



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

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Derry City and Strabane District Council

Customer Service Charter



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Customer Service Charter

Why do we have a Customer Service Charter and what is it?

Derry City and Strabane District Council aims to provide quality, accessible and value for money services for all our communities, businesses, visitors, citizens and other stakeholders.

This Customer Service Charter sets out the standards of customer service you can expect from us when contacting the Council by telephone, by text-phone, by letter, by e-mail, through our website or in person.

If you feel that we are falling short of these standards, please let us know. (In specific areas, there are additional service specific standards which are identified in the annual service plans).

Standards Of Customer Service You Can Expect

At all times, we will:

- Treat you fairly and with respect;
- Offer a friendly and polite service and be sensitive to your needs;
- Deal with your letters, phone calls and visits to our offices promptly and in line with our Feedback and Complaints Policy;
- Do our best to help you;
- Let you know how quickly we can take action;
- Provide easy-to-understand, useful information and keep you up to date about the services we provide;
- Deal with your feedback positively and quickly;
- Keep your details confidential, as far as possible; and
- Make sure our staff have the skills they need to do their jobs properly and considerately.

Equality and Diversity

We will provide:

- Information in alternative formats (such as Braille, audio, minority languages) on request;
- Loop hearing systems in our public meeting areas;
- Access to signing and other interpretative services;
- Text phone facilities (028 71 376646)

Our staff will:

- Behave professionally and politely;
- Dress smartly;
- Wear a name badge or tell you who they are; and
- Show you their Council identification card when they visit your home or business.

Councillors

Councillors play an essential part in providing services to you.

They will:

- Behave professionally and politely;
- Present a good image of the Council;
- Be available at reasonable times;
- Respond to your phone calls, e-mails and correspondence promptly;
- Aim to respond personally to your letters in accordance with the time frames set out in the Feedback and Complaints Policy;
- To act in accordance with the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Our Reception Areas Will:

- Be accessible and welcoming;
- Be tidy, clean and safe; and
- Have useful information on display.

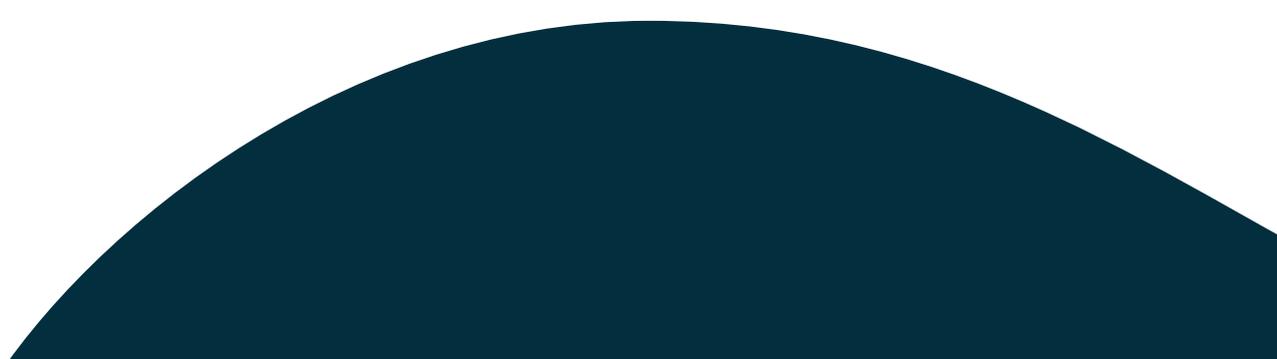
Customer Contact Arrangements

Our offices at 98 Strand Road, Derry and 47 Derry Road Strabane, will:

- Be open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday; and
- Deal with enquires relating to all service areas during our opening hours.

When Visiting Us At The Council Offices,

We will:

- Let you know how long you should expect to wait to see an officer;
 - Redirect your query to another appropriate officer if the initial contact officer is unavailable;
 - Deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible;
 - Arrange a private interview for you if you ask us;
 - Make an appointment to see a member of staff if you ask us or arrange for you to be contacted by the relevant officer.
 - See you promptly when you have an appointment and let you know if it is delayed; and
 - Arrange for an interpreter (by phone or in person depending on circumstances), or a Sign Language interpreter, if you need one.
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When Contacting Us By Telephone During Office Hours

We will:

- Answer the phone promptly;
- Tell you the service area and give you our name when we answer;
- If the person you need to speak to is not available we will either transfer you to an appropriate member of staff, give you the opportunity leave a voice mail message (if applicable) or arrange for the person to ring you back.
- Only use answer phones when there is no other member of staff available.
- Return your phone calls at the earliest opportunity.
- Use out of office voice mail messages when we are not available and give alternate contact details.

When Writing To Us Or Sending Us An e-mail

We will:

- Send an acknowledgment for all letters that we cannot respond to in accordance with departmental service standards;
- Let you know when you can expect a full reply if we cannot reply within 15 working days;
- Make sure we use language that is easy to read and understand;
- Tell you in our correspondences who is dealing with your enquiry; and
- Address responses using either Derry or Londonderry as used in your correspondence to us.

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, including complaints, and deal with it positively;
- Try to sort complaints out informally and as soon as possible;
- Help you to write down your complaint or take details over the phone;
- Display guidelines on customer-feedback (which include our complaints procedure) in all our offices; and
- Tell you, when we get your complaint, if we need to deal with it under separate procedures.

Details of how to make a comment, compliment or complaint are given in our “Guide to making Comments, Compliments or Complaints” which is available at all our offices and reception areas and via the council’s web-site www.derrystrabane.com. A copy can also be obtained by telephoning 028 71 253253 or via text-phone: 028 71 376646

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Data Protection And Freedom Of Information

If you ask for access to your personal information, as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998, we will respond within 40 calendar days.

If you request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we will respond within 20 working days unless an exemption applies where you will be notified

Council Contractors

All new contracts for services with other organisations will include a customer care clause requiring the organisation to comply with the Council's Service Standards.

When Reviewing Or Changing The Facilities And Services That We Provide

We will:

- Provide information to the local community;
- Consult with existing and potential service users and any other interested stakeholders;
- Carry out impact assessments as necessary; and
- Seek to provide customer-centered, value for money solutions.

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:

- Treat our staff with respect;
- Be considerate and polite to other customers; and
- Supply us with more information, if we ask you to.

This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats (CD, MP3, DAISY) and other minority languages.

For further information on alternative formats please contact

tel: 028 7125 3253

text phone: 028 7137 6646 or

e-mail: equality@derrystrabane.com

www.derrystrabane.com

