



Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards

Whenever customers have contact with Gristwood and Toms they will receive consistently high standards of customer service. These standards will ensure that all sections of the community are able to access our services. We are committed to ensuring that customer service excellence is an integral part of the planning, resourcing, and delivery of our services.

Policy Statement

As an organisation we will be:

- Helpful and courteous in delivering high quality services.
- Professional and positive in our approach, taking pride in what we do.
- Well informed, so that our customers know what they can expect from us.
- Effective in listening to customers when they express dissatisfaction or complain.
- Fair and equitable towards individuals and communities with differing needs.

Who are our customers?

Our customers are all the people we come into contact with in connection with our work. This includes people who live in, work in or visit the area, and people acting on behalf of people who live in the area. We are very conscious of the fact that we are often the 'villain of the piece' when we are slowing down traffic or even closing roads.

What do our customers want?

Our customers want accessible, efficient, consistent and responsive services and information, and we must strive to meet these demands.

What is customer care and why is it so important?

Because poor customer care is expensive – it loses customers, potential and existing clients and hard-fought reputations.

Customer care means:

- Providing a good quality service in a friendly, efficient and helpful way.
- Treating other people how they would like to be treated.
- Treating each person as an individual.
- Treating people with dignity, respect and courtesy.
- Offering choices where possible.
- Clearly explaining when there are no choices.

In order to do this we must understand and recognise that all our customers are different and that they all have diverse needs. These differences and needs can be based on culture, language, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, literacy, sexual orientation or religion.

Good customer care is about having a positive attitude towards, and respect for, diversity and in turn, having the flexibility to adapt our behaviour and actions in a way that is appropriate for the individual.

Why do we need customer care standards?

Apart from the common sense business approach stated above there are other good reasons for adopting customer care standards.

Customer care standards set out the expectations on our employees in their work, and ensure that we become and remain a customer-focussed organisation. In particular, these standards define a corporate customer care framework for the achievement of excellent customer service which ensures that all customers, whether they are residents or visitors, receive the same consistent, high standards of customer service.

How do we maintain our Customer Care Policy?

The development of our Customer Care Policy is an important part of our Human Resource Strategy, which aims to ensure that our workforce can organise and deliver quality services. This is delivered by:

- focusing on service priorities
- reshaping our organisation on a regular basis
- developing our skills and performance
- improving internal and external communication

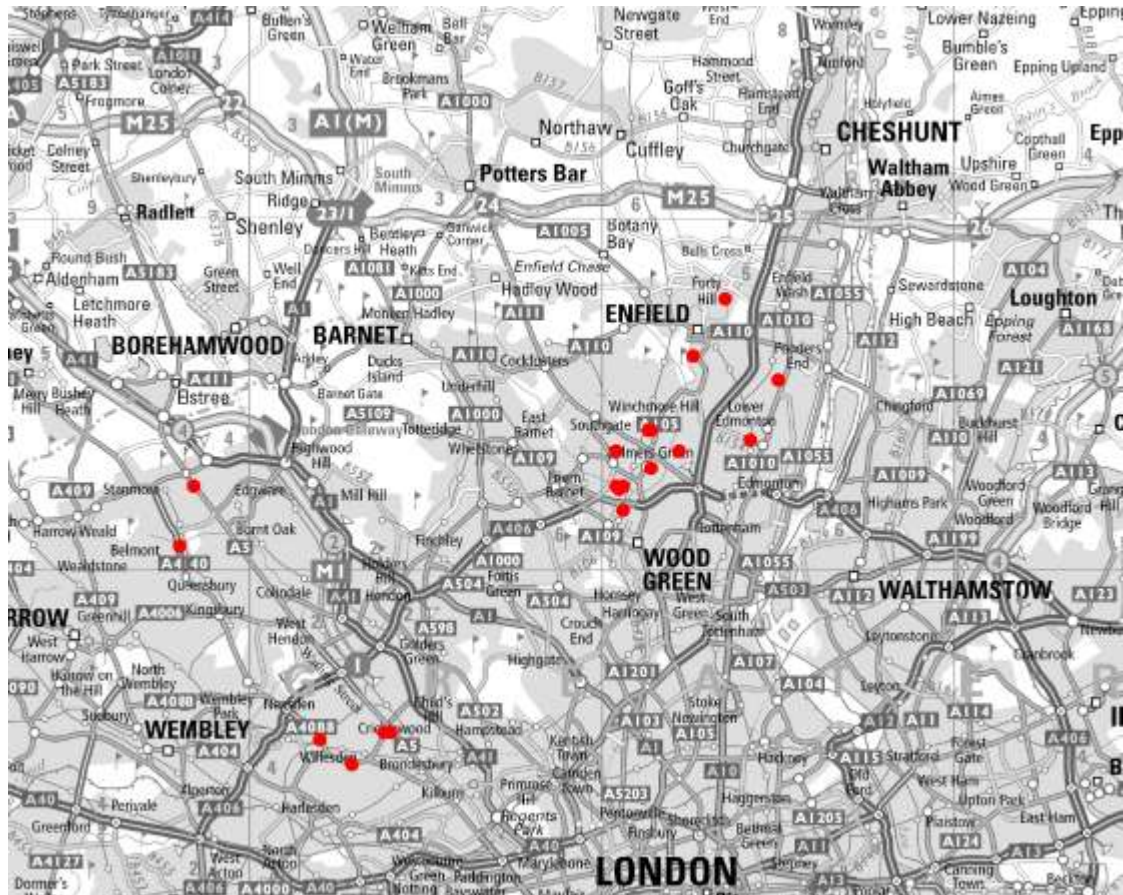
Specific training will be provided to staff to help them carry out the Customer Care Policy.

How will we measure our success?

Our Customer Care Policy is supported by Customer Care Standards.

We will monitor our performance through self-assessment and through receiving feedback from internal and external inspections.

Please find below an example of how we now map complaints, for example, to demonstrate if there are any patterns or trends that would allow us to improve.



Complaints received from Brent and Enfield contracts

In the near future, our customers will be even more involved in setting and monitoring standards, through the use of more formal means of consultation to further enhance our services.

Customer Care Standards

General

- We will be polite and courteous
- We will provide advice as and when appropriate
- We will do our best to take ownership and provide information/advice about other local services that are not provided by us or point customers in the right direction
- We will keep records, analyse them and act upon the analysis
- We will undertake work as we said we would, and in the time that we said we would, or will provide timely information to explain why this is not the case
- We will keep customers informed at all stages of work
- We will provide a safe environment for our customers

Telephone Contact

- We will answer calls within five rings
- We will greet callers politely and give our Company name
- We will try to identify any special needs
- We will thank the caller for their call
- We will only use Voicemail in rare circumstances
- We will operate an Out of hours answerphone
- We will ensure that messages on voicemail and answerphones are clear and audible by testing them
- We will respond to voicemail and other messages within 24 hours

Written Contact (including emails)

- We will reply to all correspondence, including Councillors' enquiries, within one working day
- We will provide a contact name, office address, email address and direct dial number in the letter
- We will acknowledge complaints within one working day and complete the investigation within 10 days
- We will write in plain English (as far as the technical aspects of our work allow)
- Where we require any assistance with translation we shall contact the Council

Face to Face Contact

- We will have uniformed front line staff
- We will have name badges for all staff
- We will use id cards and show them to all customers upon request
- We will encourage customers to check with the Council to verify our id
- We will have the Company name on all vehicles
- We will keep any appointment made and will inform people well in advance if we have to cancel it

- We will explain work to the customer as simply as possible and explain the next steps if further work is required

In developing these standards we sought to -

- Set standards which are user-friendly, customer-focused and measurable
- Clearly state how staff should behave in dealing with customers
- Ensure that the customer's safety is as high a priority as any other matter
- Set performance targets which can be reviewed regularly
- Give consideration to legislation, good practice and national standards
- Ensure staff are equipped to deliver services effectively and considerately

Signed



Dave Gristwood
Director
01/07/09



Andy Toms
Director
01/07/09