

Customer Standards

One in a million

Each year, Bassetlaw DC receives nearly 60,000 face-to-face enquiries mainly through the two one stop shops in Worksop and Retford.

Many more than that use our cashier facilities, we get 200,000 paying customers who we see, and more we don't see but are grateful for their Direct Debits. We love to hear from hundred of thousands more who telephone our Direct Dial and switchboard lines.

With over a million types of citizen and business interaction each year, we are constantly looking at ways to improve customer service. We believe that if we improve quality of service and access to information without driving up overall costs, it will lead to improved customer satisfaction.

Work in progress includes improvements to our website (www.bassetlaw.gov.uk) and our Speak up. we're listening campaign to encourage feedback. We have extended hours of telephony from January 2009 and a new A1 Housing property shop at Retford from February 2009. It's going to be a busy year of customer access improvements.

Stepping back from these key areas, it is getting the basics right that matters most to customers and that means setting out **customer standards**. The Council's Cabinet approved new standards in 2008, many of which we can monitor and ensure progress is being made.

Just as important to us is that our customers have signed up to the new standards. We put these to our Citizen's panel last year. Our standards developed under our Customer First programme are set out below. They define the service customers can expect from us because to us, customers are **one in a million**.

Customer Standards

When you visit

1. Council offices for customer enquiries and payments will be open from 0840 am to 5pm weekdays, This includes our One Stop Shops at Worksop and Retford.
2. We will clearly display our opening times and out of hours customer access information for emergencies.
3. Our 2 One Stop Shops will provide modern customer facilities, including ease of access, comfort features including WC, clear signage and respect for your privacy.
4. All customers will have access to services, regardless of language, disability, gender, religion, age or learning.
5. All customers will be greeted and treated in a courteous manner by staff who will give you their full attention.

6. All front line staff will wear a name badge so that you will know who is advising you.
7. We will provide a free phone service at our One Stop Shops for A1 Housing repairs and to contact other council offices.
8. Our One Stop Shop staff aim to see you about your enquiry within 3 minutes of your arrival at reception. If you need to see another specialist advisor, we aim for you to see that person within 10 minutes.
9. We will not accept abusive, violent behaviour or harassment towards our staff or other customers.
10. Satisfaction with customer services will be measured every 6 months and the results published.
11. Customer comments such as feedback, compliments, grumbles and complaints will be recorded, acted upon and results published (with names/addresses removed).
12. With our network of Help Points in rural villages and Mobile Unit,, we offer you access to video link or face-to-face help from council staff, within a short distance of where you live.

When you telephone

13. Our direct dial numbers will be stated in all correspondence and letters.
14. Council offices for customer enquiries will be open from 0840 am to 5pm weekdays In 2009, we will also run an extended hours telephone service on (01909) 533533 until 8pm and on Saturdays 8am to noon. We have an emergency service on (01909) 501999 and a 24 hour payment line on (01777) 713864
15. We aim to answer 90% of all direct dial calls within 10 seconds or 95% of switchboard calls within 20 seconds.
16. All callers will be treated in a courteous and helpful manner and you will not be kept waiting by push button automated options systems.
17. If we cannot resolve your telephone enquiry there and then, we will arrange for a call back within 2 hours or first thing the next working day.
18. If you call our switchboard and we put you through elsewhere, we will tell you who we are putting the call through to and we will brief the next advisor.

When you write to us by letter or e mail

19. We set out clearly our contact details on all forms of communications we send.

20. When you write to us, we will acknowledge your letter within 5 days and issue a full reply within 15 working days.
21. All our replies, by letter and e mail will be/have/include:-
- In plain English
 - Clear explanation and full answer given
 - Courteous
 - Professional
 - Properly laid out
 - Properly addressed including your name
 - Name of a contact officer and their job title and department
 - Telephone contact details of sender
22. You may e mail enquiries to customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk and will ensure the reply has the same elements as for letters, plus...
- Not in "text speak"
 - Immediately acknowledged then replied to within 5 working days

Keeping you informed and listening to you

23. We will operate a complaints and feedback approach, called "Speak up , we're listening", which will make it easy for you to make a complaint or service suggestion/compliment in many ways, including in person, by letter or telephone, by e-mail to a single point.
24. We acknowledge complaints etc within 5 days and respond within 15 working days.
25. If you are not satisfied with a complaint investigation and reply, you can take it to another stage involving review by the council's chief executive.
26. We will publish complaints and feedback information in our One Stop Shops and on our website. This will show what lessons we may have learned to put things right, without showing information about the complainant.
27. We will use a number of ways to consult with customers to improve services, including exit and postal surveys and use of citizen's panels.
28. Our services will be designed around customer needs, not our needs, e.g. if you need to report someone who has died, we will not pass you around various departments. *We aim to resolve at least 80% of face to face enquiries at the first point of contact*
29. We will update our web site (www.bassetlaw.gov.uk) regularly.

30. We will mystery shop our compliance with these standards twice yearly and take action on outcomes to further improve services