

Customer Care Standards



Introduction

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is committed to providing the efficient and effective delivery of first class services to all its customers. We aim to deliver services in an inclusive and fair manner, without discrimination, prejudice or bias.

We aim to deliver the following standards (and any other customer care standards that we are legally obliged to follow, e.g. Freedom of Information, the right of citizens to request information from the authority) whenever and however you contact us.

We aim to try to ensure that when we are working in partnership, our service is delivered to the same high standards.



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
We want our customers to feel:	3
We will do our best to provide services and information in ways that make them accessible for everyone, including the provision of:.....	4
If you contact us by telephone:.....	5-6
If you contact us by letter, e-mail, text or fax:.....	7-8
If you visit us:	9
If we visit you:.....	10
Compliments, comments and complaints about services.....	11
Monitoring.....	12
Your responsibility	13
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Something to tell us?	14-15

If you would like this document in large print, different language or in an alternative format please contact 01493 846512



We want our customers to feel:

- that they are treated fairly, honestly, respectfully and in a polite and courteous manner.
- that they are made aware that services are accessible to everyone.
- that they are listened to carefully when they are talking to us.
- that we use plain English when we speak or write.
- that they are made aware of our decisions and that the reasons for them are fully explained.
- that they understand our confidentiality procedures. Neither we nor our partners will discuss your personal information with anyone else unless, the law requires us to or statutory obligations dictate that we must share information.
- that our standards are in line with customer needs and requirements.
- that our standards are what our customers want.

We will do our best to provide services and information in ways that make them accessible for everyone, by providing:

- S1 an interpreter for you to speak to us face to face or over the phone, including a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.
- S2 information in a number of formats on request – for example: audio tape, Braille, large print or an appropriate language, within two weeks.
- S3 public meetings in accessible venues, with the use of an induction loop or other suitable system for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; these are available at reception facilities in addition to meeting rooms.
- S4 our aim is to provide contact details in all our published documents.

If you contact us by telephone:

S5 we will offer dedicated service numbers for Revenues and Benefits, Planning, Environmental Health and Housing Repairs direct to its Contact Centre in order to reduce waiting times. The call will be automatically routed to the most appropriately trained Customer Service Advisor to deal with the enquiry.

S6 we will answer more than 60% of calls at the first point of contact. When contacting Customer Services you will hear a recorded message which will keep you informed of your position in the queue, your anticipated waiting time and, where relevant, the best times of the day to call us.

When dialling a service department directly your call will either be answered within 5 rings or diverted to voicemail, offering you the opportunity to leave a message for the officer to call you back.

S7 we will greet you courteously and let you know which service you are through to.

S8 between 9 - 5 a member of staff will deal with your telephone enquiry during the normal working hours of the office or service you are calling, these are currently 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. The first Thursday of every month is used

for staff training purposes and therefore all offices are closed from 3.00pm.

- S9 customers can contact the Council through the Customer and Business enquiry number.
- S10 for ongoing matters customers are able to contact officers by direct dial line.
- S11 if a person is not available, we will use voice mail and check these twice daily, so that we can respond.
- S12 if we have to pass on your call, we will make sure it goes to the right person and we will explain your enquiry or request to them before we pass it on.
- S13 we will take any messages with care, where possible we will tell you the name of the member of staff we are forwarding your message to.
- S14 we will try to give you a full answer to your telephone enquiry immediately, or if this is not possible, respond fully within 3 working days.
- S15 when we telephone you, we will give you our name, tell you we are calling from Great Yarmouth Borough Council and explain clearly why we are phoning.

If you contact us by letter, e-mail, text or fax:

S16 we will try to give you a full answer within 5 working days of the date of receipt. We will either acknowledge your communication or respond in full, no more than 5 working days after you contact us. If you can give us a phone number or e-mail address to respond to, it could help to speed up our reply.

SMS Text - we will try to give you a full answer as soon as possible. This should be no more than 5 working days after you contact us.

S17 we will keep you informed of progress regarding your query, and give you the name and telephone number of the person who is dealing with it.

S18 if we can't meet the 5 day target in S16, we will give a full answer to enquiries, no more than 20 working days after you contact us.

S19 there will be some circumstances when we are not able to give you a full answer in 20 working days – for example, with some complex enquiries or where we need to make a visit, or request information from someone else. If so, we will keep you informed of what we are doing, including the date by which we hope to give you a full answer.



S20 we will use plain English and printed text in typeface Arial 12 point size or larger, in our letters, e-mails and faxes, wherever possible.

If you visit us:

- S21 and you want an appointment we will ask you if you have any special requirements.
- S22 we will see you within 5 minutes of your appointment time, it is very helpful if you arrive a few minutes early. If you are delayed, or have to cancel, please notify reception and they will offer you an alternative appointment time if appropriate.
- S23 and we are delayed we will explain why, tell you how long you may have to wait and, if the wait is anticipated to be longer than 30 minutes, give you the option of coming back on an alternative date and at a time convenient for you.
- S24 we will provide a clean, tidy and comfortable waiting area, with information about our services, access to our website and, where possible, facilities for children and toilets.
- S25 we will provide a place to discuss matters in private, if you wish.
- S26 you do not have to come alone to your appointment, you are welcome to bring someone with you.

If we visit you:

- S27 we will agree a time with you in advance and where this is not possible, we will be happy to return at another time, if our visit is not convenient. If necessary, we will let you know as soon as possible, if we are delayed or have to cancel the visit.
- S28 we will say who we are, where we come from and why we are calling. We will show you our identity card before you invite us in.
- S29 we will give you the opportunity to make a phone call to check our identity before we come in. (Please do not let anyone into your home unless you know them, or have checked their identity).

Once you have contacted the office, you will be able to request a password, which can then be verified by the visiting officer, before you allow them to enter your property.

Compliments, comments and complaints about services

We welcome all comments about our services and use them to improve the way we do things. To help us respond, we will follow the Great Yarmouth Borough Council corporate Comments and Compliments Procedure – for more information see our leaflet or visit our website:

www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-departments/complaints.htm

We will:

- S30 pass compliments and comments on to the members of staff concerned as soon as possible.
- S31 register complaints made by letter, e-mail, fax, phone or in person.
- S32 acknowledge your comment or complaint by phone, letter or e-mail.
- S33 respond to all complaints within 5 days; either with a full explanation, or to request further information.
- S34 we will resolve the matter in full within 20 working days.

Monitoring

S35 we will monitor all of these Customer Care Standards and inform customers of the levels of service, on a monthly basis.

The information will be broken down by Department and Service Unit, where necessary, to ensure that customers are fully informed and aware of service levels, targets and trends.

Information will be published on monthly performance indicators and are available to view by visiting our website at:

www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk

Alternatively, these will be on display in our offices.

Your responsibility

Great Yarmouth Borough Council and partners working on our behalf, do not tolerate abusive and violent behaviour towards our staff.

These circumstances are very rare, but our staff are not expected to stay in situations where they:

- feel threatened, either verbally or physically.
- fear for their own safety, that of colleagues or members of the public.

You should be aware that:

- other members of the public may be upset by your behaviour or language.
- if you shout there may be other customers who may hear what you say and they are not bound by confidentiality rules.

Something to tell us?

It could be about our services or the way you have been treated...

Want to contact us?

We aim to provide you with excellent services but we know there is always room for improvement and that sometimes we get it wrong.

Our Comments & Complaints Procedure is there to help us improve our services, to put things right or even to tell us that we have done something well.

So please tell us what you think. Either:

use our complaints form (available at all counters, or in the centre of this booklet)

write to us at:

**Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
NR30 2QF**

telephone us on (01493) 856100

send us a fax on (01493) 846332

e-mail us on comments@great-yarmouth.gov.uk

Comments

We welcome your comments, whether they are positive or negative, whether they are about a specific service, or the way we have treated you. Within five working days of receiving your comment, we will let you know who is dealing with it.

Complaints

If you feel we have not come up to your expectations, please let us know.

If you speak to one of our staff, they will try and deal with the matter there and then. If they cannot, or if you have written to us, we will contact you within five working days, either for more information, to report on progress or to give you an explanation. We will do our best to resolve the matter within twenty working days.

Our service managers deal with complaints. If you are unhappy with their decision, we will refer the matter to one of our Executive Directors, or ultimately to the Managing Director.

If you are not happy with our response, you may wish to contact the Local Government Ombudsman, who investigate complaints of maladministration against local authorities. You can contact the Ombudsman directly at:

The Oaks, No 2 Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park, Coventry CV4 8JB
Tel: 024 7682 0000, Fax: 024 7682 0001

More information on the Ombudsman is available at all our counters, or telephone the Ombudsman Adviceline on 0845 602 1983.

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Index

Introduction	1
We want our customers to feel:	3
We will do our best to provide services and information in ways that make them accessible for everyone, including the provision of:.....	4
If you contact us by telephone:.....	5-6
If you contact us by letter, e-mail, text or fax:.....	7-8
If you visit us:	9
If we visit you:.....	10
Compliments, comments and complaints about services.....	11
Monitoring.....	12
Your responsibility	13
<hr/>	
Something to tell us?	14-15
Comments & Complaints Form	Centrepage Insert

