<table>
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<th>Aim</th>
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| 15 – 20 mins. | Welcome and Introductions  
Establish aims for the session  
Housekeeping information  
Ground rules | Ask participants to sign in and write a name label  
Draw a seating plan if a large group  
Agree ground rules: e.g. not interrupting  
Remind participants to turn off mobile phones | Flip chart  
– record ground rules  
– write up to 4 aims for the session  

Keep both visible during the session |
| 20 mins. | Ice breaker: what is good customer service?  
Work in pairs – one person to describe a good experience of customer care, the other a bad one (5 mins.)  
Plenary session: each person describes to the group his/her partner’s experience of customer care.  
Use flip chart to record features of good and bad customer care.  
Good will include listening; meeting customer’s needs; pleasant manner, courtesy etc. | - |
| 20 mins. | Develop listening skills  
Talking and Listening game (pairs)  
Plenary:  
- what makes a good listener?  
- why does a receptionist need to be a good listener?  
Ask participants to work in pairs: one person to present the query, the other to be the listener.  
Give out the instructions to the speakers.  
Half the listeners should have the “active listening” directions; the other half, the “uninterested listener” directions.  
Allow approx. 5 minutes for the exercise.  
Then, in a plenary session, ask for feedback from the | Scenario scripts for the exercise  
Flip chart – note main features and techniques of listening  
Questionnaire “How do you rate as a listener?” (if time or homework if not) |
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<td>speakers about their experiences of speaking to someone who is listening and to someone who appears uninterested. Ask the listeners to comment on how they acted out their roles.</td>
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<td>Draw out the following main points:-</td>
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<td>• types of body language which show whether we are listening/interested in the speaker or not</td>
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<td>• verbal cues to indicate interest: e.g. asking questions</td>
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<td>• impact on the speaker of not being listened to</td>
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<td>• how a person’s first contact with a service may affect their perception of the service</td>
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<td>Refer to the principles of good customer service from previous exercise to explain why listening skills are essential to the receptionist’s role.</td>
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<td>Hand out the listening questionnaires. If time, participants could complete them now and then this session could be extended to include further discussion about listening and how to improve listening skills. If not time in the session, invite participants to complete the questionnaire at home.</td>
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<td>20 mins.</td>
<td>Develop skills of active listening: probing for information</td>
<td>“Probing the problem” exercise (pairs) Scripts for “probing the problem”</td>
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<td>“Probing the problem” exercise (pairs)</td>
<td>Split the group into pairs, aiming to pair up people who have not yet worked together. Explain the exercise. One person (the client) will present a query; the other (the receptionist) will aim to find out more about what help the enquirer needs. Hand out the prompts for the “clients” and “receptionists”. Use the queries given in the training materials or others, as relevant to the group. Allow approx. 10 mins. for the exercise</td>
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<td>15 mins</td>
<td>TEA/COFFEE BREAK</td>
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**Plenary session**: ask for feedback. Draw out the following points about active listening:

- We often need to ask questions to find out more about what the client wants.
- A receptionist may have to decide whether the advice service can help with the query or whether to suggest other sources of help.
- We may need to establish what level of help someone needs: e.g. information so that they can help themselves or an appointment for professional advice.
- Probing the problem can help a receptionist identify what action a client may be able to take and whether there are access needs such as language or learning difficulties.

**15 mins**

Relate principles of customer care to human needs

**Plenary session**

Hand out the summary of human needs and the diagram of Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs.

General discussion: how do these principles apply to customer care and the role of a receptionist?

Draw out the following points:

- Some advice service clients may be homeless; have no money; be in danger of deportation etc.- so have unmet needs at the basic levels.
- Advice services help address some of these basic needs.
- Good customer care can help meet the need for esteem and put anxious people at ease.
- The reception/waiting area should be welcoming – seating, access to toilets etc.

This session could be extended to include reflections.

**Human needs handout**

**Maslow’s hierarchy – handout**

**Prepared flip chart** – Maslow’s hierarchy
| 30 mins. | Manage difficult client situations | **Role play using case studies:** the angry client and the anxious client  
Introduce the session by commenting that advice service clients may sometimes appear angry or demanding and this can be difficult to deal with. If appropriate, ask the group to provide one or two examples from experience.  
Explain that dealing with clients who appear angry, frustrated or anxious is one of the main challenges of reception work and that the aim of this session is to look at common situations of this sort and to identify ways of managing these situations.  
**Work in pairs or threes if the group is large.**  
One person from each pair/group takes the role of the client. Then other person(s) is the receptionist.  
Issue scripts for clients – at least one person to be the angry client and at least one to be the anxious client. Clients go to a break-out space to read their scripts; receptionists stay in the training room.  
Hand out guidance and brief the receptionists on their task. Set up an interview space with the client’s chair facing the receptionist.  
Ask the clients to come back into the room as if they were clients being admitted to a “drop in” advice session. Each client will sit in front on the receptionist(s) and play the role allocated. Allow up to 10 mins for the client’s interaction with the receptionist.  
**Plenary discussion:** re-arrange the room as for the **Case studies:**  
- the anxious client  
- the angry client  
**Scripts and guidance for receptionists**  
**Flip Chart** – to record findings and action points for improving access to the advice service as appropriate |
training session.

Draw out the following points:-

- value of active listening and showing understanding of the client's anger/anxiety – link to human needs session
- need to establish what the problem is and if there are any very urgent issues
- techniques for defusing anger/alleviating anxiety: reassurance that the client will receive advice/help; acknowledging the importance of the problem; explaining how the advice service works and what will happen next

If there is time, the discussion could also explore issues such as:-

- how access to the advice services is managed and whether this should be reviewed to reduce waiting times; prevent queues etc.
- what support is/should be available for reception staff when faced with difficult situations – including procedures to ensure personal safety: e.g. a panic button
- how reception staff contribute to the planning of the advice service and the ways in which clients' enquiries are assessed and appointments allocated

20 mins. Understand the key principles of advice services and how they apply to the reception service

Plenary Session

Ask participants for their views of what makes an advice service accessible and easy to use from a client's point of view. Highlight the replies which relate closely to the 5 principles and explain that these are guiding principles to ensure that clients needing advice are able to use and have confidence in an
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| 6    | Advice service. Give the handout on the 5 principles. Options for this exercise: | • as handouts for group exercise or  
• as script for role play  
Sets of cards to identify the principle concerned (1 set per person or group depending on which exercise is used) |
|      | **Option 1**: display the 5 client scenarios – e.g. write them on flip charts and stick to the walls. Give each participant a set of 5 cards listing the 5 principles and ask them to stick the appropriate card to each scenario.  
**Option 2**: if the space is not big enough for this, split participants into groups of 3 – 4, give the scenarios as handouts and ask them to agree which principle applies to each scenario.  
Option 3: ask for volunteers to act as potential clients and use role play to present the scenarios and link them to the principles. | |
|      | **Plenary discussion** to cover points such as: | |
| 15 – 20 mins. | **Plenary or group session**  
Envelope exercise: “Who should ask…?”  
**Option 1** Group exercise: each group of 3 – 4 participants has a set of questions and decides who should ask these within the advice service.  
**Option 2** Plenary session: each participant has a set of questions and some blutac. Three flip charts headed “adviser”, “receptionist”, “both” are displayed and participants choose on which flip chart to stick | **Guidance document**: “Information, Triage & the Receptionist’s Role” on the receptionist’s role (handout)  
**Flip chart**: “advice and information” |

Pilot 1: Making Reception Work - Reception Skills - Introductory Course (3 Hours) - Tutor's Notes And Course Outline
### Resources Needed

- Flip chart stand, paper, pens
- Scripts for the role play sessions
- Blutac
- Handouts

### Plenary discussion.

- Draw out and record on a flip chart key features of information and advice respectively.
- Discuss reasons why reception staff should not give advice.
- Hand out the guidance document.
- If more time is allocated to this session, scenarios and role play could be used to illustrate the difference between information and advice.

| 10 mins. | Summary | **Brainstorm main learning points** – ask each participant to name one thing they have learned from the training and how they will implement this within their work as a receptionist.
- Mention any further training courses on reception skills which may be of interest.
- Thank participants for attending.
- Ensure everyone has a copy of all the handouts |
| Flip chart – learning points |