

# Customer Service Guidelines



March 2019

## **Aims and Principles**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Customer Service Guidelines mirror the Council's Vision in its Corporate Plan 2018-2022 and beyond.

## **Council Vision**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has a key role to play in meeting the needs of any user of the Council, on a day to day basis, with our partners to provide vital services and enhancing the quality of life to our residents. In order to achieve this our vision is *“To be a progressive, dynamic and inclusive council, working in partnership to develop our community and improve the quality of people’s lives and the values we operate by.”*

## **Council Core Values**

Our values require high standards of behaviour from staff and members as we go about our work and also affirm how we want to be treated by others. The Council will be characterised by our values which define our ethos and underpin the delivery of our Corporate Plan and everything we do. These values are: – respect, excellence, leadership, honesty, accountability and equality.

*Please note that all references to ‘customer’ throughout this document includes ratepayers.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Our Customers

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council values its customers. As a customer you are entitled at all times to be treated in a courteous manner with professionalism and due regard for your privacy by the Council and its employees.

We will treat all our customers equally and will work towards improving our service on a continuous basis.

We will provide continuous and regularly updated information on the Council's website [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk), and digital platforms as well as through our CityWide magazine and service publications, delivered to all ratepayers in the Council area.

The areas contained within these Customer Service Guidelines are:

1. Introduction
2. Contacting Us
3. Telephone Answering
4. Written Correspondence
5. Visiting our Offices
6. Violence / Harassment or Abuse towards Council Employees
7. Contacting Other Agencies
8. What can we do better?

## 2 CONTACTING US

Below are details of all Council facilities and commonly requested services. We hope this will aid you in your enquiry. Reception personnel at the facilities listed below will also be happy to assist you and provide direction for your enquiry.

A comprehensive A – Z of all Council Services can be found by logging on to the Council’s website [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) or is available on request.

### **CIVIC HEADQUARTERS**

**Lagan Valley Island**

**Lisburn**

**Co. Antrim**

**BT27 4RL**

**Tel: 028 9250 9250**

**e-mail: [enquiries@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

<b>Main Reception</b>	<b>028 9250 9250</b>
<b>Chief Executive’s Office</b>	<b>028 9244 7207</b>
<b>Service Support Reception</b>	<b>028 9244 7270</b>
<b>Registration of births, deaths and marriages</b> (9.00am – 4.30pm. Closed 12.45pm – 1.30pm for lunch)	<b>028 9244 7263</b>
<b>Mayor’s Office</b>	<b>028 9244 7331</b>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<b>028 9244 7398</b>
<b>Waste Management</b>	<b>028 9244 7453</b>
<b>Building Control</b>	<b>028 9244 7372</b>
<b>Recycling hotline (including information on recycling bins)</b>	<b>028 9244 7453</b>
<b>Leisure &amp; Community Wellbeing (Parks &amp; Amenities)</b>	<b>028 9244 7558</b>
<b>(Community Services)</b>	<b>028 9244 7713</b>
<b>(Sports Services)</b>	<b>028 9260 0264</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>028 9244 7484</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>028 9250 9250</b>
<b>City Centre Management</b>	<b>028 9244 7542</b>

Lagan Valley Island is the Council's Primary Administrative Building, at the Council's Bradford Court offices there is a limited counter service for Environmental Health services and a part time General Registrar Office to provide registration of births, deaths and marriages.

### **BRADFORD COURT**

**Council Offices**

**1 Bradford Court**

**Upper Galwally**

**BT8 6RB**

**T: 028 9049 4500**

### **ISLAND Arts Centre**

**The Island**

**BT27 4RL**

**Tel: 028 92447509**

**Email: [arts.information@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:arts.information@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Box Office Tel: 028 9244 7744**

### **IRISH LINEN CENTRE & LISBURN MUSEUM**

**Market Square**

**Lisburn**

**BT28 1AG**

**Tel: 028 9266 3377**

**Email: [ilc.reception@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:ilc.reception@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**[www.lisburnmuseum.com](http://www.lisburnmuseum.com)**

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES (Central Services Depot)** (Monday-Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm)

For refuse collections, street cleansing, bulky household collections and park and cemetery services maintenance.

**Altona Road**

**Lisburn**

**BT27 5QB**

Tel: 028 9267 3417

e-mail: [opservices.reception@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:opservices.reception@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

## **LAGAN VALLEY LEISUREPLEX**

**18 Lisburn Leisure Park**

**Lisburn BT28 1LP**

**Tel: 028 9267 2121**

**E: [leisureplex@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:leisureplex@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**W: [www.theleisureplex.com](http://www.theleisureplex.com)**

### **Other Council Facilities:**

**Aberdelghy Golf Course 028 9244 7650**

**E: [aberdelghy@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:aberdelghy@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Ballyoran Community Centre 0289048 2083**

**Bridge Community Centre 028 9244 7713**

**Castlereagh Hills Golf Course 028 9044 8477**

**W: [www.castlereaghills.com](http://www.castlereaghills.com)**

**E: [chgcadmin@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:chgcadmin@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Dog Pound (10.30am – 11.30am) 028 9244 7750**

**Dundonald International Ice Bowl 028 9080 9100**

**W: [www.theicebowl.com](http://www.theicebowl.com)**

**E: [icebowl@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:icebowl@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Enler Community Centre 028 9048 0184**

**Glenmore Activity Centre 028 9244 8020**

**E: [glenmore@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:glenmore@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Grove Activity Centre 028 9244 8026**

**E: [grove.centre@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:grove.centre@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Kilmakee Activity Centre 028 9244 8024**

**E: [kilmakee@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:kilmakee@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Lough Moss Leisure Centre 028 9081 4884**

**E: [loughmoss@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:loughmoss@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**Moneyreagh Community Centre 028 9044 9330**

**Visitor Information Centre – Hillsborough 028 9244 7640**

**Visitor Information Centre – Lisburn 028 9244 7622**

### **3 TELEPHONE ANSWERING**

The Council wishes to have the least possible waiting time for customers who telephone the Council.

Customer enquiries are very important to the Council and we will endeavour to answer your telephone call within fifteen seconds. The call handler will state their first name upon answering your call.

If the person you need to speak to is not available, where practicable, another Council Officer will assist you with your enquiry.

Where facilities exist for voicemail, customers will be afforded the opportunity to leave a voice message or return to the main switchboard.

In the unlikely event of your telephone call not being answered at Lagan Valley Island or Bradford Court, your call will be re-directed to the Main Switchboard. The length of time this will take will be dependent on how many other calls are currently being made to the Main Switchboard. Your call will be answered as quickly as possible.

At certain times the Main Switchboard at the Central Services Depot is exceptionally busy. On these occasions the caller will be put through to an automated message and be asked to hold for the next available operator. Should the caller be placed in a queue they will be advised of this.

Should the Reception Desks at the Lagan Valley LeisurePlex, Dundonald International Ice Bowl, Lough Moss Leisure Centre and Activity Centres be extremely busy, an automated telephone menu will be activated, allowing telephone customers the opportunity to have routine enquiries dealt with as quickly as possible. Relevant information regarding these facilities is available online and via Facebook.

At ISLAND Arts Centre, during Membership & Public Booking days, simultaneous online bookings and bookings in person will have priority over telephone enquiries. On these occasions telephone enquiries will be forwarded to a voicemail to ensure that enquiries are dealt with in the order that they are received. All ISLAND Arts Centre voicemail messages will be responded to within 24 hours.

#### **4 WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE**

Written correspondence, including emails, will be endeavoured to be:

- Acknowledged within five working days from the date of receipt at the Council facility.
- Every attempt will be made to answer your correspondence as quickly as possible and a comprehensive reply will be provided no later than 20 working days from the time the information request is received by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Should further work be required in order to address any outstanding areas from your query, we will inform you of subsequent progress.
- We will endeavour to provide correspondence that is easily understood, which is free as far as possible from technical details or jargon. You will also be provided with contact details and the telephone number of the Council Officer dealing with your enquiry.



## 5 VISITING OUR OFFICES

Our Council reception employees will endeavour to deal with your query as efficiently as possible.

On occasions the member of staff may not be able to directly deal with your query and this may be referred to another officer. We ask for your patience and co-operation so that your query may be attended to as soon as possible. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council employees will endeavour to provide its customers, with a disability or other needs, with the maximum assistance and help.

If you have cause to avail of reception facilities at any of the following LCCC facilities: the Island Civic Centre at Lagan Valley Island, Bradford Court Offices, ISLAND Arts Centre, Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum, Lagan Valley LeisurePlex, Dundonald International Ice Bowl, Castlereagh Hills Golf Club, Lough Moss Leisure Centre, any of our Activity Centres or the Council Depot, we will endeavour to:

- Greet you when you arrive in reception. If the receptionist is dealing with another customer on the telephone or in person, we ask for your patience, and you will be greeted as soon as possible.
- Listen to your query. Should your query be required to be dealt with by another Council Officer, we will inform you of this and make the appropriate arrangements.
- Provide you with accurate information as simply as possible, avoiding the use of jargon.
- Should an interview room be required (e.g. registering a birth or death) we will endeavour to provide you with a room as soon as possible. It may be necessary to wait for a room, depending on usage.
- Your privacy will be respected.

## **6 VIOLENCE / HARASSMENT OR ABUSE TOWARDS COUNCIL EMPLOYEES**

The Council is committed to providing a safe environment for its employees and to this end violence and/or harassment or abuse towards Council employees will not be tolerated.

There is potential for Council employees in certain circumstances, to be at risk of violence at work from members of the public.

The Council recognises the potentially damaging effect on an employee's well-being of all categories of violence whether that is actual physical attack, the threat of violence and/or verbal abuse. The Council regards all types of violence as unacceptable and will take effective action to deal with violent incidents.

This includes:

- Physical attack - whether visible injury occurs or not
- Animal attack - when an animal is used as a threat
- Verbal abuse - when an employee feels threatened or intimidated and the abuse is personally directed. This also includes cyber-aggression through texts, email messages or social networking sites
- Attack or damage to property or belongings of the employee or the Council
- Any work-related incident involving an employee, or their family, which happens away from the workplace.

*(In some cases it may be necessary for the matter to be reported to the PSNI for further action.)*

Some people become abusive and agitated over the telephone or in council reception areas when they feel aggrieved.

In these situations:

- Employees will endeavour to remain calm and factual so as not be feel provoked into responding in a manner that may inflame the situation
- Employees will try to explain what has happened to the person's complaint or case

- Employees will get support and advice from their manager if and when necessary. If the situation escalates and there is no management help currently available, employees will advise the customer that they are ending the discussion, ask them to leave or terminate the phone call. Employees will walk away, if necessary from a situation and if within a Council premise, call security if the customer will not leave the building.

### **Cyber-Aggression**

In relation to cyber-aggression through the Council's social networking sites, the Council reserves the right to remove comments, without notification, which:

- bully, harass or intimidate any individual or organisation
- are unlawful, libellous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- infringe or violate someone else's rights
- violate the law
- discuss ongoing legal proceedings
- are spam
- advertise products or services
- are irrelevant or off-topic
- are disruptive and/or repetitive.

The Council also reserves the right to remove any social media user who:

- continues to post comments such as those listed above
- encourages others to post such comments
- uses offensive images as their profile picture
- has an offensive username.

## 7. CONTACTING OTHER AGENCIES

To assist you in contacting the appropriate Agency below is a list of useful contact details for the main Agencies responsible for a wide range of activities in the Lisburn City area:

<b>Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</b>	<b>028 9504 0100</b> <a href="http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net">www.belfasttrust.hscni.net</a>
<b>South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust</b>	<b>028 9055 3100</b> <a href="http://www.setrust.hscni.net">www.setrust.hscni.net</a>
<b>Electoral Office</b>	<b>028 9044 6610</b> <a href="http://www.eoni.org.uk">www.eoni.org.uk</a>
<b>Land Registry of NI</b>	<b>0300 200 7803</b> <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk">www.nidirect.gov.uk</a>
<b>NI Housing Executive</b>	<b>03448 920 900</b> <a href="http://www.nihe.gov.uk">www.nihe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Power NI</b>	<b>03457 455 455</b> <a href="http://www.powerni.co.uk">www.powerni.co.uk</a>
<b>Land &amp; Property Services</b>	<b>0300 200 7804</b> <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk">www.nidirect.gov.uk</a>
<b>Rates Collection Agency (Eastern Area)</b>	<b>0300 200 7801</b> <a href="http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk">www.finance-ni.gov.uk</a>
<b>DfI Roads, Eastern Division</b>	<b>0300 200 7893</b> <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk">www.nidirect.gov.uk</a>
<b>Education Authority</b>	<b>028 9056 6200</b>

[www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

**Jobs & Benefits Office**

**0800 022 4250**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

**DfI Street Lighting**

**0300 200 7899**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/street-lighting](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/street-lighting)

**Water Service (24-Hour Customer Service)**

**03457 440 088**

[www.niwater.com](http://www.niwater.com)

**Rivers Agency – Ravarnet House**

**028 9260 6100**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

## **8. WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?**

If, on any occasion, the service you expect from the Council is not to your satisfaction, the Council would like to know about it. Complaints, comments and compliments will be accepted in writing, by email, by telephone or via the website. If you wish to make your complaints, comments and compliments in writing, please complete one of the complaints leaflets which can be found at all council facilities and these can be forwarded freepost to the Council. You do not need a stamp to do this. If you would like to email the Council with a complaint, comment or compliment please contact us on:

[customercare@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:customercare@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) or log onto

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/information/comments-and-complaints](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/information/comments-and-complaints)

You can also contact the Council through the Report All APP where you can let us know about incidences of littering, graffiti, dog fouling and fly tipping in your local community at the simple click of a button.

The App can be downloaded for free from the Council's website or via the App store or Google Play available on smart devices.

### **What happens to my Complaint?**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council aims to resolve complaints as efficiently and effectively as possible. On receipt of a complaint it will be directed to the appropriate department. You will be advised within five working days of receipt of the complaint and its progress.

If further investigation is required you will be kept informed of progress.

All incidents are treated as confidential unless previously agreed.

### **What if I am not satisfied with the response?**

Should you not be satisfied with the full response when you receive it, you can have the matter reviewed by the Director of the Department concerned. If you are then still dissatisfied you can request a review by the Chief Executive:

**Mr David Burns**

**Chief Executive**

**Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

**Lagan Valley Island**

**Lisburn**

**BT27 4RL**

If after this review you are still unhappy you may choose to pursue the matter by contacting:

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

**Progressive House**

**33 Wellington Place**

**Belfast**

**BT1 6HN**

**Tel: 028 9023 3821**

**Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)**

**Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)**

The Commissioner will expect complainants to exhaust the Council's complaints procedure before carrying out any investigations.

## **Abusive / Frivolous / Vexatious Complaints**

Customers should expect the highest level of customer service and our Officers will actively try and handle your complaint as best they can. We would hope that our customers would equally treat our staff in a polite and courteous manner.

If you making your complaint by telephone and you use abusive language or tone, our staff will let you know that they may put the receiver down if you continue to be abusive.

When making your complaint in person and you demonstrate abusive or aggressive behaviour, our staff have been advised to seek assistance (this could be in the form of the Police, security officers or another member of staff).

If your correspondence contains abusive language or aggressive tone, we will reply by informing you that this is unacceptable.

In terms of frivolous and vexatious complaints, the definitions of such complaints are;

- Frivolous – not serious or sensible in content, attitude or behaviour
- Vexatious – annoying, not having sufficient grounds for action and seeking to annoy

Under these circumstances, we will only terminate correspondence when it is clear that despite our best efforts, we are unable to conclude the matter. This decision to terminate a complaint will be made by the relevant Director.