

# CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

We want to ensure all of our customers receive consistently high standards of customer service.

Our customers will be able to easily provide feedback about our services. We will seek to learn and improve from our data, your feedback and our complaints process.

## As part of our commitment to customers, we will always:

- Be courteous, helpful and honest in delivering services
- Be well informed so that we can help you
- Listen and respond to you when you need our assistance or complain
- Use language that is clear and easy to understand
- Treat everyone fairly with respect and dignity
- Make the best use of technology to enable you to do more yourself online
- Regularly ask our customers for feedback about our customer service
- Publish and use feedback to improve our services

## We would like you to:

- Treat our employees with courtesy and respect
- Keep appointments made for you or give us at least 24hrs notice if you need to rearrange
- Provide us with the information we need to deal with your enquiry
- Give us constructive feedback to help us improve

## Customer Service Standards - Written Enquiries (online / letter)

Enquiries will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

## A full response will be provided within agreed timescales:

- 10 working days for service enquiries, including Elected Member/ MSP/ MP enquiries
- Where a different or statutory timescale exists for an enquiry i.e., Freedom of Information request / regulatory investigation, then the associated timescale applies. However we will always advise you what the timescale is and why.

Where a full response cannot be given within the agreed timescales you will be kept up to date regularly and provided with anticipated timescales for a full response. Full responses will detail who has provided the response and their contact details. If we need to signpost you to another organisation we will provide their contact details.

## Customer Service Standards – Social Media

We will use our social media channels to communicate and engage with our communities. Some of our customers may choose to contact us directly through these channels.

We will read all of the messages and comments we receive. We may not reply to every comment, however, we will always listen to what you have said and act appropriately.

Where a member of the public is asking a direct question, we will aim to provide a response to that question within one working day. If we are unable to respond fully then we will contact you within three working days to confirm that your question has been picked up and we are getting a response. Repeated questions about a particular subject matter will not receive a further response where we consider we have already provided a full response.

If we feel your enquiry would be better handled by a service area, we may signpost you to them directly.

Depending on the nature of the enquiry we may ask you to send us a direct private message with further details. This may be relevant where personal details are concerned.

We provide a range of information and services online so we may signpost to our website for more information, an answer to a question or to one of our e-forms for you to report an issue. We will never ask you to share your personal details publicly over our social media channels.

## Customer Service Standards – Telephone

When your call is answered, you will always be informed that you have got through to West Dunbartonshire Council. If you are calling an individual service rather than our contact centre, you will be informed of the service and the name of the officer answering the call. We aim to answer 80% of calls made to our Contact Centre within three minutes.



If we need to put you through to someone else, we will put you through to the right person and tell you who you are being put through to and their contact details in case you get cut off.

If you need to communicate with us in a language other than English, we will help make arrangements to provide what you require.

If we advise we need to call you back, we will provide an anticipated timeframe for that call. We will agree a convenient time with you, within normal office hours. If we need to get back to you we will provide a full response within an agreed timescale.

If we are occasionally unable to take your call, an answerphone will be available. You will be greeted by a message advising which service the answerphone belongs to. If you need to leave a message on an answerphone, we will return your call before the end of the next working day.

## **Customer Service Standards – Face to Face**

There may be times when you are required to visit our offices. Many of our services operate by appointment only. Please check if you require an appointment before visiting our offices.

When you do visit our offices we will greet you as soon as you attend reception.

If you have attended the office for a meeting, or will be staying for a period of time, we will ask you to sign in and sign out again when you leave.

If you are disabled or need support we will ensure that you can access our services.

All employees you are meeting will introduce themselves and explain their role.

If you are attending a meeting, our employee will introduce themselves. You will be accompanied to a meeting room at the time of the meeting.

We will be on time for our appointments, in the event we are not, we will apologise and provide an explanation. If the meeting has to be cancelled or re-arranged we will let you know as soon as possible and at least 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place.

If you want to speak to our employee privately, this can be arranged and we will find a private meeting space.

## **Customer Service Standards – Complaints**

### **You should use the complaints procedure if you believe that:**

- We have done something wrong
- We have failed to do something that you expected
- We have not treated you with courtesy

Enquiry or complaint?

### **Some problems or enquiries are not complaints. Therefore you don't need to use the complaints procedure if:**

- You want to query a letter or bill
- You want to report a repair
- You want to ask about a council service
- You want to write to us objecting about a proposal
- There are also certain kinds of "appeals and reviews" that, by law, we must handle in a certain way. These include things like school admission appeals, housing benefit/council tax, social work appeals and homeless persons reviews. The service responsible will give you advice about these.

### **Our complaints process has 2 stages:**

Stage 1 allows five working days or less to resolve your complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not have been resolved at Stage 1 and/or those that are complex and require a detailed investigation.

### **We will:**

- treat your complaint fairly and ensure we thoroughly investigate it
- tell you the name of the officer handling your complaint
- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days
- discuss the complaint with you if necessary to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- provide you with a full response to your complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days
- If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, the Citizen Relations Team will tell you and agree revised time limits, we will keep you updated on progress where possible



**This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.**