



Hart District Council Customer Care Standards

<i>Date created</i>	December 2012	<i>Department</i>	Corporate
<i>Review date</i>	January 2014	<i>Version</i>	2.0
<i>Second Review Date</i>	January 2018		
<i>Effective date</i>	April 2016		
<i>Equality Impact Assessment: (EIA)</i>	Date undertaken:	14 December 2012	
	Issues (if any):	None	

Everyone at Hart District Council is committed to providing our customers with a professional, personal and friendly service. We want to deliver the best possible service to all our residents and visitors. To ensure that you receive quality service:

1. We promise to:

- provide high standards of customer care regardless of how you contact us
- respect and treat all our customers fairly and equally¹
- provide a translation service or documents in alternative formats, if required.
- ensure our services are as easily accessible as possible
- be polite, welcoming and efficient, resolving your enquiry first time wherever possible
- make many of our services accessible 24 hours a day through our website, www.hart.gov.uk allowing you to apply for services, report problems, find information and make payments and bookings
- always carry identification when we visit you
- apologise when we get something wrong and put things right as soon as possible
- provide you with feedback about what we've done in response to things you've told us about
- Keep your personal records securely in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and let you see and update this information if you need to
- Provide you with information in line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000

2. If you telephone us we will:

- aim to answer your call within 15 seconds and with a polite greeting identifying ourselves
- however, if your enquiry relates to complex housing needs, housing benefit, local tax or a planning matter you may wait considerably longer to speak to a specialist officer due to the high demand and level of advice provided
- answer your enquiry at first contact or if necessary, acknowledge your enquiry verbally, and let you know when we will be able to resolve your query if we cannot do so during your initial call
- return your call within one working day, unless we need to find out more for you. If that happens we will ring you back as soon as we can with a response
- give you the name, telephone number and email address of the person dealing with your enquiry
- respond to voicemail messages within one working day.

3. If you write to us we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your letter within two working days² and reply within 10 working days³, either with a full response or to let you know when a full response

¹ We reserve the right not to respond to unsolicited commercial emails, other forms of correspondence or telephone messages. We also reserve the right not to respond to correspondence relating to other organisations

² Revenues and benefits do not provide an acknowledgement in 2 days but will respond within 10 days

³ Please note we do not acknowledge receipt where you are responding to a public consultation or notification

will be provided if we need more time to gather information or process your application.

- provide a response which is clear and in plain English.

4. If you email us, text us or contact through social media (e.g. Facebook) we will:

- usually acknowledge your email or message within one working day. We will reply within five working days⁴ or let you know when a full response will be provided if we need to gather more information and cannot respond in that timescale. Where appropriate, we will ask for another method of responding to you other than via social media, for issues where personal data is involved.
- if you have sent an email to a named officer and they are unavailable for more than one day, you will normally be advised via an out of office email. This message which will suggest an alternative method of contacting the council in the case that the enquiry is urgent.
- We will provide a response which is clear and in plain English (no 'text speak'.)

5. If you visit us we will:

- greet you in a polite and helpful manner
- acknowledge your enquiry verbally, and let you know when we will be able to resolve your query if we cannot do so during your visit
- try to resolve your enquiry within 10 minutes of your arrival. However, if your enquiry relates to complex Housing Needs, Housing Benefit, Local Tax or a Planning matter you may wait considerably longer to see a specialist officer due to the level of advice provided
- try to give you all the advice and information that you need
- arrange a private interview room if required.

6. If we visit you we will:

- normally arrange an appointment in advance (excluding food safety inspections or other enforcement related visits)
- provide you with our identification before coming into your home
- let you know if there is any information we need before we visit
- give you as much notice as possible if an appointment has to be altered or cancelled
- help you to fill in forms, if required.

7. How you can help us provide a better service

- You can help to provide a pleasant environment for us and other customers by:
- treating our staff with respect and be considerate and polite when you contact us
- understanding that we will not tolerate abusive language or threatening behaviour towards staff or other people using our services and that we will take action, including prosecution if necessary, against anyone who threatens or verbally or physically abuses our staff.
- providing complete and accurate information

⁴ Revenue enquiries will be responded to within 10 working days

- giving us more information when we ask you for it
- making an appointment in advance if you wish to speak to a particular person

- being on time for your appointment or letting us know if you are going to be late or need to rearrange
- letting us know of any special needs you may have, in advance if possible
- telling us if you don't understand something we tell you or ask you.

Please note this policy does not cover communications to the Council including 'spam' emails, unsolicited emails seeking to sell goods or services to the council, circulars, magazines, flyers or any communications that are made broadly and not specific to Hart District Council.

If you have any questions or issues about our Customer Services, please contact us via:

Email patricia.hughes@hart.gov.uk

Web www.hart.gov.uk

Telephone 01252 622122 (lines are open 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday)

Post Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 4AE