

Corporate Customer Care Charter

Spelthorne Borough Council is committed to providing the best possible services for the people of Spelthorne. As a Council we intend to work with all citizens in an open and clear way. We will be listening and learning and involving them in our decision-making. With their help we will develop a genuine two-way dialogue and a community focus in all that we do.

This charter sets out our commitments for the service we deliver and the standards that you can expect from us.

We aim to:

- Consult local people about the planning and delivery of services;
- Provide the services people want and need at a time and place that suits them;
- Provide easy-to-understand information about our plans, our services and how they can be obtained;
- Respond to queries and criticisms in a constructive way;
- Deliver services that represent value for money;
- Ensure everyone is treated equally and fairly regardless of race, family/marital status, gender, religious belief, age, disability or sexuality;
- Make sure our actions, or the actions of those who provide services on our behalf, are just and fair;
- Provide information about our progress and invite views on our performance.

Our staff

When you are talking with our staff they will:

- Be polite, and helpful and treat you with respect;
- Listen carefully in order to understand and respond to your needs;
- Give their name and wear a name badge, where appropriate;
- Give you an explanation of their actions;
- Tell you what will happen next.

When they are visiting you in your home our staff will:

- Explain who they are and be identified as Spelthorne Council staff;
- Clearly explain the purpose of their visit.

When visiting our offices

- Our offices will be easily accessible;
- Our reception areas will be clean and welcoming and provide a range of information about the Council's services;
- Our reception staff will see you promptly;
- We will make sure you see someone who can deal with your enquiry or arrange an appointment for you if necessary;
- We can provide an interpretation service or other support if needed, by appointment;

- If you have an appointment we will give you an explanation of any delay of over ten minutes in seeing you;
- The person dealing with your enquiry will give their name and wear a name badge;
- If you cannot visit our offices we will try to make other arrangements with you.

When contacting us by telephone:

- We aim to answer your call within 15 seconds;
- If we are unable to deal with your enquiry immediately you will be directed to someone who can;
- 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;
- If the person has a hearing impairment, we can communicate using Minicom or Type Talk by calling our special Minicom number, which is 01784 446423;
- If a person is unable to communicate in English, we can provide an interpretation service via telephone conferencing, using a qualified interpreter.

When you write to us (or e-mail):

- We will aim to reply to your letter or e-mail in full within seven working days of receiving it;
- If this is not possible (e.g. because we need to contact third parties), we will acknowledge your correspondence within two working days and reply as soon as practicable;
- Where it is not possible to reply within seven working days we will give you an explanation;
- Our reply will identify the employee who is dealing with your enquiry;
- We aim to respond to customers who are visually impaired by using Braille or large print for example;
- We aim to provide an interpretation and translation service to customers who have a language difficulty.

Listening to your comments/views

We are committed to providing the best possible service in a friendly and courteous manner, but we know that we can always improve what we do and that sometimes things can go wrong. We are interested in your views about our services, either good or bad, and would welcome your comments.

If you are dissatisfied with any service you have received from us:

- You should contact the service concerned who will try to resolve your concern promptly. If you don't know which department you need, please contact Customer Services either by telephone on 01784 451499 or via e-mail to customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or at our main reception desk at the Council Offices;

- If the person who receives your complaint cannot deal with it personally, he or she will take full details and tell you who will deal with it and how long it will take to give you an answer. You will usually get an answer within seven working days;
- If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, you can ask the senior officer responsible for managing the service concerned to look into your complaint. If you do not know who this is, contact Customer Services and they will tell you;
- If you are still not satisfied with the answers you get from the Head of Service, you can refer your complaint to our Monitoring Officer and Head of Corporate Governance, who will investigate your complaint personally.

What if you are still not satisfied?

We hope we will be able to resolve any complaints you have, but we know that sometimes you may still not be satisfied, despite all efforts

In that case, you may wish to refer your complaint to your local councillor or the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent person who investigates allegations of maladministration, which result in an injustice to the person who has complained. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, council tax, housing benefits. For further information and contact details please contact Customer Services.

If you want to contact your councillor, contact details can be found by [clicking here](#) or telephone Customer Services on 01784 451499 for details.

As a follow up

To make sure our procedures are and remain effective we may write to you to make sure you were happy with how your complaint was dealt with and ask for suggestions on how to improve.

If we fail to meet our promised standards it would help enormously if you could report this to the Head of Customer and Office Services, John Foggo, tel. 01784 446388 or e-mail j.foggo@spelthorne.gov.uk so he can ensure improvements are made.

We regularly carry out customer surveys and there is a customer comments box near the main reception desk at the Council Offices, or you can use the Contact Us facility on our website. Please use it to tell us what you think.

How you can help us:-

The relationship we have with our customers is very important to us and it is two way. We will try and help you in every way we can but we reasonably expect you to: -

- Be polite, non-abusive and non-threatening in the way you deal with us;
- Behave reasonably and not resort to violence of any sort;
- Treat our staff with respect - they are genuinely trying to help;

- Make sure that all necessary documents or other information are to hand to simplify the matter;
- Comply with all reasonable requests made by staff in an effort to resolve the matter.

Service Standards

Separate service standards will be made available for:

- Building Control
- Car Parks
- Cemetery bookings
- Council Tax
- Electoral Registration
- Environmental Health
- Housing Advice
- Housing Benefits
- Independent Living
- Land Charges
- Parks and Recreation Grounds
- Planning Policy and Development Control
- Waste and Recycling / Street Cleaning