



21/02/2022

# CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

**DISTRICT  
COUNCIL OF  
PETERBOROUGH**

ADOPTED: 21 February 2022

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## FROM STRATEGIC PLAN TO CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY

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### VISION

The District Council of Peterborough is a vibrant, attractive, growing community that values its heritage and environment and promotes a sustainable local economy.

### MISSION

To deliver effective, efficient and sustainable services that instil pride and cooperation, whilst providing a vibrant lifestyle and preserving our heritage.

### VALUES

#### Leadership

To provide effective leadership for the community.

#### Services

To provide services which are responsive and meet the needs of the community.

#### Governance

Council will act in the best interest of the community whilst fulfilling its ethical and statutory obligations.

#### Fiscal Management

Council will apply sound financial management principles and prudential management practices to ensure efficient and effective use of its resources.

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**We are committed to working in partnership with you, our community, to deliver excellent service through dedication, innovation and continuous improvement**

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### PURPOSE of this CHARTER

To establish a customer service framework between the District Council of Peterborough employees, elected members, volunteers, contractors and agents.

This document explains the key initiatives so that our customers know what to expect from us in the way of services, and what we expect of them.

A customer is any person or organisation having dealings with the District Council of Peterborough.

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**We aim to make contact with Council a positive experience, through seeking to provide information quickly, courteously and in a clear and understandable manner**

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## **Our Customer Service Standards**

Our responsibility to you – at all times we aim to:

- Treat customers courteously and with respect
- Deal with customers in a polite and helpful manner
- Listen to customers and take their views into account
- Provide customers with necessary and relevant information

Council is committed to maintaining and applying governance and risk management principles to ensure that any impacts to strategic and business objectives are considered and analysed.

## **Council's General Service Standards**

### **1. In General**

- We will respect our customers.
- We will provide prompt, friendly, courteous and efficient customer service and at all times remain professional.
- We will take ownership of your enquiry, follow-up and keep you informed of progress to completion.
- We will be realistic about what we can do and in what time frames.
- We will provide you with accurate and consistent information.
- We will show respect for your privacy in your dealings with us and the confidentiality of information discussed.
- We will strive to excel in providing excellent customer service through continuous improvement, customer surveys and identification of new technologies to assist in the customer experience.
- We will actively seek your feedback on our services.

### **2. Face to Face**

- Our frontline customer service employees will wear a name badge for ease of communication and identification.
- We will listen to you and discuss your requirements fully.
- We will endeavour to satisfy your request at the time of your visit. When enquiries of a technical or specialised nature are made to our customer service staff, the information will be passed on to the appropriate officer, and if necessary an appointment will be made to discuss the matter.

### 3. Over the Telephone

- We will endeavour to answer your call within 5 rings.
- If the person you are contacting is unavailable, where possible the call will be forwarded to someone who can assist, or return back to reception for further assistance.
- Enquiries will not go unanswered. We will return your telephone enquiry including voicemail messages within 2 business days.
- We will advise you of any delays and offer suitable options or offer to return your call.
- We will introduce ourselves using first names.
- We will take personal responsibility for, and ownership of, your enquiry to reduce transferred calls.

### 4. In Writing or Email

- We will write to you in clear, concise language that is easily understood.
- We will respond to your letter or e-mail of general correspondence within 5 to 10 business days of receipt, once recorded in Council's record management system.
- If your enquiry requires in-depth research or follow-up that will take longer than 5 to 10 business days, we will acknowledge your correspondence, and where possible, provide an expected completion date and details of the employee responsible for the response.

### 5. Via the Internet or Social Media

- We will endeavour to maintain our website pages and social media platforms with relevant and up-to-date information that is easily understood and accessible.

## General Response Time Targets

#### Telephone Calls:

|                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Answering of incoming calls      | Within 5 rings         |
| Returning phone call to customer | Within 2 business days |

#### Face to Face:

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| CSO handling of enquiry                   | 100% where possible |
| Lodgement of enquiry with another officer | 100% if required    |

#### Emails:

|                                       |                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Receipt and acknowledgement to sender | Within 5 business days |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|

### Letters by Post:

Receipt and acknowledgement to sender      Within 10 business days  
Update after 20 business days if still outstanding

### Via the Internet or Social Media:

Receipt and acknowledgement to sender      Within 5 business days

## **Risk**

Council has adopted and implemented a risk management framework to identify, assess, evaluate and treat (mitigate) risks.

In the delivery of our Customer Service Charter, the nature and type of request will be analysed within our framework, which includes a development and understanding of any associated risk.

The goal is not to eliminate all risks, but rather to manage risks involved in the Council's functions and services and to create and protect value for our stakeholders and community.

Council's risk criteria is used to evaluate the significance of the risk and is reflective of its values, objectives and resources and the views of its stakeholders.

It should be noted that whilst the risk criteria of the request is established at the beginning of the risk management process, it is dynamic and will be continually reviewed and amended, where necessary.

Council's priority rating of risk levels are:

|                 |  |  |                     |
|-----------------|--|--|---------------------|
| <b>Extreme</b>  | Identified as a significant risk to the community, etc | Attend to issue immediately                          | Within 12 hours     |
| <b>High</b>     | Identified as a risk to community safety               | Escalate as appropriate                              | Within 1 to 3 days  |
| <b>Moderate</b> | Identified as a lower community safety risk            | Risk to be noted and appropriate timeframe allocated | Within 2 to 3 weeks |
| <b>Low</b>      | Identified as a minimal community safety risk          | Risk to be noted                                     | Within 8 weeks      |

## **Measuring and Improving the Quality of our Service**

We will measure and improve the quality of our service by:

- Obtaining feedback from the community using customer service surveys and by our direct dealings with customers.
- Implementing quality training and appropriate coaching activities for our staff.

- Using effective internal systems, statistics and corporate reporting to measure our performance.
- Recognising our staff for customer service delivery excellence.

## Helping us to Help You

You can help us to meet our commitments to you by:

- Being courteous, polite and respectful of our employees.
- Respecting the rights of, and provide courtesy towards other customers.
- Being open and honest with us by providing accurate and complete details when contacting us, in a calm manner.
- Letting us know when your situation changes, for example, your address or personal details change or your dog or cat registration details change.
- Contacting the Council to make an appointment if you have a complex or technical enquiry, or need to meet with a specific employee.
- Contacting the employee referred on any correspondence sent to you and quoting the reference number – if applicable.
- Using appropriate channels for customer requests, complaints and compliments.
- Working with us to help solve problems.
- Not consuming unwarranted amount of Council resources.
- Telling us where we fall short on our service in any aspect so that we may improve our services to you.
- Helping us recognise our employees by telling us when you have received excellent customer service.
- If you don't know, ask one of our employees.

## Protection of Customer

We will take care to ensure that the reporting of complaints will not result in a customer experiencing any form of victimisation or unfair treatment as a result of the complaint.

## Abusive Customers

- Where the customer is personally abusive or uses bad language, the communication may be terminated immediately by the officer.
- If face to face, the officer may walk away.
- If by telephone, the officer may terminate the call.
- If in an email, the address may be blocked or not responded to.
- The Chief Executive Officer may decide to limit or cease responses to any person who is abusive and/or derogative in their communication with Council or who fails to accept that Council has done all that it can reasonably do to assist. A decision of this nature will be communicated in writing to the person.

- If an officer feels threatened by the language or behaviour of the customer, the Police may be notified.

## Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service which has, or should have, been received. Council's Complaints Policy defines a complaint as:

*“An expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected. This includes complaints about a service that has been, or should have been delivered.”*

Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been delivered, the Complaints Policy and the associated procedures apply. Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with a matter as a request for service, rather than a complaint, in the first instance.

## Vexatious Complaints

All complaints received by Council will be treated with the utmost seriousness, however if a complaint is found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious, no further action will be taken on the complaint.

The customer will be informed of this decision in writing by the Chief Executive Officer.

## Anonymous Complaints

While we will receive anonymous complaints, we will generally only act on them where the matter is considered to be serious and there is sufficient information in the complaint to enable an investigation to be undertaken.

## Contact Us

Council can be contacted by:

Mail: PO Box 121, Peterborough, SA 5422

Email: [council@peterborough.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@peterborough.sa.gov.au)

Phone: 08 8651 3566

Website: [www.peterborough.sa.gov.au](http://www.peterborough.sa.gov.au)

## References

Complaints Policy  
Complaints Handling Procedure – Elected Members  
Handling Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints Policy  
Ombudsman Enquiry Procedure  
Public Interest Disclosure Policy  
Public Interest Disclosure Procedure  
Request for Service Policy  
Threatening Behaviour at any Council Place of Work Policy

## Review History

| Version No: | Issue Date: | Description of Change: |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1           | 21/2/2022   | Document creation      |
|             |             |                        |