

Nottinghamshire County Council

Customer Service Standards

June 2023

Why do we have Customer Service Standards?

Nottinghamshire County Council aims to deliver high standards of customer care and service to all residents that use or experience our service(s).

Every employee is personally responsible for providing good customer service.

People will form their view of the Council from their own personal experience of how we as an organisation serve them.

We need to aim to get it right - ***first time - every time.***

Our standards are simple, user friendly and measurable. They apply to both staff and residents and outline what you can expect from Nottinghamshire County Council staff when contacting the Council by telephone, e-mail, the website, using electronic forms, or via any other channel, including in person.

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

Complaints, Comments and Compliments are valued and welcomed – if we don't know where we are going wrong, then we cannot make it right.

[Comments, compliments, and complaints | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

Standards of Customer Service you can expect

At Nottinghamshire County Council we will:

- Treat customers fairly; with respect and consideration
- Be polite, helpful, open, and honest
- Listen and respond positively to what you are telling us
- Do what we say we are going to do
- Give you choice over how you access services
- Communicate clearly and understandably without using confusing jargon and acronyms
- Be open and transparent, keeping you updated regularly on progress
- Explain our decision making in a way that you can easily understand
- Make the best use 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 complaints, comments, and compliments positively and within specified timelines and use the information you provide to improve our service delivery
- Respect your confidentiality and safeguard your personal information
- Let you know how quickly if there will be a delay in responding to your enquiry or resolving your complaint
- Connect you with services who can help you if you do not need our service
- Ensure you can access information, advice, and services easily and we meet legislation relating to accessibility standards

If you telephone us, we will:

- Aim to answer calls within 30 seconds
- At the customer service centre, we aim to answer 80% of calls within 30 seconds
- Provide you with the service area and who you are speaking to
- Provide you with appropriate contact details should you need to get back in touch
- Return your phone calls on the same day or, if this is not possible, arrange a convenient time to re-contact you.
- Call you back if we have promised to do so.
- Try to deal with your enquiry at the first point of contact. If this is not possible, we will pass your enquiry 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 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 you can access information, advice, guidance about our services easily and that our website meets legislative requirements in terms of accessibility standards
- Have a feedback mechanism in place for you to provide improvement suggestions
- Provide a facility for answering queries relating to the website
- Make papers available on our website either in a PDF format or word document (and ensure these meet accessibility standards)
- Provide information about how to contact us, across all channels
- Ensure the information is accurate, easy to find and current

If you write to us via email or letter, we will:

- Provide an acknowledgement to your e-mail or letter within 2 working days of receiving it
- Provide a full reply within 5 working days for standard enquiries (this may be different with some statutory services and, if it is, we will advise you of these response times)
- In more complex cases, we will acknowledge your request and will clearly state when you will get a full response (this will normally be within 20 working days)
- Keep our correspondence simple and easy to understand
- Tell you in our correspondence who will be dealing with your enquiry
- Provide you with contact details and an enquiry number should you need further advice

If you visit one of our public buildings, we will:

- Ensure all reception points are clearly identified
- Ensure that reception staff are welcoming, helpful, and polite.
- Deal with you professionally and efficiently
- Try, wherever possible, to provide you with your preferred method of communication
- Give you an indication of how long it will be before someone can see you
- If we are unable to deal with the enquiry at the location, we will direct you to the appropriate service and building where support can be offered
- Provide you with clean, safe, and comfortable surroundings

If we visit you in your home, we will:

- Carry identification and show it straight away
- Be prompt
- Let you know as soon as possible if there will be a delay or unable to attend the appointment
- Explain who we are and the purpose of the visit
- If needed, tell you who to telephone if you want to confirm the identity of the visiting officer
- Let you know what will happen next

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 and act on all feedback provided to us
- Acknowledge your communication within 2 working days
- Try to resolve complaints informally and as soon as possible
- Take all complaints seriously
- Help you by taking your complaint details over the telephone
- Tell you if we need to deal with it under our statutory procedures, which may impact timescales. If this is likely, we will make you aware
- Provide a full written response to you within 20 working days, or another timescale which we will have discussed and agreed with you
- We will learn from all comments and complaints and use them to make improvements.

Equality and Diversity

We aim to provide:

- Inclusive and accessible services
- Telephone interpreting service
- Access to signing and other interpretative services

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

We will:

- Ensure that all employees are appropriately trained
- Handle all information provided to us sensitively and confidentially
- Make sure your information is not discussed with, or disclosed to, any unauthorised person
- Only ask you for information that is relevant to your enquiry
- Respond within 3 months to requests for access to your personal information, as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If the request is for straightforward information, you may receive it within 1 month.
- Respond within 20 working days to request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (unless the Public Interest Test applies, which allows us more time – we will let you know if this is the case).

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 we do not use jargon in our response
- Use the most cost effective method of communication by sending information via text, email, and 2nd class mail

What we ask of you

We will aim to meet the standards that we have set out above.

In return we ask you to:

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