



Customer Charter Booklet



Customer Charter

Improving the quality of life for all our people.

The Council is working to improve the quality of life for all the people in Down District, which means providing the best possible services. This Charter describes our commitment to you and the standards that you can expect from us.

Our promise to you

- To provide the services that the Down district community needs
- To make sure our services are provided by staff who are trained and well informed
- To provide easy-to-understand information about our services
- To make sure everyone can obtain appropriate services
- To consult you about changes to our services
- To keep you informed about our progress
- To be just and fair.

Our staff

When talking with our staff they will:

- Be polite, helpful and treat you with respect
- Identify themselves
- Listen carefully in order to understand and respond to your needs
- Give you an explanation of their actions.

When you telephone us

- We aim to answer your call within 6 rings
- You will be directed to someone who can deal with your enquiry
- The person dealing with your enquiry will give their name
- If the person you need to speak to is not available we will try to help, take a message or arrange for someone to ring you back.

When you write to us (or email)

- We aim to acknowledge receipt within 3 working days
- We aim to reply in full within 10 working days
- Where it is not possible to reply within 10 working days we will give you an explanation
- Our reply will identify the member of staff who is dealing with your enquiry.

Visiting our facilities

- We seek to provide easy access for all visitors to our facilities
- Our facilities will be clean, welcoming and provide information about the Council's services
- Our reception staff will welcome you and endeavour to see you promptly
- We will make sure you see someone appropriate to deal with your enquiry, arrange an appointment or contact you as necessary
- We will endeavour to provide an interpreter or other support if needed, which may require an appointment
- If your appointment is delayed by more than 10 minutes we will give you an explanation
- If you cannot visit one of our offices we will make other arrangements for you.

Listening to your views

We are interested in your views about our services, both good or bad and would welcome your comments. If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received please refer to page 8 which details our Complaints Procedure.

The standards you can expect from our services

Down District Council aims to provide services to its customers to the following standards:

Street Cleansing

- Cleanse the main street and footpaths of towns and large villages everyday, including the adjoining streets of our main towns (Ballynahinch, Downpatrick, and Newcastle)
- Cleanse all streets other than the main street, in towns and villages once every fortnight
- Cleanse all play areas once a week
- Cleanse all housing estates every 4 weeks
- Empty all litter bins in towns and large villages every day
- Carry out same day clean up in the case of a notified special event, with associated bins being collected within 24 hours
- Respond to reported instances of unacceptable littering within 48 hours, when appropriate.

Refuse Collection

- Collect household waste as per the published calendar. Commercial waste as per agreed contract
- Collect waste within 2 working days that have missed their collection (due to Council error)
- Bulky waste collection on an agreed date.

Grounds Maintenance

- Maintain Council open spaces, play areas, and recreational grounds as per work timetable
- Provide and maintain seasonal floral displays throughout the year
- Maintain Council cemeteries on a regular basis
- Introduction of wildflower meadows and sustainable planting.

Finance

- Pay outstanding accounts within 30 working days.

Dog Control

- Commence investigation into an attack on a person or livestock within 1 working day of notification
- Respond to general enquiries within 2 working days
- Respond to complaints about stray dogs within 2 working days of request
- Arrange collection of an unwanted dog within 2 working days of request.

Dog Licensing

- Process a postal application for a dog licence within 3 working days of receipt.

Entertainment Licensing

- Register and receipt applications within 3 working days
- Respond to a request for inspection of premises within 10 working days
- Provide written advice to businesses within 5 working days following inspection of premises
- Issue licenses within 5 working days of Council approval being granted.

Alcohol Byelaws

- Review, on a yearly basis, areas designated under the Alcohol Byelaws prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public places and include new areas identified as having a problem
- Operate a zero tolerance policy in respect of breach of the byelaw and prosecute all cases referred to the Council from the PSNI
- Seek to recover legal costs of prosecution in all cases.

Building Control

- Acknowledge applications within 3 working days of receipt
- First Time Plan Check within 18 working days of receipt
- Amended Plans checked within 16 working days of receipt
- Completion Certificates issued within 3 working days of receipt
- If you request an inspection before 10am we will visit your site the same day
- Saturday and Evening inspections can be arranged to suit your needs.

Building Services

- Maintain Council buildings, property and facilities in accordance with a planned maintenance programme ensuring they are pleasant, safe and healthy to visit, use and accommodate
- Provide an inspection and repair service in accordance with schedules that ensure safety issues and defects are quickly repaired
- Ensure capital projects are delivered to agreed time, quality, cost and environmental targets
- Provide a burial service at Council cemeteries in accordance with agreed timetables 365 days a year.

Environmental Health

- Commence the investigation of food / food premises complaints within 2 working days of receipt
- Commence investigation into confirmed cases of infectious disease within 2 working days of receipt of notification
- Commence investigation into all Environmental Health related complaints within 2 working days of receipt
- Respond to requests for pest control advice within 2 working days of receipt
- Commence all work related accident investigations within 2 working days.

Recruitment

- Provide job application forms within 3 working days of request
- Keep candidates informed at each stage of the selection process
- Provide feedback to all candidates on request.

Leisure Services

- Staff will be polite, friendly and informative. They will be trained and appropriately qualified to national standards
- All staff will be easily identifiable by wearing corporate uniform including their name badge
- Facilities will be monitored hourly and kept to a high standard, providing a safe clean environment and will be set out to meet your requirements
- The time and availability of services will be published in an up-to-date centre programme
- Every part of our service will reflect quality and operate to Quest standards. If things go wrong we will take whatever practical steps we can to put it right immediately.

If we don't meet our standards

If our service falls short of our specified standards we want to hear from you. We have a three-stage Complaints Procedure which you can use for this purpose.

Stage 1: Informal (maximum 10 working days)

At this stage each service handles its own complaints. The relevant service will investigate the complaint, research the issues raised, prepare and send out a full response to the complainant.

You may make a complaint in writing, by telephone, by email or by calling in person at the Council offices or at any Council facility. A complaint may also be made through a Councillor, or another individual or organisation may complain on your behalf.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days of receipt, and aim to resolve the matter within 10 working days from the time we hear from you. If you are not satisfied with the response you can ask for a further review, see Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal (maximum 15 working days)

If you are not happy with the response to your complaint you may contact the Director of the service with details of the complaint, the service's response and the reasons why you are not satisfied.

The Director will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days of receipt with a full reply in 15 working days. If you are still not satisfied you may ask for a further review, see Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 3: Formal (maximum 15 working days)

If you are not happy contact the Clerk and Chief Executive with details of the complaint and the reasons for not being satisfied with the previous responses.

The Clerk's office will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days of receipt with a full reply within 15 working days.

Following investigation the Clerk and Chief Executive will write to the complainant giving the Council's final response to the complaint.

If you're still not satisfied you may ask the Northern Ireland Ombudsman to investigate your complaint.

The Ombudsman may be contacted by:

Telephone: 0800 343424 (Freephone)

Fax: (028) 9023 4912

E-mail: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

Writing to The Ombudsman, Freepost, Belfast BT1 6BR or

Calling at The Ombudsman's Office, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast BT1 6HN

Keeping you informed

We will keep you informed of what we are doing, and how we are doing it, through:

- The Council's Web site at www.downdc.gov.uk
- The Council's Corporate Plan
- The Council's Annual Report
- News stories and messages in the media
- A range of information leaflets.

Alternative Formats

You can obtain a copy of this Customer Charter, Down District Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Report on request, in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disc and audiocassette and other languages by contacting the Administration Department, Down District Council, 24 Strangford Road, Co Down, BT30 6SR. Tel: (028) 4461 0800

Contact details

Building Control

Building Control / Dangerous Buildings /
Entertainment Licences

Telephone: (028) 4461 0829
Helpline: (028) 4461 0848
Fax: (028) 4461 0845

Building Services

Telephone: (028) 4461 0868
Fax: (028) 4461 0860

South Eastern Group / Estates Management /
Project Management

Telephone: (028) 4461 0827
Fax: (028) 4461 0830

Chairman & Chief Executive Office

Chairman & Chief Executive

Telephone: (028) 4461 0802

Corporate Services

Accounts Payable

Telephone: (028) 4461 0810

Births, Deaths & Marriages

Telephone: (028) 4461 0825

Human Resources

Telephone: (028) 4461 0805
Fax: (028) 4461 0859

Licensing

Telephone: (028) 4461 0808

Payroll

Telephone: (028) 4461 0813

Environmental Services

Dog Warden

Telephone: (028) 4461 0323

Environmental Health / Pest Control
Illegal Dumping / Food / Hygiene

Telephone: (028) 4461 0824

Refuse Collection

Telephone: (028) 4461 0819

Cultural & Economic Development

Cultural & Economic Development	Telephone: (028) 4461 0852 Fax: (028) 4461 0851
Community Relations / Development	Telephone: (028) 4461 0853
Down Arts Centre, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 0747 Fax: (028) 4461 6621
Down County Museum, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 5218 Fax: (028) 4461 5590
Down District Strategy Partnership	Telephone: (028) 44617667
Events Office	Telephone: (028) 4461 0854
Marketing	Telephone: (028) 4461 0841
Tourist Development	Telephone: (028) 4461 0856
Tourist Information Centre, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 2233 Fax: (028) 4461 2350
Tourist Information Centre, Newcastle	Telephone: (028) 4372 2222 Fax: (028) 4372 2400
Town Centre Manager	Telephone: (028) 4461 1703

Recreation Services

Community Safety Partnership	Telephone: (028) 4461 0840
Countryside Development / Grounds Section / Sports Development	Telephone: (028) 4461 0814
Down District Policing Partnership	Telephone: (028) 4461 0857

Other Services

Ballyvange / Killough Road Community Centre, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 4917
Bann Road Recycling Centre, Castlewellan	Telephone: (028) 4377 2891
Ballynahinch Leisure Centre	Telephone: (028) 9756 1950 Fax: (028) 9756 5606

Other Services continued

Bridge Centre, Killyleagh	Telephone: (028) 4482 8648
Castlewellan Community Centre	Telephone: (028) 4377 0007
Cloonagh Road Civic Amenity Site	Telephone: (028) 4483 9884
Dan Rice Hall, Drumaness	Telephone: (028) 9756 1449
Delamont Country Park, Killyleagh	Telephone: (028) 4482 8333
Down Leisure Centre, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 3426 Fax: (028) 4461 6905
Drumanakelly Landfill Site	Telephone: (028) 4481 1890
Lough Inch Cemetery, Ballynahinch	Telephone: (028) 9756 2987
Newcastle Centre / Tropicana	Telephone: (028) 4372 5034 Fax: (028) 4372 2400
Strangford Lough Office	Telephone: (028) 4272 8886 Fax: (028) 4272 9588
Struell Cemetery, Downpatrick	Telephone: (028) 4461 3086
Tyrella Beach July / August	Telephone: (028) 4485 1228
Tyrella Beach September / June	Telephone: (028) 4482 8333

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road, Downpatrick
Co Down BT30 6SR
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Fax: (028) 4461 0801
Email: council@downdc.gov.uk