

OUR STANDARDS



Our Standards,
Our Commitment,
Our Promise...



**The standards you should expect from
North Norfolk District Council**

Service for all

We aim to provide services and premises that are accessible to everyone. We will also ensure that your privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs are fully respected.

Keeping you informed

We will inform the public about our services and facilities and how to use them effectively. We also aim to ensure that the information is easy to read and understand.

Information is made available, on request, in accessible formats such as large print, and on audiotape. The Council's website can be displayed in large text for the visually impaired, and for the blind using speech browsers. Information about key Council services can be obtained in different languages. Interpretation services can be arranged. Minicom services are available.

We will provide a polite and welcoming service. Staff dealing with the public will normally wear identity badges and deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible. Reception areas will be clean and comfortable. All facilities will be well-signposted and leaflets and other information clearly displayed.

We will aim to see all customers within five minutes of entering all Council premises. If you have to wait longer than this to receive service, you will be given an explanation and, where appropriate, offered the opportunity of making a future appointment.

Confidentiality will be respected. Where necessary we will provide private interview facilities and access to a telephone.

Telephone

We aim to answer all calls within 15 seconds. You will then be connected to the person or service you are enquiring about, as quickly as possible.

If we cannot connect you, you will be told of the delay and given the opportunity to leave a message on an answering service (voicemail). We will use voicemail only when it is not possible for the person you want to contact to take your call. The message will tell you where that person is,

and when he or she is expected to return. We will aim to reply to voicemail messages within two working days of retrieving them.

All staff answering the general enquiries line will state the Council's name. Staff answering the telephones within the Council and other facilities will state the section and their name.

We also aim to ensure that a caller is transferred no more than once to have a query answered. If necessary, we will take your details and contact you with the information you require.

When the service you are asking about is outside the Council, we will attempt to direct you to the correct service provider. In some cases we may raise your enquiry with the service provider on your behalf.

Letters/fax/email

We will aim to respond to all queries, written correspondence, faxes and emails within seven working days of receipt. If the subject matter is more complex, we will contact you to explain the reason for the delay and, where possible, say when a response should be available.

All our letters to customers will have a named person and telephone number for you to contact.

Visits by Council staff

If a member of staff has to visit you at home, this will normally happen at a mutually agreed time. Any Council staff visiting your home will show an official identity card without being asked. If you have doubt about the authority of a particular member of staff, you should telephone the number on the back of the identity card.

If you have to cancel an appointment, please inform the member of staff at least 24 hours in advance.

The same procedure will also apply to contractors acting our behalf.



Appointments

We will try to be punctual for appointments and will make every effort to notify you if it is not possible to see you within 10 minutes of your appointment time.

Listening to our customers

To ensure that our standards meet your needs and expectations, we will always consider your views. As a customer you must have the opportunity to influence the decisions we make on your behalf.

We will:

- ▶ distribute the Customer Charter to the Council Members who, as representatives of the community, will review our standards and provide feedback;
- ▶ gather and consider customer satisfaction data;
- ▶ enable customers to comment on Council services through the 'Comment and Complaints' leaflet, our online 'Contact us' form, a 'Site feedback' form or a downloadable complaints form.

The Council aims to make it easy for customers to give us their views, compliments and concerns, and to make our services more responsive to their needs. If you are happy or unhappy with us, or our services, we want to hear about it.

Continually improving our performance

We will promote innovation and best practice by setting annual targets for each department, section and individual member of staff and will carry out regular performance reviews.

In addition we will record and analyse all complaints. We will regularly inform Councillors and the public of these details and of how we dealt with the complaints. We will conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys to find out what you think of our services and how we might improve them.

Keeping you informed

We will give you information in the following ways:

- ▶ The Council's *Outlook* magazine (published four times a year)
- ▶ The Council's website www.northnorfolk.org
- ▶ Information on display in Council premises
- ▶ News releases to the media
- ▶ The Council's Corporate Plan
- ▶ A wide range of information leaflets

Open meetings

Our meetings are open to the public and the media. We publish the agendas, papers and minutes of these meetings on our website, and they are available for inspection at Council offices and libraries.

Access to information

The Council supports increasing openness, accountability and transparency in the public sector. We aim to expand the amount of information made available to the public through our website.

We hope that by routinely making information available, it will be easier for you to understand and participate in Council processes and decisions, and it will also provide you with better access to the services we provide.

There are three important areas of legislation that give you the right to see information held by the Council.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows you to ask the Council for any general information it holds about its work.

You can see our 'Publication Scheme' – a list of all the information we regularly make available – by visiting our website at:

www.northnorfolk.org

If what you see is not listed in the publication scheme you should write to the Corporate Freedom of Information Officer, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Norfolk NR27 9EN. To find out how to access information under the Act, you can obtain a leaflet



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from the Council's website or from the Council's offices.

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 1988 gives you a right of access to information about yourself and sets out a number of obligations on all organisations holding personal information. DPA requests have a charge of £10 for each request. A valid request will be answered within 40 calendar days of its receipt.

If you want to know whether information is held about you and, if so, what information, you will need to write to the Legal Services Manager, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Norfolk NR27 9EN.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 give you the right to see the environmental information we hold, including information about air, water, land, natural sites, plants and wildlife.

We will handle any requests made under these Regulations in the same way as requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Complex requests, however, may take up to 40 working days to be answered fully.

If you cannot find what you are looking for this way, please browse through our publication scheme. It is not exhaustive, but it may guide you to the right page on the website or the right person to contact.

If you are still having difficulty finding the information you need, then please call our Environmental Health Freedom of Information Officer or email: jc@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Most information about our activities will be provided free of charge. However, we reserve the right to make a charge to cover the costs of dealing with complex or time-consuming enquiries and we will advise you in advance where this will apply, and what the charge will be.



What if you are not happy with our service

We want to know what you think of our services. Your feedback is very important to us – it helps us to improve so that we can serve you better. If you are not satisfied or think we have failed to deliver, please talk to a member of staff or the manager of the service involved. If you are still not satisfied, then you are encouraged to make a complaint using our complaints procedure.

The form can be downloaded from the website (www.northnorfolk.org) or a copy of the form can be sent to you. Please contact Jane Wisson on 01263 516096 or email: jane.wisson@north-norfolk.gov.uk

More information

We will review these standards as appropriate and revise them as required. If you would like to ask about any of the standards mentioned or make any comments, including suggestions for improvements, please contact Philip Burton on 01263 516000 or email: philip.burton@north-norfolk.gov.uk

For more information on our services and the standards you can expect, visit the Council's website – www.northnorfolk.org – for details and view our Customer Charter, or telephone the appropriate service. You can call general enquiries on 01263 513811 for assistance if you do not have a direct line for the service you want.

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If you would like this information in large print,
audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different
language, please contact:

Telephone: 01263 516000

Minicom: 01263 516005

or visit:

www.northnorfolk.org