



# Our customer experience service standards

We are committed to providing a consistently excellent standard of service by putting our customers at the heart of everything we do.



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL



# When you contact us, we will:

- Be professional and positive in our approach, giving you our full name, and aiming to resolve your enquiry the first time you contact us whenever we can
- Be well-informed and listen to your query, so we can obtain as much information as possible to help you resolve your issue as quickly as we can
- Listen and respond to you promptly when you think we have fallen short or could improve
- Offer a variety of ways to access our services, including, where it meets your needs, a high quality 24/7 digital self-service option
- Respond to your enquiry within our published timescales, or, where this will not be possible, let you know, explaining why there is a delay and agreeing with you an alternative deadline for a response
- Let you track the progress of your enquiry as it is being dealt with (where the technology allows)
- Arrange an appointment, if necessary, for you to speak to someone who can help you if your request cannot be dealt with by the first person you contact
- Signpost to where you can get help, advice or guidance if you contact us about a service another organisation provides



# You can help us by:

- **Using our online opportunities to contact us and request a service - this means we can help you more quickly and have an up to date record of all our communications with you**
- **Being clear about your reasons for contacting us**
- **Being polite and courteous to our staff that are helping you**
- **Telling us if this is an initial contact or a continuation of an existing contact**
- **Telling us how we can correspond with you further, providing us with the documents and information we need to help you**
- **Asking us to explain anything you are not sure of**
- **Keeping any appointments that you have with us, and letting us know if you are not able to attend**
- **Giving us feedback to ensure we can improve**





## We will be respectful by:

- Treating everyone fairly and respectfully, keeping equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do
- Being polite, helpful, open and honest with you
- Listening to you without judgement to best understand your needs
- Explaining decisions and outcomes clearly
- Respecting your rights to privacy and confidentiality
- Ensuring our information is in a format that can be easily accessed and understood

## We would like you to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy, respect and dignity
- Give us your views and suggestions to help us improve our services



# We will constantly improve by:

- Encouraging you to feedback on our services, using the internet, telephone, response forms, or through a member of staff
- Working with you when we design services to make sure they are simple, convenient and meet your needs
- Publishing how we are performing to show if we are on track
- Handling any complaints professionally, and learning lessons when we fall short of our standards
- Making best use of technology to help us deliver more effective and efficient solutions
- Continuously learning from our own processes
- Reviewing our own procedures and feedback to ensure that our services best reflect your needs



# Our service standards

Our standards set out what you can expect from us when you contact us.



## When you use our services online, we will:

- Be accessible 24/7 for those services which are now fully digital (i.e. you can complete a request, payment or enquiry from start to finish through our website)
- Provide the information you need jargon-free or recommend you use our search tool to find what you are looking for
- Enable you to report issues, apply and pay for services, book appointments, update us and more via simple and accessible forms
- Encourage you to register for a customer account which will offer a personalised and interactive service, and allow you to track the progress of your request
- Provide access to council news, information, decisions and consultations concerning your local community
- Not ask for unnecessary information
- Give you help and support to access and use the self-serve elements of our website
- Enable an online translation service and other help tools for those with specific needs
- Test our online customer journey, minimising the number of 'clicks' required and ensuring that online forms work as they should



# When calling us by telephone, we will:

- Be available during our published opening times
- Transfer you to the named officer you ask for, if available or appropriate
- Answer your call as soon as possible and, for our main lines, let you know where in the queue you are whilst you are waiting, giving you the option to receive a call back and letting you know how else you can access our services
- Limit the occasions you will need to leave a voicemail message to exceptional circumstances
- Make you aware of who is dealing with your enquiry
- Provide a customer who has a hearing impairment with access to an alternative system
- Offer a translation service if needed
- Return calls within an agreed timeframe

# When emailing or writing to us, we will:

- Acknowledge your email or letter as soon as possible and confirm how it will be dealt with, or if we need further information from you
- Issue you with a full response to your enquiry at this point, or provide you with details of who is dealing with the matter and how long they will need to respond
- Use plain language and offer information in a variety of formats
- Provide clear details of any outcomes and how we will take them forward





# When you visit us face-to-face, we will:

- Introduce ourselves, display our names and talk with you in private if you prefer, and it is safe to do so
- Help you to access our services through our digital or telephone self-service channels
- Arrange appointments if you need to see someone in person
- Ensure when you arrive for your appointment, we see you promptly
- Keep a record of the meeting so a follow up can be made if necessary
- Clearly advertise our opening times and provide an appropriate and accessible space for different queries

# When visiting you in your home or business, we will:

- Provide you with the name and contact details of the person visiting you in advance, unless it is inappropriate to do so
- Agree an appointment time with you and keep you informed if a delay occurs
- Present ID cards, displaying names and a photograph, upon arrival giving you the opportunity to check our identity
- Be respectful of your property and your culture





# In relation to complaints, we will:

- Always acknowledge your comment, compliment or complaint, and provide you with a reference number within three working days
- Resolve your issue efficiently and informally, whenever possible
- Provide you with a written response within 10 working days
- Contact you if we are not able to respond within these timescales, for example if the complaint is very complex or if we need to handle the complaint differently
- Acknowledge, accept and apologise if we are at fault, and offer a reasonable remedy
- Use learning from complaints to improve overall customer experience and service delivery
- Support your right to raise unresolved complaints with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and respond fully to any issues they raise with us in response to your complaint



# To protect your confidentiality, we will:

- **Ensure all our staff are appropriately trained**
- **Handle all information you provide to us sensitively and confidentially**
- **Manage all your information in accordance with legislation**
- **Make sure that your information will not be discussed with any unauthorised person**
- **Ask you to provide only relevant information and explain why we need it**
- **Investigate and respond to any concerns you may have about your personal data**



**WATFORD**  
**BOROUGH**  
**COUNCIL**

---

 [customerservices@watford.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@watford.gov.uk)

 01923 226400

 [www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)



watfordcouncil