



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

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Customer Service Standards

February 2014

Why do we have Customer Service Standards?

Nottinghamshire County Council aims to deliver high standards of customer care and service to all customers who use, or experience our services.

Every employee is personally responsible for providing good customer service. People will form their views of the Council from their personal experience of how we serve them, as such we need to ensure that we ***get it right first time and every time.***

Our standards are simple, user friendly and measurable. They apply to both internal and external customers and outline what you can expect from us when contacting the Council by telephone, by letter, by e-mail, through our website or in person.

Having a clear set of customer service standards against which we can measure our performance will enable us to continually improve our service design and delivery so if we are not meeting these standards we'd like you to let us know so that we can fix this.

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/contact/comments/>

(Note: In some departments there will be an existing set of service specific standards in place e.g. Highways, Libraries, Child Protection and Adult Protection. These standards may be, in some cases, statutory or policy based and may, in some cases, be higher than the customer service standards within this document).

Standards of Customer Service you can expect

At Nottinghamshire County Council we will at all times:

- Treat customers fairly; with respect and consideration
- Be polite, helpful, open and honest in all of our communications
- Listen to you and respond positively to what you are telling us
- Do what we say we are going to do
- Deliver good quality, affordable services
- Organise our services around your needs
- Ensure you can access to information, advice and services easily
- Give you choice and control over how you access services
- Communicate clearly and understandably without using confusing jargon and acronyms
- Share information with you
- Explain our decision making in a way that you can understand
- Make the best use of all of our resources
- Try wherever possible to provide the services you need, when and where you want them
- Try wherever possible to answer your enquiry at the first point of contact
- Provide you with easy-to-understand, useful and up to date information about our services
- Deal with your feedback positively and quickly and use it to improve the service we provide
- Respect your confidentiality
- Let you know how quickly we can take action to answer your enquiry or resolve your complaint
- Direct you to where you need to go if you do not need our services

If you telephone us we will:

- Aim to answer within 10 seconds or 4 rings
- At the customer service centre, answer 80% of calls within 30 seconds
- Tell you the name of the service area and who you are speaking to
- Provide you with appropriate contact details
- Return your phone calls on the same day or, if this is not possible, the next working day
- Try to deal with your enquiry at the first point of contact. If this is not possible we will put you through to the right service area who can offer further help or expertise
- Transfer you to the right person however, where this may not be possible, we will offer to take your details and arrange for someone to call you back within an agreed, or appropriate, timescale
- Respond to telephone messages within 2 working days, unless the voicemail or the specific service standards state otherwise

If you visit our website we will:

- Ensure the website and online facilities are easy for you to use
- Provide a facility for answering queries
- Endeavour to make all paper forms available on our website either as PDF format or an electronic form
- Ensure the information is accurate, easy to find and current
- Provide you with the means to leave comments about the website, the information provided, and how it can be improved.

If you write to us we will:

- Display opening times and details of how you can contact us
- Provide a response to your e-mail within 2 working days
- Provide a full reply within 5 working days for standard enquiries
- Send an acknowledgement straight away where a full reply needs further investigation due to its complexity. The acknowledgement will clearly state the timescale outlining when a full response can be expected (this should normally be within 20 working days)
- Keep our correspondence simple and easy to understand
- Tell you in our correspondence who is dealing with your enquiry
- Provide you with contact details and an enquiry number should you need further advice

If you visit us we will:

- Ensure all reception can be clearly identified and that they are welcoming, helpful and polite.
- Let you know how long it will be before someone can see you
- Aim to deal with your enquiry within 20 minutes or we will contact the appropriate service on your behalf if we are unable to deal with the enquiry directly
- Deal with you efficiently, listening carefully to what you tell us
- Provide you with clean, safe and comfortable surroundings
- Try to provide you with a confidential meeting area if this is required and where we are able to do so
- Try, wherever possible, to provide you with your preferred method of communication
- Endeavour to see you within 20 minutes when you do not have a pre-arranged appointment

If we visit you we will:

- Carry identification and show it straight away
- Be prompt
- Let you know as soon as possible if we are going to be late or miss an appointment
- Explain who we are and the purpose of the visit
- Tell you who to telephone if you want to confirm the identity of the visiting officer
- Do our best to make arrangements should, for any reason, you want a female or male officer to visit you
- Let you know what will happen next as a result of our visit

Complaints, Comments and Compliments

We want to hear from you if you have a complaint, or wish to make a comment or compliment. We will:

- Welcome all feedback
- Acknowledge within 5 working days
- Try to resolve complaints informally and as soon as possible
- Take all complaints very seriously
- Help you by taking your complaint details over the telephone
- Tell you if we need to deal with it under separate procedures, which may impact timescales
- Provide a full and final written response to you within 20 working days, or another timescale which we will have agreed with you
- We will learn from your comments and complaints using them to make service improvements.

Equality and Diversity

- We comply with the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and provide inclusive and accessible services and will make reasonable adjustments to address your individual needs. This includes a telephone interpreting service and access to signing and other interpretative services.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

We aim to:

- Ensure that all employees are appropriately trained
- Handle all information provided to us sensitively and confidentially
- Make sure your information is not be discussed with, or disclosed to, any unauthorised person
- Only ask you for information that is relevant
- Respond within 40 days to requests for access to your personal information, as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998
- Respond within 20 working days to request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Providing you with information

If we need to send you information following an enquiry we will:

- Ensure the information is accurate, up to date and relevant to your enquiry
- Provide it in an appropriate format and use plain English
- Ensure that it is sent to you within 2 working days
- Use the most cost effect method of communication by sending information by email and 2nd class mail

What we ask of you

We will aim at all times to meet the standards that we have set out above. In return we ask you to:

- Provide feedback
- Treat our staff with respect
- Be considerate and polite to other customers
- Provide us with all the information we need to help you
- Let us know if you have special needs
- Ask us to explain anything that you are not sure about
- Tell us where we can make improvements to our services