



CORPORATE CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

Reviewed and updated 24 February 2016 - JC

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1. Introduction

We aim to deliver excellent services to everyone.

We set ourselves high standards of service and stretching performance targets and we continuously monitor how we do against these to make sure we continue to improve the quality of the services we provide. We want all our customers and stakeholders to let us know if they have any comments to make, good or bad on any of our services.

All City of Lincoln Council staff have a responsibility to ensure that the services provided to our customers meet the highest possible standards at all times.

Customers have been involved in agreeing the standards and are also involved in monitoring our performance against the standards set.

2. What Customers can expect from City of Lincoln Council Staff

The general principles of customer care that people can expect when contacting any area of the Council are:

We commit to:

- ◇ Greet you politely
- ◇ Treat you with respect
- ◇ Tell you who you are speaking to
- ◇ Listen to your views and seek to improve our services
- ◇ Try to resolve your problem when you first contact us
- ◇ If it is not possible to resolve your problem immediately we will, wherever possible, call you back or make an appointment for an officer to call at your home;

- ◇ Ensure that our offices and information are easily accessible to all
- ◇ Call you back when requested, where possible at an agreed time
- ◇ Aim to ensure that all our written communication is easy to understand
- ◇ Provide telephone-based language interpretation for customers who need it

- ◇ Ensure all our customer facing staff display a name badge

3. What we expect from our Customers

We have set out standards to provide customers with the best service we can. In return, we expect people to:

- ◇ Treat staff politely and courteously. Threatening or aggressive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.
- ◇ Provide us with the information we need to provide them with a service as soon as possible
- ◇ Read all information we send to them
- ◇ Ensure they attend all appointments made
- ◇ In line with our Health and safety policy we ask that customers refrain from smoking if we are visiting them at home. If customers do not comply with this we may need to cancel or terminate our visit
- ◇

4. Equality and Diversity

We are committed to service and employment practices that make sure no one is treated less favourably, disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their:

- ◇ Age
- ◇ Disability
- ◇ Race or Nationality
- ◇ Religion or Beliefs
- ◇ Gender or gender identity
- ◇ Marital or partnership status
- ◇ Sexual orientation
- ◇ Political affiliation
- ◇ Trade union membership or activity
- ◇ Maternity or Paternity

We are both an employer and a service provider, and will tackle equality issues appropriately in both of these roles. This commitment applies to employees, council members, contractors and job candidates as well as all of our customers and service users.

To help us eliminate all forms of unfair and unlawful discrimination, we follow these principles:

- ◇ We recognise diversity and people's diverse needs and preferences
- ◇ All people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- ◇ Our policies, procedures and practices are fair to all
- ◇ Everyone will have equality of access to our services
- ◇ All customer areas and meeting rooms have induction loops or access to our portable loops
- ◇ Our information will be available in other formats if appropriate. This includes large print, braille or audio. A telephone based translator will be available on request and arrangements will be made for sign language translation if needed

5. Customer Care Performance

We want to provide a service to residents which meets the highest possible standards at all times. We aim to ensure that we deal with all customer enquiries efficiently, effectively and courteously by doing the following things:

- ◇ Training our staff to deal with enquiries effectively;
- ◇ Staff giving their name when answering a call;
- ◇ Aiming to answer telephone calls as quickly as possible - with 30 seconds as the standard we measure ourselves against;
- ◇ Calling back when we promise to;
- ◇ Making the outcome of enquiries clear;
- ◇ Sending out all leaflets and forms requested by the end of the day
- ◇ Answering written correspondence within 10 working days
- ◇ Using plain English and discarding the Jargon
- ◇ Seeing visitors who arrive at our office without an appointment, within 20 minutes of their arrival; and seeing people with an appointment on time
- ◇ Offering personal interviews and appointments at a mutually agreeable time within 10 days (a separate standard exists for tenant repair appointments)

- ◇ Being polite at all times
- ◇ Being tidily dressed and wearing name badges/ having official I.D
- ◇ Offering a full range of services on our website for customer convenience
- ◇ Offering an interpretation service and accessible documents request
- ◇ Ensuring our offices are comfortable and accessible for all our customers
- ◇ If we cannot help with an enquiry, assist in finding someone who can

6. Monitoring our Performance

We will monitor our Customer Care performance in the following areas

- ◇ The average wait to be answered when calling our contact centre, and the percentage of telephone calls answered within 30 seconds
- ◇ The number of written enquiries dealt with and responded to in 10 working days
- ◇ The number of formal complaints received and the time taken to respond
- ◇ The number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman Service

7. Reporting Performance

We report the results of our performance monitoring against our Service Standards on our website at www.lincoln.gov.uk. We also publish regular summaries in Your Lincoln and Home magazine (for council tenants), and display performance posters in our reception areas

8. Commenting on a Service or Making a Complaint

We aim to get it right first time. However we are human and deal with thousands of enquiries each month, and can occasionally get things wrong. If we do fall short of your expectations or our service standards we will take action to put things right as quickly as possible.

- ◇ We welcome all comments on service delivery and view complaints as constructive feedback
- ◇ We will resolve complaints effectively, as quickly as possible
- ◇ We will help you to write down your complaint if you feel unable to put your formal complaint in writing
- ◇ We will advise you if your complaint should be more appropriately dealt with by way of statutory review or appeal and explain how to do this

- ◇ Wherever possible we try to resolve initial complaints informally
- ◇ We will respond formally to any formal complaint and will escalate unresolved complaints to a senior manager for a level II response.
- ◇ We will ensure that you are aware of your rights to take an unresolved complaint to a designated person or ombudsman as appropriate

10. Contact Details

Email: customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Tel: 01522 881188

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