



# Aberdeenshire Council **Customer Service Charter**

*Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland*



# Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

## The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through . . .

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

## The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by . . .

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

## Our aim

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to providing high quality services and delivering high standards of customer service.

As a customer of Aberdeenshire Council, you have the right to be treated fairly and considerately when using any of our services whether in person, by phone, in writing or by any of our electronic channels (including email, internet enquiries, text messaging and video conferencing). These standards outline the level of service you should expect and gives you the opportunity to challenge us if we do not deliver them.

We will deal with you as an individual and ensure that you are treated fairly and equally. When dealing with all customers, we will:

- Be friendly and accessible
- Understand your needs
- Meet your expectations wherever possible and explain when we cannot
- Treat you as we would expect to be treated ourselves
- Respect confidentiality
- Provide a quality service and work continually to improve this service
- Wear badges at all times or produce identity cards

## Contacting Aberdeenshire Council Our Pledge

If you contact us by phone, we will:

- Answer your call promptly, politely and give a name
- Listen carefully to what you say
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- Help you complete forms, when required
- Take clear and concise messages and ensure your message is passed onto the appropriate person
- Deal with your enquiry at first point of contact, whenever possible
- Always pass on full details of your call if we have to transfer your query to someone else
- Specify when we will get back to you if we are unable to give you an answer straight away

## If you contact us in person, we will:

- Make sure that, where practicable and possible, our offices are accessible to everyone. If any office is not accessible to an individual, we will make reasonable efforts to arrange alternative arrangements for a service to be provided
- Display our opening hours
- Make sure our reception areas are clean, tidy and safe
- Greet you at our main reception area within 5 minutes of your arrival
- See you on time if you have an appointment or keep you informed if there is any delay
- Offer you somewhere private to talk to us where applicable
- Let you bring along a friend, relative or support worker to your appointment
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages, as well as Braille, on audio tape and in large print
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- Arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter if you would prefer to use sign language
- Help you to complete forms, when required
- Deal with queries at first point of contact, wherever possible

## If you email, use our internet enquiry service, text message or write to us, we will:

- Acknowledge your enquiry within 3 working days of receipt, and respond with a full reply as quickly as possible and no later than 20 working days. If we can't give a full response within 20 working days, we will contact you and explain why
- Use plain English in our reply
- Give the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the person dealing with your enquiry
- Give you at least 24 hours notice if we need to visit your home
- Visit you within 5 working days of your request for a home visit if required, or sooner if the circumstances demand
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages, as well as Braille, on audio tape and in large print

## If we visit you at home, we will:

- Show our identity card(s) when we arrive
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- Arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter if you would prefer to use sign language

- Help you to complete forms, when required
- If you are out when we arrive, leave a business card, giving the name and telephone number of the person you require to contact
- Not smoke
- Not make unnecessary use of mobile phones in your home
- Not enter parts of your home unnecessarily or which are not affected by the nature of our visit
- Not use your facilities such as electric power, kitchen, toilets etc without your permission
- Not use your private telephone
- Not use radios or similar equipment
- Be responsible for providing any power necessary for carrying out work
- Leave your home clean and safe, at the completion of each working day

## What you can do to help us?

There are ways that you can help us to help you. When you phone us, call in at any of our offices or await our home visit, it will help if you:

- Have with you any letters or documents which relate to your enquiry and by giving us any information we ask for
- Let us know in advance if you might need an interpreter or if you might need information in a different language, Braille or large type
- Let us know if you have particular access needs
- Attend appointments on time, or let us know if you will be late or can't attend as this will help us keep waiting times to a minimum for all customers
- Can be patient, as sometimes offices and phone lines are very busy and we will do all we can to keep waiting times to a minimum

The council has respect for all its customers and employees and our aim is to provide all our customers with a high level of service. You can help us by:

- Treating our staff with respect
- Not using bad language, being abusive, or acting in a threatening manner
- Please do not smoke around our employees
- Respecting the privacy of other customers
- Remembering that we are here to help and assist you

# Customer Feedback – Our Procedures

## What do you think about our services?

We aim to provide quality services that meet the needs of our customers and maintain/improve our standards.

To help us do this, we rely on feedback from all our service users to ensure that we are doing what we say we will do and to help us make improvements to our services.

If you feel we have fallen short of our standards, we want to know where things have gone wrong, so that we can put them right and also improve our services. We will deal fairly and effectively with anyone wanting to complain about our activities or appeal against any of our decisions.

There are a number of channels in place where you can feedback your opinions to us – this could be a complaint, a comment on our service provision or a compliment about our staff and performance. You can:

- Visit us online at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay)
- Visit any of our offices who will accept your feedback and pass onto all relevant persons for review and investigation
- Write to any of our offices who will pass your feedback onto the relevant persons for review and investigation
- Telephone any of our offices who will accept your feedback over the phone and

Aberdeenshire Council welcomes all feedback, positive and negative, and takes all information seriously as it helps us to improve our services to our customers.

Where complaints are received, we will ensure that the following basic principles are adhered to:

- Fair, full and impartial investigation, consistent with legal rights
- Confidential investigation, to maintain the confidentiality of both staff and complainants
- Efficiently investigated, with established time limits set with customers kept fully informed on progress
- All incoming complaint information analysed to help us to identify our areas for improvement in the future

**Complaints are considered to be any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about the standard or way a service is provided, or about lack of action undertaken. If upon fully completing our investigation and response, you are still unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk) who may decide to undertake an independent investigation on your behalf.**

## Contacts

- If you want to find out something about Aberdeenshire, the best thing to do is to go to our website at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk).
  - If you want to visit us, then call at one of our offices in any of the major towns in Aberdeenshire. The offices are listed on our website and in the telephone book.
  - If you want to speak to someone and know their name, then e-mail, telephone or write to that person.
  - If you don't know who you need to speak to, phone us on 08456 08 12 07 and tell us what you need. Or email/write to us at your local Area Manager's office:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Banff and Buchan Area Office<br/>St Leonard's<br/>Sandyhill Road<br/>Banff<br/>AB45 1BH<br/><a href="mailto:banff.buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">banff.buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garioch Area Office<br/>Gordon House<br/>Blackhall Road<br/>Inverurie<br/>AB51 3WB<br/><a href="mailto:garioch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">garioch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buchan Area Office<br/>Arbuthnot House<br/>62 Broad Street<br/>Peterhead<br/>AB42 1DA<br/><a href="mailto:buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kincardine and Mearns Area Office<br/>Viewmount<br/>Arduthie Road<br/>Stonehaven<br/>AB39 2DQ<br/><a href="mailto:kincardine.mearns@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">kincardine.mearns@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formartine Area Office<br/>29 Bridge Street<br/>Ellon<br/>AB41 9AA<br/><a href="mailto:formartine@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">formartine@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marr Area Office<br/>School Road<br/>Alford<br/>AB33 8TY<br/><a href="mailto:marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>  |

### **Alternatively, you can write to:**

Colin Mackenzie  
Chief Executive  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Woodhill House  
Westburn Road  
Aberdeen  
AB16 5GB

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**[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)**