

# Darlington Borough Council's Customer Charter

Darlington Council has devised a Customer Charter in consultation with residents and employees. It sets out the standard of services we aim to provide people, as well as what to do if those standards are not met.

## When you get in touch with us we will:

- Be welcoming and polite
- Tell you who we are and which service we work for
- Listen carefully to what you say
- Record your details accurately
- Give enough time to deal with your enquiry
- Deal with your query in a fair, helpful, respectful, friendly and efficient manner
- Resolve enquiries at the first point of contact where possible and do all we can to support you
- Explain what more information we need from you to help resolve your query
- Be prompt with our responses
- Provide correct information and explain things clearly
- Give you the details for the right organisation if your enquiry is not part of our business
- Provide a fair and unbiased service, regardless of your race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability
- Respect your legal rights under the Data Protection Act
- Treat all information in confidence and ask your permission to share it, unless we are legally bound to pass information on to others

## If you visit us we will:

- Provide opportunities for you to be consulted and give us feedback on how we are delivering our services
- Apologise if we make a mistake and correct it as quickly as possible
- Provide you with a full explanation if we are unable to give you what you are asking for.

- Welcome you on arrival

- Keep our reception areas warm, clean, tidy and comfortable

- Wear our identity badges so you know who we are
- Deal with you promptly keeping any delays down to a minimum (we aim to see 90% of visitors to the Customer Service Centre within ten minutes)
- Respect your privacy and see you in a private place if you prefer

- Offer an appointment if this is more suitable
- Ask your permission to answer the telephone should it ring whilst dealing with you

- Assist any visitors with particular access requirements

- Offer help with completing forms or with seating if you need it.

## If we visit you at home we will:

- Visit you at a time that is convenient for you where possible
- Identify ourselves and show you our identity badge

- Keep our appointment or make contact with you if we are delayed
- Respect your home.

## If you telephone us we will:

- Answer 80% of calls within 20 seconds
- Greet you with hello/good morning or afternoon, give you our name and which service you have contacted

- Try to answer your query. If we are unable to we will give you the contact details of the person who should be able to answer your query before we transfer you

- Take your contact details if the person you wish to speak to is unavailable and ask that person to make contact with you either the same day, if possible, or the next working day

- Only use voicemail when it is not possible for us to answer the telephone. If you leave a message we will either make contact the same day, if possible, or the next working day

## If you fax, e-mail or write to us we will:

- Provide a full response to 90% of letters, faxes and e-mails within ten working days, making reference to the date of your enquiry. If we are unable to do this we will write to give you a date when you can expect a full reply
- Use language which is clear to understand in our reply

- Include a contact name and direct telephone number to help you if you need any further information

- Use Braille, large print and different languages if you need us to.

Please note that if you make a request under Planning or Information Rights Legislation you will receive a response within the appropriate statutory timescales.