



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

CUSTOMER CHARTER

Mission Statement

"The Council will lead the sustainable economic, social, cultural and community development of our County and deliver quality public services to the communities we serve."

COURTESY AND CONSIDERATION

You are at all times entitled to be served:

- In a courteous and prompt manner,
- With due regard to privacy and confidentiality,
- By helpful and supportive staff.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will:

- Treat all our customers equally,
- Aim to identify and work to eliminate barriers that may prevent or hinder customers using our services.

INFORMATION

We undertake, in so far as is possible to:

- Provide information to our customers that is clear, up to date and accurate.
- Increase the access to information for our customers through the use of Information Technology.
- Seek only that information which is relevant to the query or request.

APPLICATIONS

We undertake, in so far as is possible to:

- Make a decision as quickly as feasible on valid and complete applications submitted on time,
- Deal with all applications fairly and consistently in accordance with the rules and regulations,
- Give reasons for decisions.

ACCESS

We will endeavour to:

- Provide clean, accessible public buildings that ensure privacy, as required and comply with occupational health and safety standards.

SERVICE THROUGH IRISH

We will:

- Accommodate our customers, if they wish to conduct their business through Irish.

COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSES

In relation to telephone contacts we will endeavour to:

- Answer your telephone calls in a timely manner.
- Ensure that employees will, when taking your call, give you their name and the name of the department in which they work.
- Request your name and contact information and call you back at an agreed time if your query cannot be dealt with immediately at the time of your call.

In relation to written contacts we will endeavour to:

- Acknowledge all written communications within 5 working days.
- Provide a comprehensive reply within 20 working days.
- Advise you of the reason for the delay in cases where this is not possible and to issue you with regular updates.
- Include the name and contact number of the individual dealing with your correspondence in all our correspondence.

- Use clear simple language whenever possible and to use technical terms only when absolutely necessary.

In relation to personal contacts we will endeavour to:

- Be available to help you in so far as is possible and to be polite and courteous in our dealings with you.
- Arrange meetings at a time that suits you and end to minimise waiting times in so far as is possible.
- Answer your questions fully and if this is not possible immediately we will endeavour to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.
- If you wish to meet a specific member of staff, we will assist you in making an appointment with an appropriate person.

In relation to social media we will endeavour to:

- Respond as appropriate to queries on our services raised via Social Media by posting on those social media sites hosted directly by Laois County Council, i.e. Facebook and Twitter.
Posts which appear on sites which are derogatory, defamatory, abusive, threatening or inappropriate will not be responded to and may result in legal proceedings or other actions as the Council deems fit being initiated against the person responsible including referral to An Garda Siochana .

OUR EMPLOYEES

We will endeavour to:

- Ensure that our employees are also recognised as customers.
- Ensure that they are supported by management.
- Ensure that they are consulted through the use of appropriate mechanisms.

THE CUSTOMER'S ROLE

Laois County Council aims to provide a high quality of service in a safe and secure environment. In order to achieve this we ask our customers to note that the following behaviour will not be accepted:

- Use of violence and/or threat of violence against members of staff and/or members of the public,
- Verbal and/or non-verbal intimidation,
- Harassment of staff or members of the public by the use of abusive, racist, obscene or threatening language,
- Malicious damage to and theft of Laois County Council property,
- Personal property being left unattended while using Laois County Council's facilities,
- Behaviour which is disruptive and interferes with the use and enjoyment of the facility by others,
- Carrying out video and/or audio recordings or taking of photographs without the specific written authorisation of the Director of Services, Corporate Affairs and the inappropriate posting of same on social media.

It is your responsibility, as a customer of Laois County Council:

- To treat employees of the Council in a professional, courteous and civil manner at all times as our employees have the right to be treated in an acceptable manner.
- To comply with reasonable directions from Council staff,
- To adhere to the requirements of the Council's policy on Acceptable Customer Behaviour.
- To ensure that, where appropriate, children are accompanied and supervised at all times.

CUSTOMER CARE

There may be occasions when our systems will not function as well as we would wish.

Laois County Council has a simple and transparent Customer Complaints Procedure which you may use if you are in any way unhappy with the quality of the service afforded to you.