manages the systems for the clearing of paper bank giro credits (the credit clearing) and euro cheques (the euro clearing).

Further information

For further information please contact your bank or C&CCC:

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