



Customer Relations

Newtownabbey Borough Council

Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey BT36 5QA

Tel: 028 9034 0000

Email: info@newtownabbey.gov.uk

Web: www.newtownabbey.gov.uk

Alternative formats are available on request.

2005



Newtownabbey

BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Charter for Customers

Your guide to the Council



Chief Executive's introduction

I hope you will find the Council's 'Customer Charter' useful and that it will give you a better understanding of the services and the standards of service you can expect from the Council.

The aim of the Council is:

'to promote and improve Newtownabbey for the benefit of all who live in, work in, or visit the Borough'.

To achieve this aim we will:

- consult our customers to identify and meet their needs
- work in partnership with others
- treat everyone equally
- promote best practice and innovation
- work in an open and accountable way.

'Our Customers' is one of the key themes in the council strategy. We therefore aim:


'to ensure that all services and standards meet the identified needs of our customers and to regularly review and publish our performance against these standards'.

In this booklet we have:

- explained how to contact the Council
- detailed our customers' rights and responsibilities
- stated the standard you can expect from all our services
- detailed our complaints procedure
- stated how we consult you and keep you informed
- listed the services for which we are responsible and given details of other organisations you may want to contact.

Details of the standards for all our services are available on request.

Your opinion matters to us and we will take every opportunity to improve the quality of our service to you. If you are happy or unhappy with our standards of service, we would like to hear from you.



NORMAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Service First



How to contact the Council

Calling in person

You may visit our offices at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey. They are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. If you need directions, please telephone reception on 028 9034 0000.

Telephone

Our telephone lines are open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and a voice message is available 24 hours a day. Please ring reception on 028 9034 0000.

A text phone service is available for the profoundly deaf on 028 9034 0109. We are also registered with BT Typetalk.

Email and website

Email: info@newtownabbey.gov.uk Website: www.newtownabbey.gov.uk

Writing

Write to us at Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey, BT36 5QA. Alternatively, fill in one of our freepost 'Comment or Complaint' cards. You can get a card from any of our offices, or phone to ask for one.

Send a fax to 028 9034 0200.

Through your local Councillor

You may contact a local Councillor about any concerns you may have. They will take up the matter on your behalf with the appropriate officer in the Council. Call us for details of your local Councillors or see the list on our website.

Text message

You can send us a text message from your mobile phone. Call 078 16 225 290 and start the message with NBC. For example, NBC Street needs cleaning on Moss Road.



Our promises to you

The Council is committed to providing a high-quality service to our customers.

Our commitment to you means that Council staff will:

- be friendly, helpful, approachable and professional
- respond quickly and efficiently to requests for Council services
- respond promptly to all enquiries about our services
- give you straightforward information about our services
- answer telephone calls quickly and help you to use our facilities
- consult customers regularly and take account of their comments
- promote equality and fair treatment
- aim to offer you value for money
- aim to continuously improve our services for customers.



Help us to help you

We can give you a better service if you:

- let us have your ideas, comments and suggestions
- tell us at once if you are dissatisfied, and give as much information as possible
- comply with health and safety regulations, which are there to protect you
- help care for our environment
- let us know about services you are satisfied with.



Our standards

You should expect the following standards from all Council services.

Service for all

We aim to provide services that everyone can use, and will ensure that all our premises are accessible to every customer. We will respect each person's privacy, dignity, and religious and cultural beliefs.

Clear and concise information

We will inform you about our services and facilities and how to use them. We will aim to ensure that the information is easy to read.

We will make information available, on request, in accessible formats such as large print or audiocassette. Our website is available in large text for people with impaired sight, and also uses speech output displays for people who are blind.

Courteous service

Our service will be polite and welcoming. Staff dealing with the public will normally wear identity badges and deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible. Reception areas will be clean, comfortable and smoke free, with all facilities well signposted.

We will try to see you within 5 minutes of your arrival. If you have to wait longer than this, we will explain why.

Confidentiality will be respected. Where necessary we will provide private interview facilities and access to a telephone.

All our staff receive regular customer care training to ensure that they are friendly, helpful and knowledgeable.



Answering the telephone

We aim to answer 90% of all calls within 10 seconds of the first ring. We will then connect you as quickly as possible to the person you need to speak to.

If we cannot connect you, we will tell you that there is a delay and that you can leave a message on an answering service. We will get back to you within one working day of receiving an enquiry on the answer phone.

All staff answering the switchboard will state the Council's name. Staff answering the telephones will state the section and their name.

We will aim to transfer you only once to have a query answered. If necessary, we will take your details and get back to you with the information you want.

When the service you are asking about is outside the Council, we will direct you to the correct service provider. In some cases we may make enquiries on your behalf with the service provider.

Dealing with queries

We will respond to all queries, letters and emails within 3 working days of receiving them. If the matter is complex and needs more attention, we will contact you to explain the reason for the delay and, if possible, say when you should get a full response. If it involves a long investigation, we will inform you of progress at least every 15 working days.

All our letters to customers will be written in plain English and free of unexplained technical language. They will name a person and telephone number for you to contact.

Visits by Council staff

If a member of staff has to visit your home, this will normally happen at an agreed time that suits you. Any Council officer visiting your home will show an official identity card without being asked. If you have any doubt about the authority of a particular officer, you should check by phoning the relevant Council department.

If you have to cancel an appointment, please inform the officer at least 24 hours in advance.



Complaints procedure

As a Council we try to get things right first time. However, sometimes we don't succeed. If you are not satisfied with something we have done, you have the right to complain. You can complain by phone, in person, in writing, using a Comment Card or through the website.

Our complaints procedure is confidential. It has two stages to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fully and fairly.

Stage 1: Your complaint

As the first step, the department responsible for the service will deal with your complaint. The department will acknowledge your complaint by telephone or letter within 3 working days of receiving it. The department will issue a full reply within 10 working days. If this target cannot be met, you will be told of the delay, the reason for the delay, and when to expect a response. We aim to resolve 90% of complaints within 10 working days.

Stage 2: What to do if your complaint has been investigated, but you are still not satisfied

At this stage the complaint will be dealt with by the Customer Relations Officer and the appropriate Director. Again, we will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to resolve it within 10 working days.

If you are still not satisfied, what can you do?

If your complaint has still not been settled to your satisfaction, the Chief Executive can refer you to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman. You can contact the Ombudsman:

by writing to: The Ombudsman
 Freepost BEL 1478
 Belfast BT1 6BR

or by phoning: 0800 34 34 24

We monitor the way we deal with complaints to ensure we meet our targets for handling and resolving them. We regularly publish details of how well we have met our targets and how we have dealt with complaints.



Listening to our customers

To ensure that our standards meet our customers' requirements, we will always consider your views and opinions. As a customer you must have the opportunity to influence the decisions we make on your behalf.

To help us improve our services, we will take on board your views in several ways:

- conduct a regular residents' satisfaction survey and aim to keep satisfaction levels above 80%
- consider the findings from regular consultations with customers of all our services, and act on these findings
- invite your comments on our services through the 'Comment or Complaint' cards, our Council magazine - 'Source', our on-line comment forms and surveys
- distribute the Customer Charter to Councillors who, as representatives of the community, will review our standards and provide feedback
- apply for quality awards for our key services - for example, the Charter Mark we gained for Bruslee Recycling & Civic Amenity Site.

We want to make it easy for you to give us your views and concerns, and aim to make our services more responsive to your needs. If you are happy or unhappy with us or with our services, we want to hear about it.



Keeping you informed

We aim to ensure that we communicate well with our customers, and we will give you information in the following ways:

- our magazine 'Source', delivered 3 times a year to all homes and businesses in the Borough
- the Council's award-winning website www.newtownabbey.gov.uk
- our information stands in local shopping centres
- information on display in Council premises
- news releases to the media
- our Corporate Plan
- a wide range of information leaflets
- events mailing list
- electronic display stands.



A-Z of Council services

A	Abandoned Cars	028 9034 0157	I	Illegal Dumping	028 9034 0157
	Air Pollution	028 9034 0169	J	Jordanstown Caravan Park	028 9034 0060
	Alcohol Free Zones	028 9034 0099	L	Litter Removal	028 9034 0057
	Arts Development	028 9034 0063		Local Agenda 21	028 9034 0077
B	Ballyearl Arts & Leisure Centre	028 9084 8287	M	Marketing & Public Relations	028 9034 0028
	Best Value Initiative	028 9034 0038		Mayor's Office	028 9034 0002
	Births, Deaths & Marriages	028 9034 0180		Museums & Heritage	028 9034 0064
	Bowling Green Bookings	028 9034 0060/61	N	Noisy Neighbours	028 9034 0175
	Bruslee Recycling & Civic Amenity Site	028 9335 2122	P	Parks & Play Areas	028 9034 0042
	Building Control	028 9034 0140		Pest Control (Ballymena)	028 2566 5818
C	Cemeteries Administration	028 9034 0080		Play Development	028 9034 0065
	Cemeteries Maintenance	028 9034 0042		Project Development	028 9034 0078
	Civic Events	028 9034 0034		Property Certificates	028 9034 0097
	Community Services	028 9034 0066		Public Toilets	028 9034 0059
	Community Centres Bookings	028 9034 0060	R	Recycling Enquiries	028 9034 0077
	Ballyduff, Monkstown, Rushpark			Refuse Collection	028 9034 0057/56
	Rathfern & Glengormley			Restaurant Mossley Mill	028 9034 0023
	Community Safety Partnership	028 9034 0070	S	Sixmile Leisure Centre	028 9334 1818
	Consumer Safety	028 9034 0168		Society Lotteries	028 9034 0099
	Contacting Council Members	028 9034 0099		Sports Development	028 9034 0067
	Council & Committee Administration	028 9034 0099		Sports Grounds	028 9034 0061
	Countryside Access	028 9034 0076		Street Cleansing	028 9034 0057/ 56
	Customer Relations	028 9034 0031		Street Naming	028 9034 0141
	Cycle Ways	028 9034 0076		Street Name Plates	028 9034 0046
D	Dangerous Structures	028 9034 0141	T	Tenders	028 9034 0090
	District Policing Partnership (DPP)	028 9034 0011		Tennis Court Bookings	028 9034 0061
	Dog Licences	028 9034 0158/59		Tourist Development	028 9034 0071
	Dog Warden	028 9034 0178		Tourist Information	028 9034 0000
	After-Hours	028 9036 4111		Town Hall Bookings	028 9034 0060
	After-Hours	028 9334 2017		Town Twinning	028 9034 0072
	Dog Fouling	028 9034 0170	V	Valley Leisure Centre	028 9086 1211
	Dog Bins	028 9034 0178	W	Waste Collections	028 9034 0057/56
E	Economic Development	028 9034 0072		Black Bins / Blue Bins / Brown Bins	028 9034 0057/56
	Entertainment Licences	028 9034 0171		Buying a Bin	028 9034 0057/56
	Environmental Health	028 9034 0161		Bulky Household Items	028 9034 0057/56
	Equality Scheme	028 9034 0038	Z	ZEST Leisure Membership	028 9086 1211
	Events Hotline	028 9034 0202			
F	Finance & Accounts	028 9034 0127			
	Food Hygiene	028 9034 0176			
G	Good Relations	028 9034 0033			
	Graffiti Removal	028 9034 0056/57			
	Grave Purchase	028 9034 0080			
H	Health & Safety in the Workplace	028 9034 0165			
	Human Resources	028 9034 0084			



Services the Council is not responsible for

Here is a list of local services that we are not responsible for, with their contact details:

Electoral Office (Newtownabbey)	028 9034 2263
Land Registry of NI	028 9025 1555
NE Education & Library Board	028 2565 3333
Newtownabbey Local Strategy Partnership	028 9034 0197
Northern Health & Social Services Board Patient and Client Information	028 2565 3333 084 57 626 428
NI Housing Executive Rathcoole Office	028 9036 5911
New Mossley Office	028 9084 3711
Grants Office, Ballyclare	028 9335 2849
Ordnance Survey	028 9025 5755
Planning Service	028 9025 2800
Rate Collection Agency	028 9025 2757
Roads Service (grass verges and road repairs)	028 9025 4057
Social Security Agency Newtownabbey Office	028 9025 0888
Antrim Office	028 9442 6500
Ballyclare Office	028 9335 2822
Street Lighting	028 9025 3051
Town Centre Management Company	028 9034 0039
Water Pollution	0800 807 060
Water Service (24-Hour Customer Service)	084 57 440 088
Northern Ireland Electricity	084 57 455 455