

Environmental Health & Housing Customer Charter



THE SERVICE

We provide a range of services which are aimed at:-

- Improving public health and reducing inequalities in health.
- Protecting the environment.
- Conserving natural resources.

The scope of our environmental health services is shown below:-



SEE SEPERATE CHARTER FOR HOUSING ADVICE

We have been awarded the prestigious Chartermark Award for excellent customer care and quality of service. Chartermark is the national standard for customer service in the public sector, encouraging public services to be the very best.

CONTACTING US

When you contact us we will:

- Be approachable, helpful and considerate
- treat you with courtesy and politeness
- listen and understand customer needs
- treat all customers equally

You can contact us in any of the following ways:



By **telephoning** the Customer Service Centre on **01271 388870**.

- 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
- We aim to answer 93% of all telephone calls within 6 rings (20 seconds)
- When we speak to you we will say good morning or afternoon, give the name of the service or person you are speaking to and ask how we can help you.
- If we cannot help you immediately we will let you know who you have been speaking to and when we will contact you
- If your call needs to be transferred to another section, the details of your enquiry will be passed on
- We aim to answer all messages left on answer machines within 24 hours (Monday to Friday)
- If you leave a message on an answer machine and it is likely to take more than 24 hours, the message will tell you when we will contact you.
- **Out of hours standby service** operates out of normal office hours for emergencies only. Should you need to take advantage of this service, the standby officer can be contacted on **01271 388240**. The standby officer will confirm whether or not immediate attendance is required.



In **person** :-

- 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
- Location: Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Barnstaple.
- Appointments are not always necessary. However, you may write or telephone to check availability if you wish to see a particular officer.
- We aim to see 80% of callers within 15 minutes of visiting one of our reception areas
- All staff will wear name badges
- You will be seen in a private place if requested
- Area Offices in Ilfracombe & South Molton – if you want to see an Officer, please telephone the Customer Service Centre in the first instance (**01271 388870**) to ensure availability. The Service Centre teams will answer general enquiries or refer to an Officer where technical input is required.



In **writing** to the Head of Environmental Health & Housing Services, Civic Centre, Barnstaple, North Devon, EX31 1EA.

- We aim to reply to 98% of letters within 10 working days
- Where we are unable to respond in the above time, we will advise when a response can be expected and who is dealing with the matter
- Responses will be typed and easy to understand



By **computer** by sending us an e-mail:

customerservices@northdevon.gov.uk

- We aim to reply to 100% of email requests for service within 1 working day.
- Where we are unable to respond in the above time, we will advise when a response can be expected and who is dealing with the matter
- Responses will be typed and easy to understand

WHEN YOU CONTACT US

We understand that on occasions, you may contact us when you feel upset or angry about something that is affecting you or where you feel our involvement hasn't gone as outlined in this Customer Charter. In the latter case, please refer to the **Putting Things Right Section** of the Customer Charter.

However, when you are feeling emotive, upset or angry about something, please help us to help you by treating our staff courteously and respectfully at all times, whether in person or by telephone.

Our staff are not expected to tolerate situations that become verbally abusive or out of control. It is usually impossible to be constructive at these times.

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

We will tell you when we are reaching our standards through the local press, in our reception area, on the Council's website at www.northdevon.gov.uk and in the Council newspaper.

For all our different types of "Requests for Service" we have established target times for: -

- How quickly our officers should make contact with our customers.
- How quickly the issue should be resolved.

We will report on our achievements against these standards as defined in our Service Plan. Information on our standards of service is also available on our Website or by telephoning the Customer Service Centre on **01271 388870**.

The Unit has signed up to the Regulatory Compliance Code and our enforcement policies have been adopted by Committee following public consultation.

The rights of our customers, following any enforcement action, e.g. rights of appeal, etc., will always be fully explained.

A copy of our enforcement policy will be made available on request.

LEGISLATION

Much of the work of the Unit is highly prescribed by statute. Our regulatory duties and service responsibilities are principally carried out under the provisions of the following pieces of legislation: -

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Act 1985/2004
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (various)
- Public Health Act 1936
- Licensing Act 2003
- Gambling Act 2005

NEW IDEAS AND IMPROVEMENTS

We will routinely undertake customer satisfaction surveys to help improve our services. These surveys will also be used to ensure that our services are delivered in an equitable fashion throughout the district.

Our officers will give our customers an expectation of our service at the onset of all investigations.

A comprehensive list of the Service's established target times can be made available on application to the Environmental Health Manager.

We will take into account your views and give feedback through the local press, Council's newspaper, website and in reception areas.

Our objective is to deliver as many services/provide information at a time convenient to the customer – 24 hours a day wherever possible. The service is developing on-line applications for key areas of service, such as Licensing; and hopes to phase these in during the 2007/2008 financial year.

PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

We intend to get things right first time, but if things do go wrong we want you to feel comfortable about challenging us and making a complaint.

You can make a complaint by contacting the service direct by any of the methods previously listed, or you can ring the Complaints Officer in Customer Services on **01271 388444**.

We will acknowledge all complaints received within 3 working days and send a full response within 10 working days.

Should the response be longer than 10 working days we will contact you and let you know when we will be able to reply.

If you are unhappy with the response, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed. This will normally be undertaken by Customer Services.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you would like this information or any information we produce to be provided in alternative languages, in braille or on audio tape, please contact Customer Services on **01271 388260** or e-mail us on customerservices@northdevon.gov.uk

We aim to provide this information within 15 working days of any request. We will let you know if this is likely to take longer.

REVIEW

Our service charter will be reviewed as part of the yearly 'service planning cycle' within the Authority.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information on any of the services we provide or have any comments about how this Charter could be improved, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01271 388870.

This Charter was revised on 3rd September, 2008

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