

## **Central Bedfordshire Customer Charter**

### **Vision / commitment**

We are committed to providing you with an excellent customer experience when you use our services. We will provide you with a high quality accessible service that meets your needs.

### **What Can You Expect?**

This Charter sets out the standards that we aim to follow in order to provide you with the highest possible standard of customer service, no matter how you choose to contact us.

As a Council we will:

- Always treat our customers fairly
- Be professional, open and honest
- Expect our employees to be focused on our customers' needs
- Listen and respond to the needs of each customer, treating everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect
- Treat any information you give us on a strictly confidential basis, within the law
- Respond quickly and efficiently to requests for service and information
- Keep you informed so you know what to expect, explaining what we will do next, and by when
- Use clear non technical language
- Work with our partners and contractors to ensure they commit to our standards so that every customer receives the best possible service
- Seek and act on feedback received to continuously improve our service delivery

### **Services for all**

We are committed to delivering services to everyone living in, working in or travelling through Central Bedfordshire without discrimination, prejudice or bias on the grounds of :

- Age or disability
- religion or belief
- colour, race or ethnic background
- Gender, marital status or sexual orientation

### **Accessibility of information**

Information on all Council services can be made available in the following additional formats on request

- Audio cassette tape
- Braille
- Larger print
- In another language

A translation or interpretation service is available when needed to ensure information about Council services is available to all customers

**In all your dealings with us, you have a right to :**

- See personal information we hold about you under the Data Protection Act 1998; and
- Ask us for any information we hold that may be available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Our Service Standards**

Set out below you will find the expectations we have set ourselves for responding to your enquiries

**Contact by Telephone**

We will provide you with a friendly, professional, efficient service and we aim to :

- Answer your call within 20 seconds
- Tell you our name when we answer
- Answer your enquiry immediately or, where this is not possible identify who is able to answer your enquiry and provide you with their details
- Connect you to the right extension first time
- Ask if you want to speak to someone else or leave a message if the person you are calling is not available
- Advise you when you can expect a response from us

**Visits to our offices**

We aim to provide you with as many services as possible in a location convenient to you and we will :

- Greet you within 2 minutes of your arrival
- See you within 5 minutes of your appointment time where you have an appointment,
- Ensure you are seen by a Customer Service Advisor who can deal with your enquiry within 10 minutes of your arrival, where you do not have an appointment
- Arrange for a private interview room if necessary
- Provide suitable and comfortable waiting areas

## **Contact by E mail, letter and fax**

We will respond to you via your chosen method of communication and we aim to:

- Acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within 1 working day
- Provide a full response to your enquiry within 5 working days or
- Tell you if your enquiry relates to statutory timescales which will take longer to provide a full response or we are unable to meet this target and when we will be giving a response
- Reply using plain, jargon free language

## **Our Website**

We aim to make it easy for you to find the information you want at a time that is convenient to you and we will

- Ensure that our website information is accurate and up to date
- Let you make payments, fill in forms and get information on all Council services
- Ensure that our website is accessible to all our customers, by providing speech software and visually compliant pages

## **Visits to customers homes / business premises**

We appreciate that it is sometimes necessary for us to visit you and we will :

- provide you, where appropriate, in advance with the name and contact details of the person visiting you
- Agree an appointment time, where appropriate, with you and will keep you informed if a delay occurs
- Show identification cards, with our names and photograph, on arrival and give you the opportunity to check our identity (please do not let anyone into your home unless you know them or have checked their identity)

## **Help us to help you**

We are committed to delivering a high quality service to all our customers and ask that in return, you :

- Let us know about any changes in your personal circumstances that may affect the service we provide for you
- Let us know if you have any special needs so that we can provide the right help
- Let us know if you cannot keep an appointment

- Treat our staff and other customers with respect. Our staff, partners and contractors will not tolerate abusive or violent behaviour and action will be taken as appropriate to address any such situations

### **Listening to our customers**

Our aim is to help you in the best way we can. We want to ensure that our service standards meet your requirements and will listen and act on any complaint, comment or compliment that you wish to make.

- A formal feedback process is available by contacting our Customer Services team by telephone, in person or via e mail. The process is also available on our website. Issues relating to schools must be directed to the school. Please contact the relevant form teacher or Head of Year
- Social Care feedback may be subject to a different procedure. Please do contact us if you would like any further information

Customer satisfaction surveys and feedback are a valuable method of seeking your comments. These are regularly distributed to people who live in, work in and travel though Central Bedfordshire.

Comments can be made to any member of staff, by telephone, in person or by e mail or by completing or requesting a customer comment card. We will monitor customer feedback and learn from it.

### **Contact us**

This Charter must continue to develop and change to meet the needs of our customers. If you have any comments or ideas, please contact

Head of Customer Services  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Priory House  
Chicksands  
Shefford  
Beds  
SG17 5TQ

0300 300 8000

e mail [customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)