

Working for you

Harrogate Borough Council Revenues and Benefit Services Customer Charter





What is the Revenues and Benefit Services Customer Charter?

We aim to provide high-quality services and information for all our customers. We want to provide you with an efficient and professional service.

This charter sets out the standards we are working towards.

We are constantly looking for new ways to improve our service and we welcome any comments you want to make.

We aim to do the following:

Customer Care

- 😊 Treat you politely and not discriminate against you because of your race, religion, age, sex, sexuality or disability.
- 😊 Make sure that the staff who serve you are trained to give you their time, help and advice you need.

Answering phone calls

- 😊 Greet you politely and clearly. Employees will give you their name and the name of the service or place you are calling.
- 😊 Pick up calls within 5 rings
- 😊 Put calls through to the right place first time.
- 😊 If we have to hold your call in a queue at very busy times, make sure it is answered within 5 minutes. Ensure that any holding message is informative and aims to assist you.

- ☺ Resolve your enquiry as fully as possible at the first point of contact or transfer your call to the right person. If it is not possible to transfer, either take a message or give you the correct number to phone.
- ☺ Where we have to transfer your call, we will give your name and an explanation of your query to the relevant department, to save you repeating it.
- ☺ Where the enquiry could not be resolved at the point of contact, we will arrange a call back within 48 hours.
- ☺ Avoid the use of answer phones during office hours, except in the case of simple requests for information.

Answering letters, faxes and e-mails

- ☺ Answer all letters and post a response to you within 10 working days of receipt.

Acknowledge all e-mails within 24 hours and make a full response within 5 working days.
- ☺ Where we are unable to respond within these targets, send you an acknowledgement letter and give you an alternative response time.
- ☺ Use plain language and avoid using jargon.
- ☺ Quality check all letters and e-mails we send you.

Giving you a decision on your benefit claim

- ☺ Where your circumstances have changed, we aim to give you a decision on your claim within 10 days
- ☺ Where you make a new claim, or repeat claim, we aim to give you a decision within 34 days. This includes the time it takes for you to give us all the information and evidence we need which we will deal with within 14 days.

Seeing you in person





- ☺ Provide clear signs in reception areas so that you know where to go.
- ☺ Make sure reception areas are clean, tidy and safe.
- ☺ Make sure visitors are seen by a receptionist within 10 minutes of arriving.
- ☺ Make sure visitors have their query fully resolved or see a Customer Services Officer within 20 minutes of arriving.
- ☺ If you have an appointment, make sure you see the relevant officer within 15 minutes of arriving. Let you know beforehand, if we need to cancel a pre-arranged appointment
- ☺ Make sure that staff wear official identification at all times so that you know who you are dealing with, both in Council buildings and when visiting you at home.

- ☺ Resolve your enquiry as fully as possible at the first point of contact or pass you to the right person.
- ☺ Where you need help in completing a Benefit claim form, we will help you and give you a receipt to acknowledge your claim has been received.
- ☺ Where an enquiry is complex and further information is needed from you, give you a named officer to re-contact.
- ☺ Arrange a time and place for you to discuss issues in private if you like.
- ☺ Make other arrangements to see you if you cannot visit our office because of a long-term illness or disability.







Dealing with complaints, comments and compliments

- ☺ Record complaints, comments and compliments and use them to review and improve our services.
- ☺ Deal with complaints within 5 working days or, if this is not possible, we will acknowledge in writing and respond within 10 working days.
- ☺ Inform you how you can take your complaint further if you are not satisfied with our response, including how you can have your complaint independently reviewed by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- ☺ Treat complaints confidentially, while making sure we are fair to everyone concerned. Apologise when we are at fault and do our best to put things right.

Keeping customers Informed and involved

-  Produce information about our services and us that is accurate, useful and up to date.
-  Review the customer charter every year.
-  Understand the views and priorities of our customers.
-  Use customer feedback to help us make decisions.

How you can help us to help you

-  Treat our employees politely.
-  Give us all the appropriate information so that we can deal with your enquiry quickly and effectively.
-  When making a benefit claim, answer all the questions on our claim form and have available the evidence we need to process your claim. If you do not have the information or evidence, please get it to us as quickly as possible.
-  Let us know beforehand if you need to cancel or rearrange a pre-arranged appointment.
-  Tell us immediately if you are unhappy with the service you have received.
-  Tell us if you are pleased with the service you have received so that we can encourage good practice across the Council.



Do you need to contact us?

In person at Scottsdale House:

Scottsdale House,
Springfield Avenue,
Harrogate,
HG1 2HR
Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

By phone:

Benefit Services (01423) 556455
Revenues (01423) 556677
Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5.00pm
and on Friday 8.30 am to 4.30pm

By e-mail:

ben_rev@harrogate.gov.uk

By post:

P.O. box 13
Scottsdale House,
Springfield Avenue,
Harrogate,
HG1 2SD

For more details, look in your local phone book or on our website at www.harrogate.gov.uk

To report a complaint, comment or compliment, please contact us as above or, pick up a 'complaints, comments and compliments' form at any of our offices.

