



Customer Service Standards

Revised May 2021

Committed to putting our residents first

Hillingdon Council is committed to putting our residents at the heart of everything we do and providing excellent customer service. These standards ensure that we have a consistent approach across the council to customer care and it is important that all employees follow them.

We will:

- treat people with respect and be polite at all times
- provide quality services to all our customers
- avoid using jargon, so that people are clear about the information we give
- encourage people to give feedback about the council so we can continue to improve our services

Help us to help you

To help us deal with your enquiry, we ask that you:

- are courteous to our staff at all times
- treat everyone with respect regardless of how you contact us
- help us to keep our environment clean and safe when you visit
- tell us in a timely manner when things go wrong
- provide additional information in a timely manner, if requested

People can contact us in a range of ways:

1. Online

Often the quickest way to resolve your enquiry will be to use our online services, which can be found on our website by visiting www.hillingdon.gov.uk/doitonline. Here you will find information on how to access our services and be able to report any issues you have, such as a missed collection, pay a bill, submit a complaint or compliment about the services we have provided.

When people use our online services, we will:

- make it easy for people to find and access the online services they require 24 hours a day and seven days a week
- aim to keep all pages relevant and up to date
- ensure that people can make payments, fill in forms, report and request services
- make sure all pages are easily viewable on all devices

If your enquiry cannot be resolved using our online services, you could:

2. Telephone

- **Council's Contact Centre**

The majority of incoming telephone calls to the council will be made to the Customer Contact Centre, which is responsible for answering telephone enquiries between 8 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday. The Council's Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre is open between 9 am and 5 pm. The Contact Centre teams are fully trained and will be able to deal with the vast majority of calls they receive.

- **Other council staff**

Our staff will:

- answer telephone calls within three rings by giving their name and the name of the team they work in
- if a member of staff is away from their desk, they will transfer their call to someone else within the office/team to take a message. Managers will make arrangements for the team/department/service area telephones to be answered during core times, including lunch times

3. In writing

When an enquiry is received by email or by post, we will:

- aim to respond in full within 10 working days of receipt and the response will aim to deal with all of the issues raised
- the reply will give the name of the officer, their title, the team they work in and their telephone number when responding to the enquiry
- an out-of-office message will be sent if an officer is away from the office when you send an email

4. Face-to-face meeting

When people visit us:

- we will be required to apply the current Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time of your visit and you may wish to call before you visit
- we will display clear and accurate signage
- we will provide self service facilities, where appropriate
- if someone has an appointment, we will aim to see them as quickly as possible and within 15 minutes of their arrival
- if a visitor does not have an appointment the appropriate service officer, will aim to see them within 30 minutes of their arrival
- when we meet people either in the Civic Centre or elsewhere, we will wear our identity badge with our name and photograph displayed at all times

Standards of appearance

- we will dress smartly and appropriately for the duties that are undertaken and be mindful of our overall appearance

5. Customer feedback

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received and wish to make a formal complaint:

- we will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within three working days of receipt and tell you who is going to investigate your concerns, the complaint reference number and when you can expect the response to be sent to you
- we will aim to respond to formal complaints within 10 working days and the response will tell you how to escalate the complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the response you received. The timescale for responding to Adult Social Care complaints is 20 working days
- if there is going to be a delay in responding to a complaint, we will inform you of this

Compliments

If you are pleased with our service, please let us know online at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/feedback, calling 01895 277335 or by writing to Hillingdon Council, 3E/07, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW.

6. ICT Code of Conduct

We will:

- comply with the Code of Conduct when using the council's ICT facilities

7. Requests for information

We will:

- protect the personal information we hold on our records in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations
- supply information requested in Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days, except in exceptional circumstances
- respond to Subject Access requests within one month of receipt, except in exceptional circumstances

8. Members' Enquiries

When an enquiry is received from an Elected Member, we will:

- acknowledge receipt of an enquiry within two working days of receipt
- aim to respond within 10 working days of receipt

9. Petitions

Anyone who lives in the borough can sign or organise a paper or electronic petition. The petition organiser must live within the borough.

To be valid, the council requires the minimum number of signatories as shown in the table:

| Number of signatories required | <i>Paper petition</i> | <i>Electronic petition</i> |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| About council service matters | 20 | 100 |
| On a live planning or licensing application | 20 | 20 |

Paper petitions should show the full name, address and signature of every person signing it.

For electronic petitions, an indication of residency within the borough will be required through the online system used.

For valid petitions about council service matters:

- we will acknowledge receipt within five working days to the petition organiser, and detail what the council plans to do with the petition
- if the petitioner organiser is not satisfied with the proposed action, we will arrange a petition hearing so they can speak directly to the relevant Cabinet Member on the matter
- we will contact the petition organiser about three weeks before the date set for the petition hearing about attending and speaking
- prior to the petition hearing date, we will send the petition organiser a copy of a formal report prepared on their petition that the Cabinet Member will consider. We will also publish the report on our website for other interested residents to view
- following the petition hearing, we will confirm with the petition organiser the decision made by the Cabinet Member within five working days, detailing the action that was agreed to be taken in relation to their petition

Valid petitions about live planning or licensing application:

- we will acknowledge receipt of such petitions within five working days to the petition organiser and inform them about their right to speak on the application when it formally comes before the relevant committee for decision
- once a date is set for the application to be considered, we will contact the petition organiser again, before the date of the committee meeting, about how they can put their views direct to the councillors on the committee making the decision
- the day after the meeting, we will confirm the decision made by the committee on our website and, wherever possible, make the meeting available on our YouTube channel for other interested residents to view