

# Our Customer Service Charter

Our aim .....	1
What you can do to help us? .....	3
Customer feedback – Our procedures .....	4
What do you think about our services? .....	4
Compliments .....	4
Complaints .....	5
Contact us .....	5

## Our aim

**Orkney Islands Council is committed to providing high quality services and delivering high standards of customer service.**

As a customer of Orkney Islands Council, you have the right to be treated fairly and considerately when using any of our services whether in person, by phone, in writing, by email or via our website. These standards outline the level of service you should expect and gives you the opportunity to challenge us if we do not deliver them.

All Council staff will deal with you as an individual and ensure that you are treated fairly.

When dealing with customers, we will:

- Be polite, friendly and helpful.
- Wear identity badges at all times.
- Use plain language when talking or writing to you.
- Offer you choices in how you contact us to get information or request services.
- Take responsibility for your enquiry and either deal with it ourselves at the first point of contact or find the appropriate person to help you.
- Provide a fair, efficient, consistent and confidential service.
- Comply with the Data Protection Act at all times, only sharing information about you if you say we can, if we are permitted to do so by law or, if not doing so, would put you or someone else at risk.
- Look for ways to continuously improve our service to you and learn from any feedback including surveys, comments and complaints.
- Monitor regularly that the terms of our Charter are being delivered to you.
- Make the best use of technology to enable service improvements.
- Ensure that our staff are fully trained and their skills are kept up to date.

If you contact us by phone, we will:

- Welcome you to Orkney Islands Council and give you the opportunity to enter the extension number that you require so that you can get straight through to the member of staff you wish to speak to.
- If you prefer to hold for a switchboard operator, we will aim to answer your calls to the switchboard within 6 rings and greet you with “Good Morning/Good Afternoon, Switchboard”.
- Aim to answer calls to extension numbers within 6 rings and tell you who you are speaking to and the service/team that we work in.
- Listen to you carefully so that your query is dealt with appropriately and/or your call is transferred to the correct person.
- If the line is engaged or the person that you require is unavailable, you will be offered the chance to hold, be transferred to someone to take a message or in some cases some extension numbers have voicemail so you will be able to leave a message on this if required.
- Always pass on full details of your call if we have to transfer your query to someone else.
- Specify when we will get back to you if we are unable to give you an answer straight away.

If you contact us in person, Customer Services staff will:

- Make sure that our customer service reception areas are accessible and make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.
- Display our opening hours and emergency numbers for when we are closed.
- Aim to greet you at our main reception area within 5 minutes of your arrival.
- Get the correct person through to see you and keep you informed if there is any delay.
- Offer you a private meeting room if required. However, if you prefer a meeting desk in our open plan area, this can also be arranged.
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages and formats.
- Ensure that customers accessibility needs are met e.g. making sure we use a hearing loop for someone with a hearing impairment.
- Provide you with a receipt for a document on request if required.
- Deal with queries at the first point of contact, wherever possible.
- Display up-to-date information in a prominent position in our reception area. This will include details of:
  - our Customer Service Standards
  - our Comments Cards to enable you to provide feedback on our service delivery
  - our ‘Annual Performance Report’ which details how we have done over the past year
  - Orkney Islands Council’s ‘Our Plan’ which outlines our 5 year plan

- our Complaints procedure

If you email, use our website enquiry service or write to us, we will:

- Aim to acknowledge your enquiry within 5 working days of receipt, and respond with a full reply as quickly as possible, and no later than 20 working days. If we can't give a full response within 20 working days, we will contact you and explain why.
- Use plain English in our reply.
- We will use the standard letterhead templates for all our correspondence which includes a name, contact telephone number and email address of the person dealing with your enquiry.
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages and formats.
- Exercise discretion in respect of circulated letters and vexatious correspondence.

## **What you can do to help us?**

There are ways that you can help us to help you. When you phone us or call in at our offices, it will help if you:

- Have with you any letters or documents which relate to your enquiry and by giving us any information we ask for.
- Tell us about any changes in personal circumstances that may affect the services provided to you.
- Let us know if you might need information in a different language or format.
- Let us know if you have particular access needs.
- Attend appointments on time, or let us know if you will be late or can't attend as this will help us to keep waiting times to a minimum for all customers.
- Can be patient, as sometimes offices and phone lines are very busy and we will do all we can to keep waiting times to a minimum.
- When telephoning, give us the extension number, name of the person or the service that you would like to speak to.
- Tell us how we can improve our service.

**The Council has respect for all its customers and employees and our aim is to provide all our customers with a high level of service. You can help us by:**

- Treating our staff with respect.
- Not using bad language, being abusive, or acting in a threatening manner.
- Respecting the privacy of other customers.
- Remembering that we are here to help and assist you.

## Customer feedback – Our procedures

### What do you think about our services?

We aim to provide quality services that meet the needs of our customers and maintain and improve our standards.

To do this, we rely on feedback from all our customers to ensure that we are doing what we say we will do and to help us to make improvements to our services.

If you feel we have fallen short of our standards, we want to know where things have gone wrong, so that we can put them right and also improve our services. We will deal fairly and effectively with anyone wanting to make a complaint.

You can:

- Visit us online at [https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/Contact\\_Us/Contact-Us-Online.htm](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/Contact_Us/Contact-Us-Online.htm).
- Visit either of our Customer Services offices at Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall or Warehouse Buildings, 2-12 Victoria Street, Stromness where we will accept your feedback and pass it onto the relevant person(s) for review and investigation.
- Email us at [customerservice@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:customerservice@orkney.gov.uk) and we will pass your feedback onto the relevant person(s) for review and investigation.
- Write to us at our offices and we will pass your feedback onto the relevant person(s) for review and investigation.
- Telephone the Council on (01856) 873535 and we will accept your feedback over the phone and pass you onto the appropriate person if necessary.
- Complete one of our comments cards at any of our reception areas and we will pass it onto the relevant person.
- Take part in any of our surveys which are regularly carried out to monitor customer satisfaction.

### Compliments

We know that our staff try to do their very best for Orkney residents and some of them always go the extra mile. We feel it is important to those members of staff, who have done a good job, that they receive positive feedback. If you would like to compliment a member of staff or a team, you can e-mail, write or telephone the Council. We will make sure that the individual and their manager gets to hear about it.

## Complaints

Orkney Islands Council is committed to providing high quality services to our community. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please ask for a copy of our complaints leaflet or visit our website <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/council/c/complaints-procedure.htm> which describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

## Contact us

If you want to find out information about Orkney Islands Council, the services that we provide or contact an officer, there are various ways that you can contact us, as detailed below:

- Visit our website at [www.orkney.gov.uk](http://www.orkney.gov.uk) .
- Visit our offices at Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY or Warehouse Buildings, 2-12 Victoria Street, Stromness, KW16 3AA.
- Email us at [customerservice@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:customerservice@orkney.gov.uk) .
- Phone the Council switchboard on (01856) 873535.