

# **THE ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC (MUNICIPAL) SERVICE PROVISION BY MULTIFUNCTIONAL CENTERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Today, the most important task during the construction of the entire service state system is the creation of modern and convenient formats of public service provision for citizens. The state is oriented to the needs and demands of citizens and also provides an opportunity to participate in public policy and to organize various state and municipal services. In the process of state and municipal service provision, the state pays attention to a feedback development with citizens and uses new ways of public service provision. The federal law No. 210 "On the organization of state and municipal service provision" issued on July 27, 2010, defines the principles and the procedure for state (municipal) services provision, the conditions and the procedure for their payment, the rights of the applicants and the responsibilities of government bodies. One of the most important trends in the development of public service provision system on the territory of Russian Federation is the concept of Multi-Functional Centers (hereinafter referred to as MFCs) to provide the services according to "one window" principle.*

*In the city of Moscow, they created the public service portal "Electronic Government", which provides the electronic access to services. Using it, an applicant can file a request and other necessary documents, learn about the progress of public service provision and get its result and pay the state fee.*

*The result of MFC organization is that the process of state and municipal service organization has become more accessible, convenient and much more comfortable, due to waiting time reduction because of an electronic queue appearance, the terms for the processing of documents, the schedule of the center work comfortable for applicants, moreover, the MFC guarantees the protection of legal rights and the interests of citizens and organizations.*

*In recent years, the forms of MFC activities the work of which had shortcomings have undergone certain change. A large modernization of MFC activities is accompanied by efficiency increase during the provision of services, but it is necessary to take into account the population adaptation to such rapid reengineering. Nowadays, a low quality of state and municipal service provision on the basis of MFC remains one of the key problems, despite of the widespread practice of MFC creation and development on the territory of Russian Federation. Difficulties arise for citizens during their appeal for this or that service and in the organization of MFC work.*

*Within the framework of state and municipal management effectiveness increase, one of the key tasks is to improve the quality of population life, as well as to reduce the existing*

*administrative barriers in various areas of public relations, which significantly affects the quality of state and municipal services provided to individuals or legal entities.*

**Keywords:** State Services, Public Administration, Multifunctional Centers, One Window, Population, State, Electronic Russia, My Documents, Internet Resource, Feedback.

## INTRODUCTION

The improvement of public administration is one of the priority activities of Russian Federation Government. The work of the government bodies reflects the effectiveness of the functioning of the state as a whole (Ryabova, 2017). The need to develop an effective state apparatus and to improve the mechanism of state authority work was repeatedly noted in the President's messages to the Federal Assembly of Russian Federation.

The Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002-2010)" and the Concept of Administrative Reform in Russian Federation 2006-2010 (Nosko & Poluyanov, 2012) are the fundamental legal acts aimed to improve the efficiency of public administration.

In 2010, the Federal Law No. 210-FL "On the Organization of State and Municipal Services Provision" was adopted. This law regulates the relations arising in connection with the provision of state and municipal services at all levels of executive power, exercising executive and administrative powers (Cheremisina, 2012).

In accordance with the paragraph 5 of the Article 2 of the Federal Law No. 210-FL "On the organization of state and municipal service provision" under the Multi-Functional Center (MFC) of state and municipal service provision, it is necessary to understand the organization created in the organizational and legal form of a state or a municipal institution (which is also an autonomous institution) that meets the requirements established by the Federal Law and is authorized to organize the provision of state and municipal services, including the services in the electronic form, according to the principle of "one window" (Federal Law No. 210-FL).

Single-window technology ensures the transparency for the provision of public services; it uses the modern methods of queue management; it raises the standards of applicant servicing (Malik, 2014).

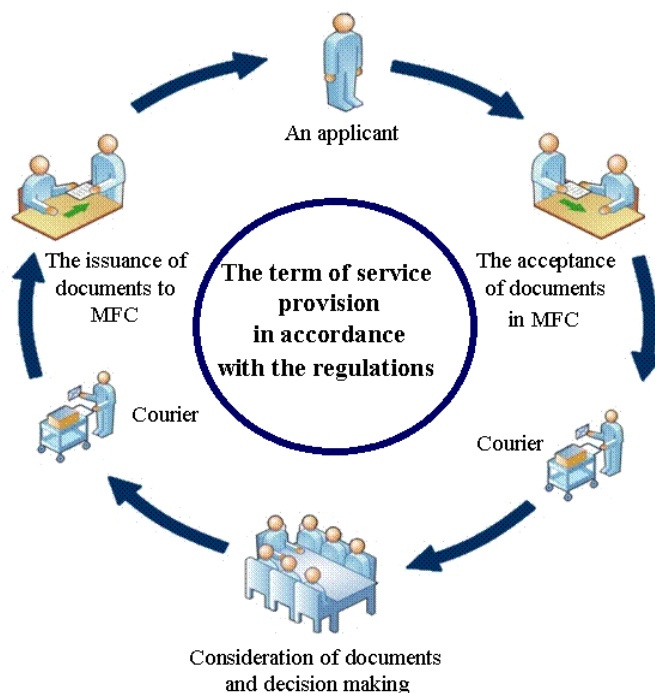
A key characteristic of MFC is the reception of applicants, which is carried out by special operators who are the members of MFC staff and not the representatives of public authorities and other commissioners. They also identify the authorized bodies responsible for the coordination of documents and responsible for the collection of the necessary documents, which previously had to be collected by citizens with their own efforts.

A MFC specialist is a universal employee who can advise an applying citizen on any service and take documents on it from the applicant (Panina, 2017).

The decision to establish a MFC (Figure 1) was made as the part of the administrative reform in order to optimize the provision of state and municipal services by:

1. The implementation of service provision technology convenient for an applicant, also in electronic form;
2. The reduction of document number that an applicant must provide for a service;
3. The possibility of obtaining several interrelated state and municipal services by a physical or a legal person at a time (Gavrilova, 2015);
4. The minimization of time spent by an applicant for a service obtaining irrespective of its subject matter, amount and the location of authority bodies of various levels involved in a service provision;
5. Interdepartmental integration, also by combining the representatives of all competent authorities in one place;

- The identification and the reduction of redundant and duplicative state and municipal services (Yuzhakov, 2014).



**FIGURE 1**  
**SCHEME FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES MFC**

The improvement of provided service quality is one of the main factors to strengthen the social status of state and municipal authorities and to ensure the public confidence in the authorities (Litvinova, 2012). The quality of public (municipal) service provision should be understood as the conformity of provided service quality indicators with the perceived needs of an individual or a legal entity, taking a service in MFC, as the result of interaction with the authorities (Skvortsova & Bykova, 2017).

A qualitative public service should create such conditions for a consumer, in which he will have the maximum final effect ultimately.

In order to assess the quality of state and municipal service obtaining, it is necessary to assess the conditions under which a service is provided and the resources expended by an applicant for this service obtaining. First of all, the quality of the state administrative and legal services is provided due to the clear work of a "back office" (an authorized government body and the coordinating organizations that influence the decision to establish a private administrative and legal relationship). The quality of servicing during the provision of public services is characterized by the following indicators: the availability of a service provision location, the availability of information about provided services, an applicant's waiting time, the comfort of service obtaining conditions and staff competence (Koptev, 2014).

The key indicators of accessibility and the quality of public service provision to citizens and organizations:

- The approval of the full list of documents required for a service provision.

2. The implementation of interdepartmental interaction between the authorities involved in the provision of services.
3. A substantial reduction of the terms for the provision of services" (Isupova, 2009).

An important step towards the improvement of service provision quality and the comfort of services are the introduction of remote access systems that provide the opportunity to apply for public services through call centers and information kiosks. The development of multifunctional centers on the territory of Russian Federation presupposes the development of qualification requirements for multifunctional center experts, the training of multifunctional center experts for the forms and the methods of operation with applicants and interaction with various authorities. The availability of qualified, carefully selected personnel for the operation in MFC, which has sufficient experience and relevant knowledge and skills, will allow to implement the approach to state (municipal) service provision in complex areas, which in its turn will increase the effect of applicant visit function transfer from the authorities to a multifunctional center at a high-quality provision of state and municipal services (Litvinova, 2012).

As of January 1, 2016 the territory of Russian Federation had 2,684 centers and 10130 offices of state and municipal services. At the same time, the population coverage rate by "single window" reached more than 94%. Nowadays, the city of Moscow has 127 public service centers. Each MFC unit provides 50-250 types of services. Undoubtedly, the primacy belongs to the social sphere-"socially significant" services that are most demanded by population and are managed by Russian Federation subjects.

The total number of applicants who applied for public services in the MFC of Eastern Biryulyovo District in 2016 amounted to 308,628 people. The volume of services that were provided to applicants in the framework of the state task for the reporting period is given in Table 1.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS WHO APPLIED FOR PUBLIC SERVICES IN EASTERN BIRYULYOVO IN 2016</b>			
<b>EPB</b>	<b>Consultations</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Total</b>
TOTAL of Universal experts	54447	158092	212539
Total for LDPSP	1444	11716	13160
Total for Civil Registry Office	1281	3062	4343
Total for FMSD	0	30182	30182
Total for the Pension Fund	0	48404	48404

## METHODS

The study employs both a set of general theoretical methods, like analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, generalization, theoretical modeling and a set of empirical methods, like document analysis, sociological surveys of residents. The leading method of research is a questionnaire survey. The main method of collecting information when examining the satisfaction of citizens with the quality of providing state and municipal services is a survey of the population (Babakaev, Vinogradova & Kuljamina, 2017). In order to analyze the quality and the availability of provided services at MFC they conducted the survey by anonymous

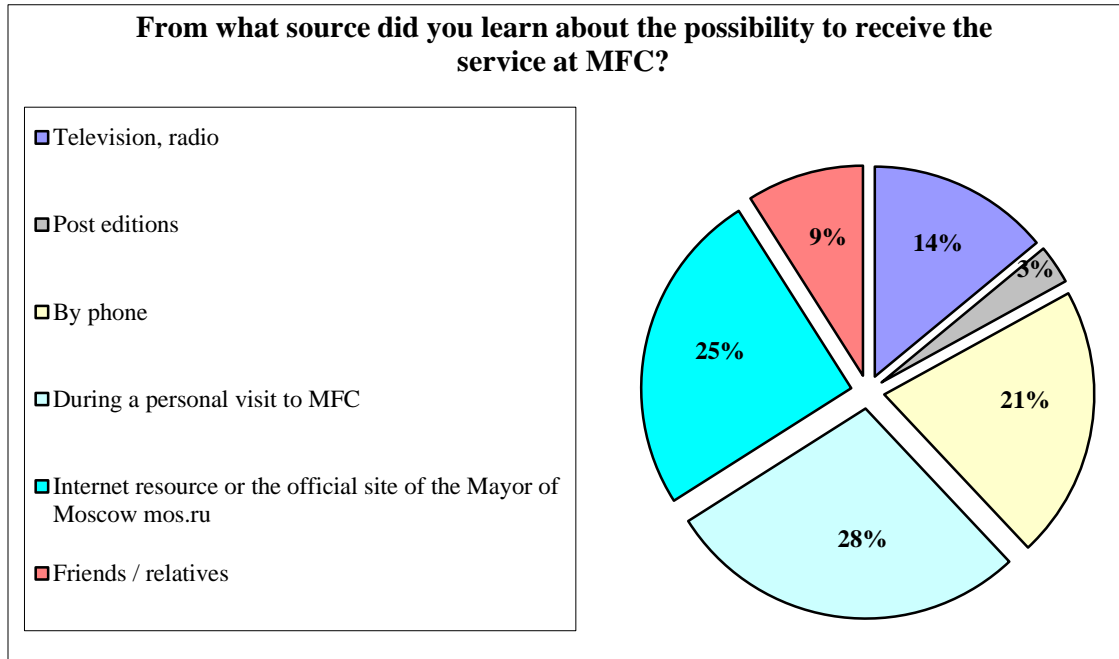
questionnaires of MFC visitors at the Eastern Biryulyovo district. The total number of respondents was 126 people. The study was conducted in 2017. The sample is random, quota.

Also, the empirical basis for the study was the normative legal acts of the government authorities of the Russian Federation, analytical materials of a sectorial nature contained in periodicals and in the scientific papers of domestic publications (Lezhnina & Isupova, 2009; Lobanova, 2013; Goncharova, 2014; Krivosheeva, 2015; Mikhailova & Koshchakova, 2015; Sinko & Perova, 2016; Tkachev & Mitrofanova, 2017; Samota & Serga, 2016; Loboda & Malkova, 2016) and foreign authors (Song & Meier, 2018; Van Ryzin, 2005; Olsen, 2015; Skordoulis, Alasonas & Pekka-Economou, 2017; Chalikias, Drosos, Skordoulis & Tsotsolas, 2016; Caemmerer, Brock, Evanschitzky & Alexander, 2017; Drosos, Tsotsolas, Chalikias, Skordoulis & Koniordos, 2015; Anwer, Esichaikul, Rehman & Anjum, 2016; Skordoulis, Kaskouta, Chalikias & Drosos, 2018).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of the survey it was revealed that more than half of the respondents (57%) were unaware of any of the services provided to the MFC since 2016, which is a very significant percentage from the total number of respondents.

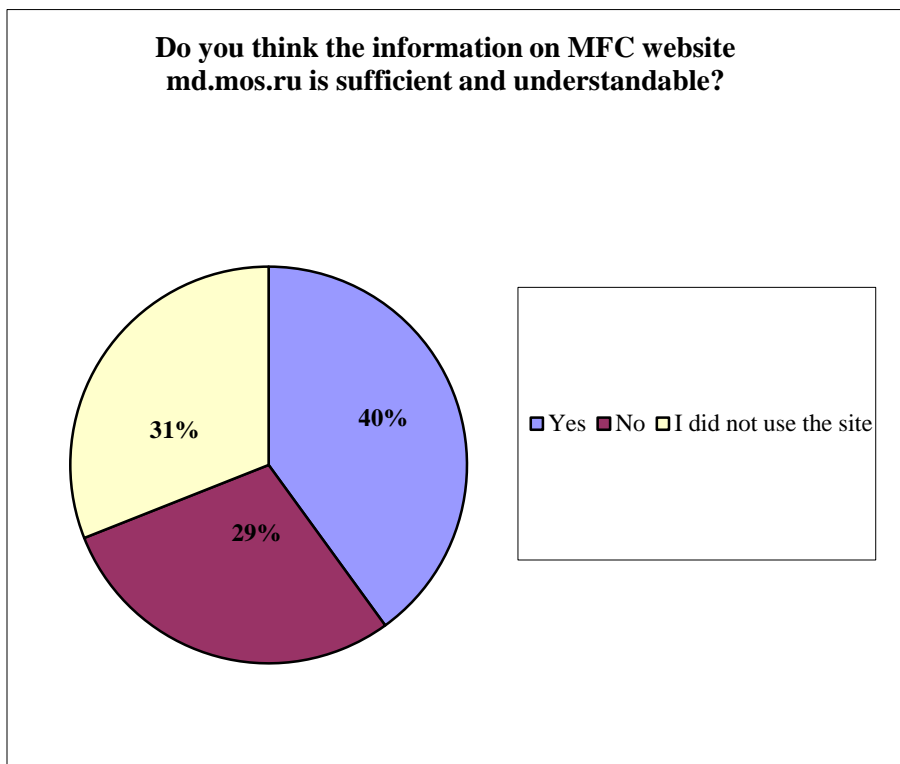
Among the remaining 43% of respondents, 28% of respondents were aware of this or that service when they visited the center personally. Every fourth (25%) gathered the information from the Internet resource. 21% of respondents were informed by phone, 14%-on TV/radio, 9%-from friends/relatives and the smallest percentage of respondents (3%) learned about the opportunities provided by MFC, from postal publications (Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2**  
**THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "FROM WHAT SOURCE DID YOU LEARN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF GETTING A SERVICE IN MFC EASTERN BIRYULYOVO?"**

Such a large number of ignorant may be due to a small share of the official site "My Documents" attendance <http://md.mos.ru/> and the inconvenience of the site section, which lists the provided services.

31% of respondents did not use the site, which is almost one-third of all respondents. A slightly smaller number (29%) found the information on the site insufficient or incomprehensible. At the same time, 40% of respondents were still satisfied with the site and the information provided on it (Figure 3).

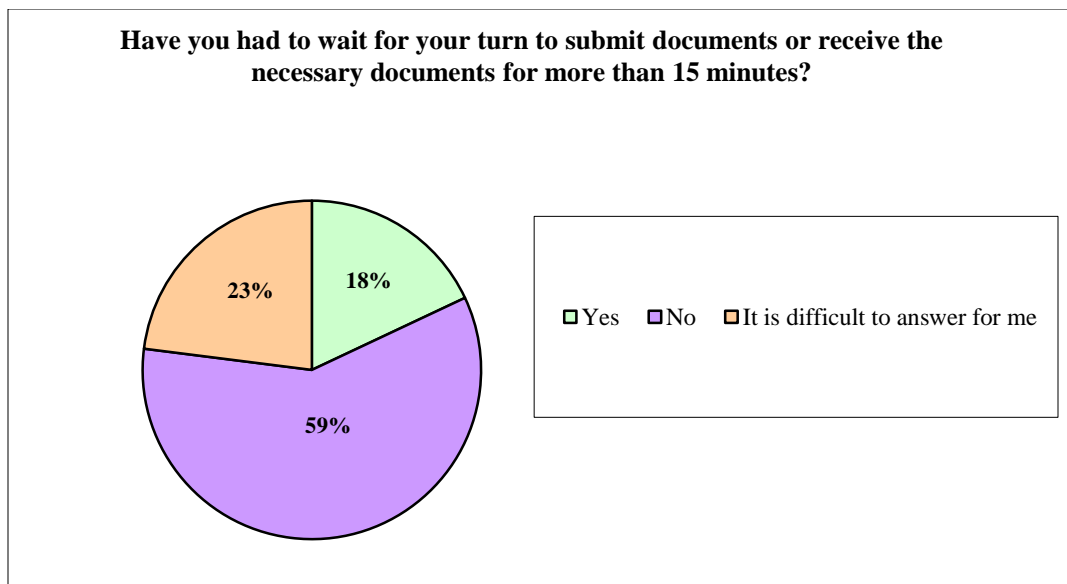


**FIGURE 3**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU CONSIDER THE INFORMATION ON MFC WEBSITE MD.MOS.RU SUFFICIENT AND UNDERSTANDABLE?"**

Thus, it can be concluded that the information provided on MFC website is quite complete and informative.

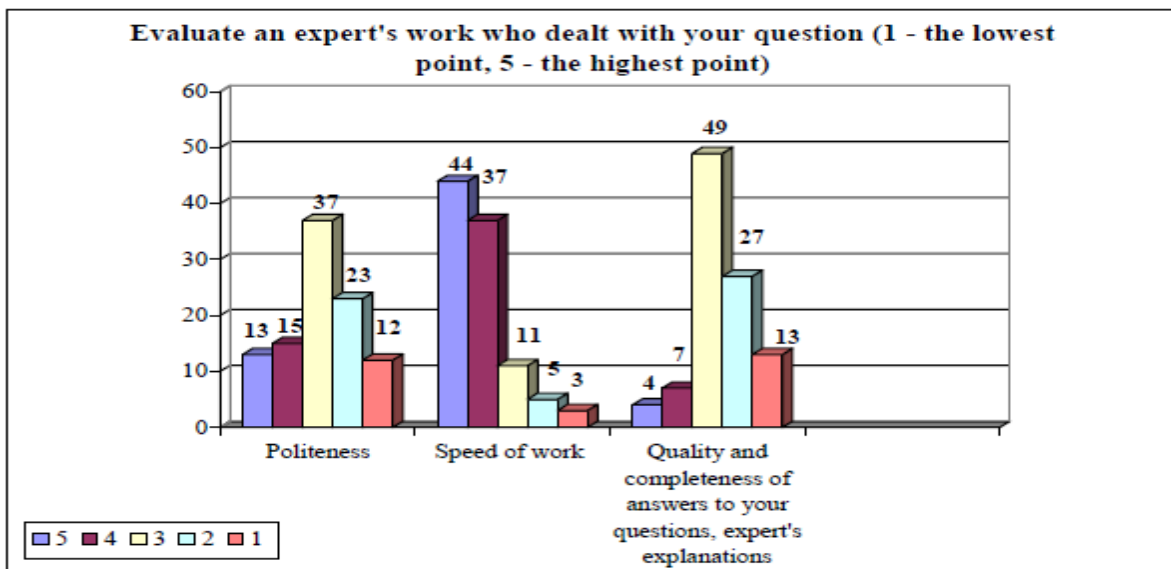
A very important criterion to assess the quality of public services is efficiency, that is, the time spent by an applicant. The Government of Russian Federation has established a general requirement for all MFC on the maximum waiting limit for a service provision, which should not exceed 15 minutes.

As the results of the study showed, more than half of the district residents (59%) did not have to wait more than 15 minutes. However, 18% of the center visitors noted that their waiting time was no more than 15 minutes. 23% of the respondents found it difficult to answer. Based on the data it can be concluded that the number of windows in MFC of Eastern Biryulyovo region corresponds to the needs of citizens and ensures the proper waiting time in a queue (Figure 4).



**FIGURE 4**  
**THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "HAS YOU HAD TO WAIT FOR YOUR TURN TO SUBMIT OR RECEIVE THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS FOR MORE THAN 15 MINUTES?"**

In order to assess the quality of an expert work during the provision of services, respondents were asked to evaluate three criteria according to a 5-point scale (1-the lowest point, 5-the highest point): an expert's politeness, speed of work, quality and completeness of answers to all the questions asked by an applicant (Figure 5).



**FIGURE 5**  
**"APPLICANTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE WORK OF MFC EXPERT FROM EASTERN BIRYULYOVO DISTRICT"**

Every third respondent (37%) gave a satisfactory assessment to the criterion "politeness". A little less amount of respondents (23%) rated this criterion as "2". 15% rated the criterion as "good". And 8% of respondents gave this criterion the lowest score (1 point).

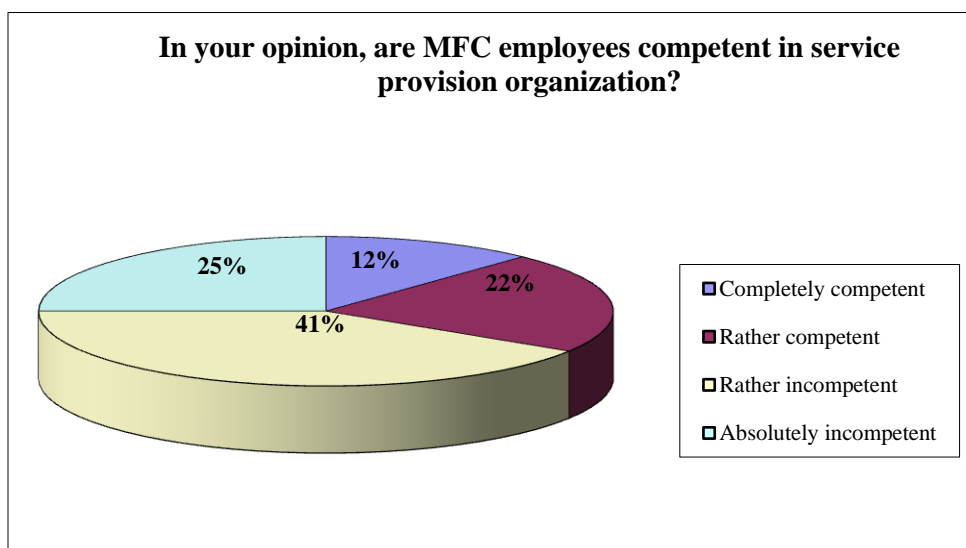
"Speed of work" was rated as "excellent" by almost every second respondent (44%). Approximately the same number (37%) noted a good work speed (4 points). 11% rated this criterion as "satisfactory" and the smallest proportion of respondents, 5% and 3%, rated the speed of work at 2 and 1 point, respectively. The dynamics at the evaluation of this criterion is a good indicator and confirms the compliance with MFC requirement once again concerning the provision of a service within a certain period of time-no more than 15 minutes.

But with a strict period of time, an expert is focused on the speed of a service provision and is not intended to advise an applicant on service provision details. Therefore, a good speed of work directly affects the criterion of "quality and completeness of expert answers to questions", which is confirmed by the chart data. 49% of respondents were satisfied with the completeness of answers and expert explanations. This criterion was estimated as "unsatisfactory" by 27% of those attending MFC. The lowest score of "1" was noted by 13% of the survey participants. Only 4% rated this criterion with the highest point.

The errors and the inattention of experts during the provision of services were noted by the majority of respondents (72%). At that, 43% of citizens remained dissatisfied with the lack of experts on the post during working hours. More than a third of the respondents (39%) found the information about service provision procedure as insufficient. And 30% were dissatisfied with the center employee rudeness. The smallest proportion of respondents (8%) remained satisfied.

Based on the results of this survey, it can be concluded that the experts often make mistakes and are inattentive during the processing of documents for service provision. The reason for this can be a limited time provided for the servicing of one applicant, as well as the incompetence of specialists in the reception windows.

In order to analyze the quality of public services, the respondents were asked to assess the competence of MFC employees of Eastern Biryulyovo district (Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6**  
**"THE ASSESSMENT OF MFC EMPLOYEE COMPETENCE IN EASTERN BIRYULYOVO DISTRICT"**



As can be seen from the presented diagram, 41% noted that the employees are rather incompetent. Every fourth applicant (25%) considered the employees as absolutely incompetent. 22% noted that MFC employees are rather competent and only 12% found the specialists fully competent. Analyzing the answers to this question, we can conclude that the majority of respondents believe that one of the key problems in the provision of public services is the lack of the center employee competence.

Also, in the framework of the questionnaire, the citizens were asked to indicate the problems they encountered during the obtaining of the services provided by MFC. Thus, many respondents complained about personnel and its incorrect work and behavior, namely frequent mistakes in documents, the lack of specialists in the field and so on.

## CONCLUSION

According to the obtained data, it follows that all problematic issues affect the personnel policy of the institution and accordingly it is necessary to analyze the expected causes of the situation and develop the measures to address the problematic issues.

A particular attention in the system of personnel management should be given to their systematic training and professional development. In order to prepare the experts for the work on the principle of "single window", the methodology was approved for MFC staff training and attracted organizations that provide state and municipal services on "single window" basis. The methodology is implemented in MFC Training Center. However, this technique is not reflected in practice. This is because the specialists of "one window" do not have appropriate competencies and skills in their activities, the high turnover of staff takes place, the lecture material does not have a sufficient degree of fullness, there are not enough hours for practical training and the competence of the teaching staff does not meet modern requirements.

As a result of the study conducted by the authors, the main problems in the organization of the work of the MFC of the Biryulyovo Vostochny district of Moscow, such as: the lack of time for expert training in a workplace, due to the busyness of the public services center; an annual extension of employee universalization terms, as the training center is focused on inbound training; the violation of deadlines by executive bodies and federal executive bodies responsible for the drawing up of documents.

Analyzing the foreign experience in organizing the provision of public services on the principle of a single window, it is worth noting the practice of South Korea, the United States, Canada and Brazil. To solve the identified problems in the course of the study conducted by the authors, it is interesting to adapt the experience of the above-mentioned countries, the leaders in this field. First of all, you need:

1. To create a single training center, in which the newly admitted center staff for the provision of public services in the city of Moscow, will take a two-week training course in social, departmental and universal areas;
2. The universalization of specialists with mentors;
3. The organization of roundtables to discuss the ways out of the existing situations.

The increase of public authority effectiveness is a prerequisite for the successful solution of complex social and economic problems faced by modern society. To do this, the system of state and municipal management should be constantly reformed, including those reforms aimed at state and municipal service provision improvement.

The improvement of the multifunctional center activity for the rendering of state and municipal services will allow reaching a qualitatively new level for the entire system of state and municipal management.

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