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# Customer Service Standards

At Torbay Council we are committed to putting the customer first and at the centre of everything we do. We want to ensure that all of our customers receive consistently high standards of customer service, that customers are able to easily provide feedback about our services and that any feedback is considered to help inform service change and improvement.

As part of our commitment to you, we will always:

* Be courteous, helpful, open and honest in delivering high quality services
* Be professional and positive in our approach
* Be well informed, so that we can help you
* Listen and respond to you when you have a query, are dissatisfied or complain
* Use language that it clear and easy to understand
* Treat everyone fairly and equally with respect and dignity.

# Customer Service Standards - Written Enquiries (web forms / email / letter)

Enquiry should be acknowledged within 3 working days

Full response should be provided within agreed timescales:

* 5 working days for Member / MP enquiries
* 10 working days for service enquiries
* Where a different or statutory timescale exists for an enquiry i.e., Freedom of Information request / regulatory investigation, then the associated timescale applies. However we will always advise you what the timescale is and why.

Where a full response cannot be given within the agreed timescales you will be kept up to date regularly and provided with anticipated timescales for a full response.

Where an officer is going to be away from the office for a period of time e.g., on holiday, an ‘out of office’ message will be sent informing you when they are expected back and if there is an alternative email address for contact.

Full responses will detail who has provided the response and their contact details.

If we need to signpost you to another organisation or department we will provide their contact details.

# Customer Service Standards – Social Media

We will use our social media channels to communicate and engage with our communities, we also understand that some of our customers may choose to contact us directly through these channels.

We read all of the messages and comments we receive. Though we may not reply to every comment, we will always listen to what you have said, and act as appropriate

General comments on our posts will not receive a response.

Where a member of the public is asking a direct question, we will aim to provide a response to that question within 3 working days, if we are unable to respond fully then we will contact you within 3 working days to confirm that your question has been picked up and we are getting a response.

Repeated questions about a particular subject matter will not receive a response where we consider we have already provided a response.

If we feel your enquiry would be better handled by a service area, we may sign post you to speak with them directly.

Depending on the nature of the enquiry we may ask you to send us a direct private message with further details.

If you are requesting information held by the Council then we may direct to you to make a Freedom of Information request.

We provide a range of information and services online so we may be signposted to our website for more information, an answer to a question or to one of our e-forms for you to report an issue.

We will never ask you to share your personal detail publicly over our social media channels.

# Customer Service Standards – Telephone

When your call is picked up, you will always be informed that you have got through to Torbay Council. If you are calling an individual department rather than the call centre, you will be informed of the department and the name of the officer answering the call.

We aim to answer 85% of calls made to the call centre.

If we need to put you through to someone else, we will put you through to the right person and tell you who you are being put through to and their contact details in case you get cut off.

If you need to communicate with us in a language other than English, we will help make arrangements to provide an interpretation service.

If we advise we need to call you back, we will provide an anticipated timeframe for that call and stick to it. We will find a mutually convenient time with you, within normal office hours.

If we need to get back to you we will provide a full response with agreed timescales:

* 5 working days for Member / MP enquiries
* 10 working days for service enquiries

Where a full response cannot be given you will be kept up to date regularly and provided with anticipated timescales for a full response.

Full responses will detail who has provided the response and their contact details.

If we are unable to take your call, an answerphone will be available. You will be greeted by a message advising which department the answerphone belongs to.

If you need to leave a message on an answerphone, we will return your call before the end of the next working day.

# Customer Service Standards – Face to Face

Whilst we no longer have connections offices there may be times when you are required to visit our offices for example to attend meetings.

We will greet you as soon as possible, if a receptionist is on the phone, we will greet you as soon as we finish on the call.

If you have attended the office for a meeting, or will be staying on site for a period of time we will ask you to sign in and sign out again when you leave.

We will give you our full attention.

If you have a disability or need additional support accessing our facilities / buildings, we will aim to provide what you need.

If you need to communicate with us in a language other than English, we will help make arrangements to provide an interpretation service.

If you are attending a meeting, the member of staff greeting you will introduce themselves.

If you are coming to our offices for a meeting, you will be met and taken to the meeting room on time (at the time of the meeting).

We will be on time for our appointments, in the event that we are not we will apologise and provide an explanation.

All members of staff you are meeting will introduce themselves and explain their role.

If the meeting has to be cancelled or re-arranged we will let you know as soon as practicable and ideally at least 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place.

If you want to speak to a member staff privately, this can be arranged and we will find a private meeting space.

You will be provided with written information following a meeting with a member of staff which sets out what was agreed, this will be provided within 3 working days, unless we advise you otherwise.