

# Our Customer Charter

We are committed to providing a consistently excellent customer experience by putting our customers at the centre of everything we do. Our charter sets out our commitment to you and what we aim to deliver.

**The Customer Charter applies to:** All staff, Elected Representatives, and contractors in all engagement with internal (Highland Council) and external customers (service users\*, stakeholders, advocates, and organisations).

\*Young people (when in an education setting) please see [Promoting Positive Relationships \(2021\)](#)

## We will play our part by:

- ✓ We will work on actioning and responding to your request, the first time you contact us whenever this is possible, and ensuring you know what happens next and by when.
- ✓ We will offer a variety of ways to access our services that reflect how customers like to contact us.
- ✓ Providing a quicker and easier online experience.
- ✓ Taking your information and looking after it.
- ✓ Aiming to find a satisfactory solution and having a 'can-do' attitude within our available resources.
- ✓ Avoiding jargon and making things understandable.
- ✓ Responding to your contact within our published timescales\*.

\*Timescales may be service specific, please see [here](#) for details ([link to be added once ready](#))

## To help us, we would like you to play your part by:

- ✓ Accessing our services by the available routes or methods as published by us.
- ✓ Acknowledging we may need to pass on your request (to other Council staff or services) so we can deal with it.
- ✓ Recognising that we will not be able to meet every need.
- ✓ Being aware of our financial constraints.
- ✓ Providing us with the information that we need to help you, including answering questions and providing further information if required.
- ✓ Asking us to explain things you are not sure of.
- ✓ Keeping any appointments that you have with us and notifying us if you are unable to attend.

## We will be respectful by:

- ✓ Treating you politely, fairly, and respectfully, with equality, diversity, and your well-being central to everything we do.
- ✓ Being, helpful and open with you.
- ✓ Listening to you and 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.

## To help us, we would like you to:

- ✓ Treat us politely, respectfully, in line with our [Customer Relationship Policy \(link to be added once ready\)](#).
- ✓ Respect that no filming/recording within council premises or of employees is permitted without appropriate permission.
- ✓ Respect that we have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse:
  - The safety and well-being of our staff is a priority, and they have the right to do their jobs without being abused.
  - We understand on occasion you may disagree with a decision. We also understand you may be experiencing vulnerability. However, we have a duty of care to protect our staff, and anyone present.
  - If you are aggressive, abusive, or behave violently or are perceived to be threatening harm towards a member of our staff we will decide what action to take, and this may include involving the Police.

## We will constantly try to improve by:

- ✓ Encouraging you to give feedback on our services, using the Council's website, phonenumber(s), response forms, or through a member of staff.
- ✓ Putting you at the centre when we design services to make sure they meet customer needs.
- ✓ Publishing our performance to show how we're doing.
- ✓ Handling any complaints with professionalism and learning lessons if [we fall short of our standards \(link to be added once ready\)](#).

## To help us, we would like you to:

- ✓ Offer us ideas to help us improve what we do.
- ✓ Let us know if we fall short of our standards and you wish to [complain by using our complaints form](#).
- ✓ Let us know if you have received outstanding service using our [compliments form](#).