

June 2007 Customer Care Policy

Our vision for customer care

Customer care is important to everyone at Maidstone Borough Council and we are committed to providing excellent services to our customers.

To make sure we are getting it right we will regularly ask customers for their opinions about our services.

Our staff are all committed to delivering excellent customer care and we will ensure all staff have access to the appropriate training.

Our customers have told us it is important to:

- answer enquiries at a single point of contact and right first time
- provide help at a wide range of access points in a variety of ways and at times that suit everyone.

We are working hard to achieve this.

Quality

We will provide a quality service to all our customers and publish charters for customer care and complaints to ensure consistency across the council.

We will monitor and publish how we are doing and how we will improve the areas that need to be improved.

Our staff will treat all your personal information confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Access

We will do our best to make sure that customers speak to the right person, first time.

All our services will be available from all our main receptions, on our web site - www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk and in a wide variety of formats to suit our customers.

We will work with other service providers, so that customers can be put in touch with the right person as seamlessly as possible.

Opening hours

Our main reception at Tonbridge Road and our telephone contact centre will be open:

- 8.30am to 5pm, Mondays to Thursdays
- 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays

Our London Road receptions will be open:

- 8.00am to 5pm, Mondays to Thursdays
- 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays

The Town Hall Visitor Information Centre will be open:

- 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Saturdays
- 10am to 4pm on Sundays

Our main reception at Tonbridge Road will also provide a Planning service on a Monday evening from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

Meeting the needs of every customer

We are committed to equal opportunities. We will provide:

- support and translation services
- clear signage to direct people to where they want to go
- buildings which are accessible and welcoming
- disabled access wherever practicable
- private areas for customers to discuss personal or sensitive matters
- Training for our staff to build awareness and understanding

Our promises – We will:

- Respond to letters within 10 working days. If a full response is likely to take longer, we will write to say when we will send a full reply.
- Answer eighty per cent of telephone calls at the first point of contact.
- Respond to e-mails within two working days. If a full response is likely to take longer, we will write to say when we will send a full reply.
- Answer 90 per cent of telephone calls within 15 seconds (six rings).
- Respond to 85 per cent of personal callers within fifteen minutes.

Making sure it happens:

- We will track, monitor and evaluate our performance to make sure that we keep our promises and make improvements when needed.
- We will listen to comments and learn from customer feedback to improve our services.
- We will tell our customers what has been done, by whom and by when.
- Whenever possible, services will be accessible from our website.
- We will use computer systems, such as document imaging, to speed up and improve services.
- We will make sure that everyone knows what they need to do to achieve good customer care.

Recording your information:

In order to deliver a high quality service most service enquiries will be recorded to ensure a consistent approach to the management of your information across the Council.

Equality and diversity:

We want our services to be accessible and useful to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other factor that may cause a disadvantage.