

Draft Customer Charter Comments

**Do you agree with the statements that are included in the Customer Charter?
(Please tick ✓ the appropriate box).**

Yes 56

No 4

If you would like to suggest changes please list these below.

When phoning in each customer should be given a DOB/service number to ensure any queries the customer may have can stop having to go over the same thing every time they phone in.

Much of the wording seems like common sense – do we really need so many words to describe what should be normal and acceptable standards of professional conduct in local government.

Answer 80% of calls within 10-20 seconds is not good enough, that means 1 in 5 calls will not be answered without delay. Ways to overcome this frustration must be found.

Customer title wrong, resident better received.

Not too excited about the word “customer” it suggests I can go elsewhere for “services” or “products” – I cant, charter perhaps something stronger – “contract” or “compact”.

Ratepayers money wasted on this type of pretentious and fatuous claptrap would be for better employed on 1) repairing roads, 2) Making drains work, 3) Fixing broken pavements, 4) More pavement and street cleaning beyond Stone Bridge, 5) Giving pensioners their bus travel in full.

You seem to have covered a lot of ground it looks quite promising.

Is this detail really necessary, if staff are dealing with visitors – they should only be contacted by phone if urgent, those staff can check for messages at intervals, they should concentrate on the visitor’s issues

The terms “customer” and “customer charter” are not helpful, I do not patronise or buy your services. I can’t shop around or compare prices. There is no contract or exchange of money. I am in fact a partner/stakeholder, without the co-operation of the general public, a council could not provide many of the services it does, “customer implies us vs. them, your charter needs to be inclusive so: - 1) We will involve you in discussions and decision making where feasible and sensible. 2) We will deliver services in consultation and cooperation with users. 3) We will respond to user enquires within timescales. 4) We aim to provide services in partnership with service users/public of Darlington. p.s in responding to enquires, council staff should make reference to the date of the user’s enquiry: - thank you for your letter/call/email of DD/MM/YY.

Not all full enough, 1) Allow customer to speak 1a) Customer do not always need to give name, address and telephone no 2) e.g. page 2 – what happens to 10% outside 10 working days 3) Page 2 “complaint” making – is very unclear. I understand “a stage one complaint” is the first level and response given to resolve the complaint made is either verbally or writing as customer requests – times as per form. Formal stage 2 is the next level of investigated matter on 1st response. Stage 3 is highest level – investigated by independent person from other department – times as per form. Ombudsman is next recourse if unresolved at council level. Add if we cannot resolve complaint with one calendar month 0 customer can ask ombudsman to investigate.

This is a bit noddy does it is only listing the way in which all organisation should interact with their customers its not rocket science; don't know why you have bothered to make a big think about this.

- 1) Ask your permission to answer telephone should it ring whilst dealing with you calls should be diverted if someone is being spoken to. 2) Provide a full response to 90% of letters faxed and e-mails within 10 working days, why are only 90% of enquires answered? Why take 10 working days to reply seems a long time to wait for a reply?

Point 4 of visit us: -10 mins is ambitious I personally have sat @ the town hall, ticket in hand for 25-30 mins more than once, I don't think its achievable on current staff levels

Answering the phone using a machine that tells you to wait is not of any use, I would rather speak to a real person being told to ring back later by a machine is an insult that is cast by the local council on many occasions, council employees never seem very happy when you meet them face to face are there problems we the customers do not know about?

Reception should be cheerful, telephone answering – the response should be from a person not an answering machine within 10-20 seconds, if busy then use more staff, only exceptionally should you use leave a message and we will contact you. Suggest extending phone times from 4.45pm, what about people who are working 4-5pm.

If you visit we will – turn off our telephone to minimise disturbance

You don't include anything for deaf and hearing impaired people is the access to someone who uses sign language? Is there a loop system? is there a quiet area with good lighting for those who need to lip-read?

I feel that this is a totally unnecessary document, the time and money spent on it could be put to better use, this outlines the standards we expect (get) from the council – normal practice – no need to spell it out the “talking Together” events on the other hand are a good development, it is too easy for the council and the public to drift apart, this helps both parties to see other points of view and hopefully makes for better local government.

There should be a section in the document relating to consulting members of the public regularly for their views on issues which affect them and how this will take place, also the frequency of consultations, perhaps elected members should consult more as part of their role?

Telephone should not be answered while dealing with customer

I feel since the change of where I paid the poll tax and the use of 5 or 6 different counter positions plus information desk there is improvement and if the matter or reason for going there needs privacy you are sent to a room which is one to one, private, at the beginning of February or I was there and mark the system as good and more, big improvement. Are you complaint time targets too ambitious? Your planning and environment dept has not proved capable of meeting your complaint response times in the recent past; does that department know this charter exists?

The only change I would suggest in the way you address your letters, the covering letter with this draft charter addressed to my wife and self begin "dear suckling – hardly respected.

Several of the points made in each section seems to set out basic standards which would surely be expected of any business or service professional i.e., welcoming and polite point 7 on getting in touch with us is really an amalgam of some of the points like welcoming and polite, the points need to be amalgamated the charter seems unwieldy and unforced its present form. Seventeen points for staff is too many for staff to hold in there head and to monitor easily and affectively, four or five point per section but no more. Some of the points are a legal requirement not a standard of service i.e. identifying yourself I think the service contract should aim at high standards not basic standards and I think 3 months is too offended 6 months would be better.

I would prefer that information given to you is not shared with others; regardless of charter permission was sought. Once permission is given for a specific purpose it is too easy to assume that this applies for any other purpose. Problems in the past few months have highlighted the danger of "losing" information when being passed to other organisations.

What do you think the Charter should be called?

Customer Caring Charter
Darlington Borough Council Customer Charter
Darlington Residents Charter
Plain speaking
DBC Customer Charter is fine
DBC service pledges
DBC resident's charter
DBC residents compact
"Another waste of money" no doubt inspired by another government stunt.
Customer communications
Delivering better contact customer charter
DBC customer charter – we are not customers, DBC service users charter expected standards from DBC services.
Resident's charter
Darlington peoples charter
Customer (or customer) charter is the correct definition – so it's ok
Darlington resident's customer charter
Customer charter agreement)
Fanny George, Princess Margaret? Why does a customer charter need another name?
You will call it "the deal" or some other buzzword.
Council's customer charter
Darlington communication action charter

Darlington borough council customer charter

Customer charter seems reasonable it says what it is

I think the customer charter is the appropriate name, thank you for asking for my views.

Citizen's charter.

As the council call it now, customer charter

"Customers charter" is as good as any as long as promises are kept and ability to contact any consultants is available keep up good work.

Darlington resident's charter

Resident care charter, community care charter

Citizen charter for Darlington

"Charter" is a rather fancy name for what is basically a list of the rules of normal common conversant with before appointment, in all, this appears to be a waste of the council money.

Darlington Borough Council Customer Service Contract, a contract binding to all parties.

Community Partnership Charter

Civilised contact

I like "Customer Charter" the only other possibility I can think of is "Council Contract" the word "Customer" implies the responsibility lies with the Darlington resident who is seeking information etc. The word "Council" puts the responsibility clearly on the side of council employees.

I see no problem with the title you have already given it.

One to one

For the People