

# **Council Service Standards**



October 2006 Version 1

# Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

## Customer Service Standards

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### Customer First – Our Corporate Customer Service Standards

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This Council is working hard to deliver high quality, value for money services to local residents. We are constantly monitoring what we do and seeking ways of improving those services. One way is through our Service Standards. Our standards for customer contact, listed below, show we are committed to delivering high standards of customer care across all services.

Each service unit of the Council also has a set of Service Standards clearly stating the minimum level of services residents can expect. Our aim is to meet every standard and where we can, surpass it.

We will:-

- ensure that our customers' needs are identified and understood and always deliver our services in a friendly, equitable and professional manner.
- provide you with any assistance you may require to complete any Council forms.
- provide, on request, a range of information leaflets printed in languages other than English.
- ensure that all our staff are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without unlawful discrimination.
- record and monitor customer contacts to ensure that you are being treated fairly in accordance with the [Council's Equality Plan](#) & [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).
- monitor and regularly review our performance and make information available to the public.

#### **When you contact the Council by telephone:**

We will:-

- greet you in a courteous way, confirming the service section you are dealing with and the person taking the call.
- make every effort to deal with your call in full at this first point of contact.
- not transfer your call unnecessarily; if we have to do so, we will tell the appropriate person what your call is about.

- take clear and concise messages and ensure your message is passed on to the appropriate person, who will get back to you within 1 working day.
- offer the provision of a 'Typetalk' system on request.
- provide, on request, access to Language Line.

**When you contact the Council in person:**

We will:-

- ensure you will not have to wait more than 10 minutes to be greeted by a council officer on arriving at our Reception Areas during their normal working hours.
- offer the provision of sign language interpreters on request.

**When you contact the Council by letter/fax:**

We will:-

- record and initiate a reply (if required) to your letter/fax within 10 working days. An immediate acknowledgement letter will be forwarded to you if further investigation is needed.

**When you contact us by the Council's Internet Site:**

We will:-

- respond to e-mail enquiries within 5 working days of receiving them.
- keep the Council's website, [www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk](http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk) up to date and accessible.

**When we visit your home:**

We will:-

- ensure that any employee who comes to your home has and presents to you his/her Council identification; you should ensure you are aware of the purpose of their visit and check their identification before allowing entry.

## When you make a comment, complaint or compliment to the Council:

We will:-

- record and initiate action to all comments, complaints and compliments received within 10 working days. An immediate acknowledgement letter will be forwarded to you if further investigation is needed.

## When you want access to Council - held information:

We will:-

- comply with statutory guidance and Council policy on access to information, publicity, consultation and the protection of people's rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This document is also available in other languages on request:

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধে পাওয়া যায়।

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

本文件也可应要求，制作成其它语文或特大字体版本，也可制作成录音带。

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Also available in  Large Print,  CD Rom,  Audio Tape and Braille on request.

Contact us on: 024 7637 6376

*typetalk*  : 18002 024 7637 6376



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## **Public Amenities - Customer Service Standards**

### **Cleansing and Refuse Collection:**

We will:-

- collect your domestic refuse once a week, provided the wheeled bin lid is flat with no extra side waste.
- collect your 'Red Box' for recyclable materials once a week, provided it contains the correct materials.
- collect garden waste in your 'Green Wheeled Bin' every two weeks from March to November according to published details and where property location permits.
- operate normal collections on every Bank Holiday, except during the Christmas and New Year period.
- advise you at least one week in advance of any changes to your normal service day as a result of public holidays or rescheduling.
- advise you, as soon as possible of any disruption in the service due to unforeseen circumstances.
- empty any wheeled bin that our employees have missed within 2 working days, provided it contains the correct materials, it is easy to access and the lid is flat.
- empty any missed "Red Box" on the following working day provided, it contains the correct materials and is easy to access.
- provide an assisted collection service for all refuse and recycling services for residents who are elderly, disabled or infirm and are unable to present their bins / boxes for collection.
- provide residents in sheltered accommodation and flats with Mini Recycling Sites and an emptying service, so that they can participate in recycling cans, glass and paper.
- provide recycling facilities at 'Bring Sites' for glass, paper, cans and textiles.
- provide a street sweeping service to comply with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, ensuring that the environment is as clear of litter and refuse as is reasonably practicable.
- remove bulky domestic waste by prior arrangement and subject to the appropriate charge at the time. (The current charge is £15 for 5 items.)

## **Fly Tipping:**

We will:-

- remove any fly-tipped material from Council land within 5 working days of notification.
- make every effort to identify and prosecute those people who unlawfully dump their rubbish in public areas.
- provide advice to private land owners on measures they can take to reduce fly tipping.
- remove fly-tipped materials from private land within 5 working days on receipt of the landlord's written consent (there is a variable fee for this service).

## **Tackling Graffiti:**

We will:-

- remove graffiti from Council properties within 5 working days of it being reported. However, reported incidences of racial, sectarian or obscene graffiti will be removed within 24 hours.
- remove graffiti from private property within 5 working days on receipt of the landlord's written consent (there is a variable fee for this service).

## **Parks and Open Spaces:**

We will:-

- provide information leaflets on the parks, sports pitches and cemeteries, at all Council service points and through the website.
- maintain the grass areas and floral displays, and clear litter in the parks and cemeteries, in accordance with the detailed standards in the grounds maintenance quality specification. A copy of this specification will be available for inspection.
- inspect all play areas once a week to ensure that the equipment is in good working order and safe to use. Any defective equipment will be taken out of service until it can be repaired.
- commission an annual independent inspection of play areas to ensure that the equipment is in good working order and safe to use. Any defective equipment will be taken out of service until it can be repaired.

- ensure that all sports facilities are of a high standard, through development and maintenance programmes, and through limiting the numbers of games played on grass pitches.
- ensure that trees reported as being dangerous within a park, open space or growing on Council-owned land are inspected and, where necessary, made safe immediately.
- provide bins for dog faeces in public open spaces and empty them at least every 2 weeks.

### **Cemeteries:**

We will:-

- maintain the cemeteries in a tidy and respectful condition.
- make the appropriate administrative arrangements for an interment within one working day of receiving the relevant notification.
- provide you with assistance in searches for title deeds, at the fees set by the Council.
- provide a choice of burial services whenever possible in sympathy with the wishes of the bereaved, in accordance with religious beliefs and in accordance with Cemetery regulations.

### **Civic Hall:**

We will:-

- despatch all tickets for shows booked by customers to them within 4 working days of receipt of payment.
- offer the opportunity for regular patrons to join the 'Friends of the Civic Hall'; annual membership confers reduced booking fees and other special benefits.
- ensure that the theatre, its staff, equipment and facilities are available to hirers as agreed in the hiring contract, and at the times stated.
- give advance notice of any planned changes to service times or facilities. If any emergency disrupts the services, we will explain what is happening, offer an alternative service where possible, and/or offer a refund where services have been paid for in advance.
- record all booking requests for the theatre accurately and provide you with a copy of your hiring contract within 5 days by post.

## **Chief Executive's Office – Customer Service Standards**

These are the main service standards the Service Unit operates to. There is more detailed service standards published on the Council's internet site [www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk](http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk) that includes the following:-

- [The Community Plan 2004 – 2007 - Shaping Our Future](#);
- [The Corporate Plan for Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council 2005 -2011](#);
- [Best Value Performance Plan 2006 – 2007](#);
- [The Chief Executive's Office Service Development Plan 2006 – 2007](#);
- [The Crime & Disorder and Drug Misuse Strategy 2005 – 2008](#).

Hard copies of the above detailed service standards are available on request.

### **When you apply for a job at the Council:**

We will:-

- record your request and forward to you the 'Job Application Pack' within 2 working days.
- notify you of an interview within 2 working days following short-listing.
- assist you with the completion of any Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council job application form, if requested (at least 2 working days) before the closing date of the application.
- cater for special needs at interviews if notified (at least 2 working days) in advance.

### **When community groups enquire about Grants:**

We will:-

- provide accurate information about Council grants policy and application procedures at the Town Hall and on the Council's website.
- record all grant applications accurately and send you an acknowledgement with your application reference number within 10 working days.
- check all completed, returned grant applications and, if necessary, contact you within 10 working days of initial receipt to request any additional information that may be needed in order to process your application.

## **Planning Policy:**

We will:-

- maintain a Local Development Scheme that will set out a programme for the production of planning policy documents.
- consult and involve the community and other stakeholders in the preparation of planning policy documents using methods outlined in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- publish an Annual Monitoring Report by 31st December of each year which will set out progress in the implementation of the Council's planning policies and the production of planning documents.

## **Environmental Health, Planning & Building Control – Customer Service Standards**

These are the main service standards the Service Unit operates to. There is more detailed service standards published on the Council's internet site [www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk](http://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk) that includes the following:-

- [Council Enforcement Policy](#);
- [Environmental Health, Planning & Development Services Enforcement Policy](#);
- [Building control Policy](#);
- [Building Control Practices & Procedures](#);
- Occupational Health & Safety Enforcement Procedures.

Hard copies of the above detailed service standards are available on request.

Across all our services we will:-

- give you the name and phone number of the person who is providing the service.
- take a message and get back to you within one working day if you need to speak to one of our specialist staff when they are not available.
- be fair and reasonable, but also firm and decisive, when making enforcement decisions.
- be clear when we are giving advice, so that you know what a legal requirement is and what a recommendation is.

### **Environmental Health:**

We will:-

- make an initial response to 90% of requests for service within the following times:-
  - 1 working day for rats inside your home, stray dogs, risk of exposure to toxic substances, burglar alarms sounding continuously, food poisoning notifications, or fatal or near-fatal accident notifications;
  - 3 working days for all other enquiries.
- carry out planned programmes of inspections for food hygiene, health and safety and pollution control in line with national standards of quality and frequency, inspecting the highest risk premises most often.
- carry out monitoring and assessment of air quality and contaminated land and publish our Contaminated Land Strategy and Air Quality Assessments on the Council's internet site.

## **Building Control:**

We will:-

- issue decision notices within 5 weeks, or within 2 months if an extension is agreed with the customer, for 100% of complete applications.
- respond to 85% of full plans applications within 2 weeks and 90% within 3 weeks.
- respond to 100% of dangerous structures notifications within 2 hours.

## **Development Control:**

We will:-

- offer you the opportunity to discuss your proposals with us and give you professional advice before you submit a planning application.
- receive planning applications on-line via the Council's internet site.
- publish a weekly list of valid planning applications on the Council's internet site.
- publish progress with current planning applications on the Council's internet site.
- once we have received a valid planning application, we will decide at least:
  - 70% of major applications within 13 weeks;
  - 75% of minor applications within 8 weeks;
  - 90% of other applications within 8 weeks.

## **Development & Town Centres - Customer Service Standards**

### **Abandoned Vehicles:**

We will:-

- investigate reports of abandoned vehicles within 24 hours of notification and remove vehicles within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove them. Written permission is required before removing abandoned vehicles from private land.

### **Car Parking:**

We will:-

- repair ticket machine faults within 24 hours.
- make safe reported dangerous faults within 24 hours.

## **Community Finance - Customer Service Standards**

### **Benefits:**

We will:-

- acknowledge receipt of your benefits claim within 10 calendar days and, where possible, process your claim within this time.
- visit you in your home to help you complete your application form for benefits and to check the relevant supporting information required to process your claim.
- process your claim within 5 working days once we have received your completed form and all supporting information.
- provide information as to how your claim has been calculated and your right of appeal if you do not agree with the calculation.
- acknowledge all appeals within 3 working days of their receipt and refer cases to the Appeals Service within 28 calendar days of their receipt.
- re-determine housing and Council Tax benefit within 9 calendar days of notification of change of circumstances.
- ensure that rent allowances are paid to claimants weekly or to their landlords 4-weekly (in arrears).

### **Council Tax:**

We will:-

- action all changes in Council Tax banding within 10 working days of notification being received.
- determine all requests for discounts/changes in circumstances and issue a revised bill within 10 working days.
- update the customer's account within 2 working days of payment at a Council office or within 4 working days of notification being received from the Council's bankers or Girobank.
- ensure that all residents are notified within 4 weeks of a missed payment.

## **Debtors – Accounts Receivable:**

We will:-

- update the customer's account within 2 working days of payment at a Council office or within 4 working days of notification of payment being made from the Council's bankers.

## **Rent Payments:**

We will:-

- update the customer's account within 2 working days of payment at Council offices or within 4 working days of notification of payment being received from the Council's bankers or Girobank.

## **Housing - Customer Service Standards**

### **Estate Management:**

We will:-

- respond to reports of racial incidents or serious harassment within one working day.
- not tolerate racial harassment and we will take appropriate action against perpetrators.
- respond to all other reported incidents of anti-social behaviour, not included above, within 10 working days.
- monitor and regularly review all incidents of racial harassment and anti-social behaviour.
- carry out a new tenant visit within 6 weeks of the date of the tenancy commencing.

### **Allocating Houses:**

We will:-

- ensure that allocations and homelessness policies and procedures are fair, non-discriminatory and open to people in housing need (except where legal exemptions apply).
- carry out any enquiries and send you a letter advising you on the outcome of your application within 10 working days from receipt of your completed application form and requested information.
- process medical applications and any changes or amendments to your application within 10 days.
- select a new tenant for vacant houses within 1 working day of keys being handed in to the council offices in Nuneaton or Bedworth.
- process a termination of tenancy within 10 working days of notification.
- secure property where necessary on the same day keys are handed in to a local housing office, if 24 hour advance notification is provided.

### **Homeless Applications:**

We will:-

- give you an appointment within one working day with a trained officer, if you are about to become homeless.

- seek to prevent you becoming homeless by intervention and providing you with advice and information.
- assess your circumstances and, if required, provide you with good quality temporary accommodation until the necessary investigations into your case have been completed.
- carry out and complete our investigation of your case and inform you of our decision in writing within 21 working days, subject to relevant information being provided and contact being maintained.
- provide permanent housing to those in priority need who are found to be unintentionally homeless.
- provide temporary accommodation, if necessary, to those in priority need and who are found to be unintentionally homeless until we can make an offer of permanent accommodation.
- provide temporary accommodation for a reasonable period (usually 28 days) to those not in priority need to allow them time to secure their own accommodation. We will also provide advice and assistance to help them to identify alternative accommodation.

### **Major Improvements:**

We will:-

- give you at least 15 working days' notice before carrying out any major works to your home that may cause disruption, for instance re-roofing of your property or installation of central heating.
- consult with you and where possible give you a choice of colours and layout when installing new kitchens and bathrooms, and colours and styles when installing front or rear doors.
- publish a programme of Capital Works and Major Repairs annually with information updated regularly throughout the year.

### **Council House Sales:**

We will:-

- acknowledge your application for the 'Right to Buy' your Council house within 7 working days.
- issue an offer to you within 11 weeks for a house or 15 weeks for a flat/maisonette of receiving a formal application to purchase.
- issue to you confirmation that you have the right to buy your Council house within 21 working days of receiving the application.

- aim to complete the sale within 20 weeks of receiving the acceptance (Notice of Intention).

### **Council House Repairs:**

We will:-

- prioritise any repair you request and for repairs categorised as “routine”, send you a repair receipt giving the date when the work will be completed.
- emergency category response within 24 hours – Example jobs include total failure of electrical power and or lights; total loss of water supply.
- urgent category response within 3 working days – Example jobs include blocked sink waste pipe; toilet not working (where there is more than one toilet in the property).
- routine category response within 15 working days – Example jobs would include repairing small cracks in plasterwork; dealing with leaking guttering.
- offer you an appointment that is convenient to you, for urgent and routine works and also if work has to be checked before a repair is carried out.
- minimise the inconvenience caused to you when carrying out a repair, and clear up after we have carried out work.
- at all times respect your property and your right to privacy.
- value your comments on our repair service and send you Tenant Satisfaction Survey cards when you report urgent or routine cyclic repairs that are required in your home.

### **Insurance Claims:**

If you believe that you have suffered due to negligence on the part of the housing service by its agents, sub-contractors or employees you should make a claim in writing to the manager at your local housing office.

We will:-

- acknowledge your claim and any subsequent enquiries within 10 working days from receipt and you will be informed by letter where delays may occur.
- complete our investigations and submit a report to our claim handlers within 15 working days.

## **Tenant Involvement:**

We will:-

- promote, encourage and support the development of tenant and resident associations and groups and, with the assistance of our tenant participation officer, encourage groups to become registered.
- actively involve tenants in performance monitoring of services.
- monitor the effectiveness of consultation and its influence on service delivery.
- arrange and attend meetings where requested.
- give tenant groups support, both financial and otherwise.
- keep our tenants updated by producing a newsletter at regular intervals throughout the year.
- carry out surveys on a regular basis to gain opinions on the delivery of our services.