



CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Policy Owner: Director Corporate Services

Direction: 5. Our Civic Leadership

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 North Sydney Council will provide the highest possible level of service to its customers.
- 1.2 Our service to our customers will reflect our Vision and Core Values. All activities undertaken at Council are focussed on the delivery of service to our customers. Therefore, our service goes beyond the personal contact staff have with the public and encompasses internal procedures and practices that result in efficient service.
- 1.3 Council's staff will be professional at all times and show:
 - a) courtesy in all circumstances;
 - b) accuracy in what they do;
 - c) accountability for the quality of service they deliver;
 - d) integrity in all their dealings;
 - e) consideration for the needs of the customer; and
 - f) promptness in all their actions, keeping people informed of progress.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all permanent, temporary and casual employees and nominated contractors of North Sydney Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Customers - include all customers, whether internal or external.
- 3.2 Nominated contractors - are those whose contracts necessitate their working at Council offices, using Council's facilities and operating in a similar manner to staff.

4. PROVISIONS

Council's primary purpose is the provision of service to both residents and non-residents of the North Sydney local government area.

- 4.1 External Customers - All those seeking assistance from the Council will be accorded a high level of service regardless of the manner in which that assistance is sought.
- 4.2 Internal Customers - Staff will give each other the same level of service as that provided to our external customers, as it is important that internal service standards support the external service delivery.
- 4.3 Courtesy - will be shown in all circumstances, even in difficult situations where the customer does not show similar courtesy in return. Staff will be courteous in their spoken words, body language and demeanour.
- 4.4 Accuracy - Where there is any doubt about the accuracy of any information, the details will be checked and validated prior to release.
- 4.5 Accountability - Staff will look for ways to enhance the quality of service they deliver. Concerns about the quality of service will be referred to the next level management.
- 4.6 Integrity - Staff will act with integrity in all their dealings and comply with all provisions of the Code of Conduct for Staff.
- 4.7 Confidentiality - Staff will ensure personal information is kept confidential.
- 4.8 Consideration - Consideration will be given to the needs of the customer. Staff will be empathetic and respond to the needs of the customer within the constraints of Council's role and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government Regulations 2005*.
- 4.9 Promptness - Staff will meet the Service Level Agreements for their department.

- 4.10 Continuous Improvement - Impediments to good customer service, when identified, will be addressed. Examples might include reviewing procedures, documentation, improving online service provision via the internet and wherever possible to enable customers to complete business over the phone, updating Council's Customer Request Management System. Council recognises that our customers may wish to contact Council in a variety of ways and we are committed to providing choice about how customers can access Council services.
- 4.11 Performance Measurement and Customer Feedback - Council recognises the need for a strategic approach to Customer Service and as such has developed key performance indicators (KPIs).

Staff will be assessed on the quality of their delivery of customer service through Council's Performance Planning and Assessment Process.

Council Staff will aim to achieve the following turnaround times in relation to key areas of customer contact:

- a) Correspondence - all letters and emails will be responded to within 10 working days;
- b) Phone Messages - will be responded to within one working day;
- c) Complaint Handling - the staff member responsible for handling the complaint will provide acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant within five working days. The staff member responsible will also ensure the complainant is kept informed of the progress regarding investigation and resolution of the complaint.

Council will provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback, both if we have not met our service commitment i.e. complaint and also if we have exceeded expectations in relation to our services i.e. compliment.

Customer feedback can be provided:

- a) via Council's Website
 - b) by phone
 - c) in person - Customer Service Centre
 - d) by email
 - e) by fax
 - f) by letter
- 4.12 Training and coaching - will be provided on customer service and general communication skills on a needs basis. In order to meet our commitment to Customer Service, Council will ensure that all staff have access to a range of training and materials to support service delivery.

4.13 Customer Responsibilities - Council requests that customers assist Council staff in our service delivery by:

- a) Treating staff with courtesy and respect;
- b) Respecting the rights of other customers;
- c) Being honest and accurate with information provided to Council;
- d) Working with Council to resolve problems; and
- e) Providing Council with feedback.

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 Each member of staff and/or nominated contractor is:

- a) accountable for the quality of the service they deliver; and
- b) responsible for identifying and reporting any impediments to delivery of good customer service.

5.2 Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- a) monitoring the level of service provided by their staff and nominated contractors and for modelling and coaching good customer service;
- b) acting upon any identified impediments to the delivery of good customer service;
- c) assessing staff against the customer service criteria established in the Performance and Planning Assessment (PPA) in identifying training needs.

5.3 Directors are accountable for ensuring consistently high levels of customer service in their Divisions.

5.4 Council's Workforce Planning Department is responsible for arranging any training and/or coaching on customer service and communication skills.

6. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Disruptive and Abusive Customers Exclusions Policy
- Managing Unreasonable Complaints Conduct Policy
- Open Government Policy

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- Telephone and Voicemail Policy (staff policy)

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	2 August 2004	Council	794	2008/09
2	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
3	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
4	25 June 2018	Council	214	2020/21