

# **Our Charter for Customer Service Standards**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Conwy County Borough Council is committed towards delivering efficient and effective services for the residents, businesses and visitors of the County and our vision is:

***Conwy – a progressive County creating opportunity***

1.2 We believe in putting our customers first, listening to their needs and continually improving to meet changing demands. A focus on our customers is an integral part of our Corporate Values and the overall Community Strategy for Conwy. It is also at the heart of the Corporate Plan 2012-2017 which makes a commitment to our communities to involve them in a more meaningful way.

1.3 One of our Corporate Values is to be Customer Focused. We have developed this Customer Charter to explain what standards customers can expect. In summary they are:

We will put the customer at the heart of service delivery

We will be polite, friendly & helpful

We will listen & learn from customer views & measure satisfaction

We will respond in a timely manner

We will monitor our services' performance

We will offer a bilingual service

We will provide clear, simple and accessible information

1.4 This Charter tells you about the level of service you can expect from us and what we expect from you. It also tells you what to do if things go wrong. As the services we offer continue to develop, we will update the Charter to reflect the changing needs of our customers.

1.5 We want to give the best service we can to everyone who needs our help. We also welcome your views on how we can make further improvements. We have included some useful contact details at the back of this booklet to help you get in touch with us.



Iwan Davies  
Chief Executive



Cllr Dilwyn Roberts  
Leader

## 2. Our Values and Key Standards

2.1 This Charter demonstrates our commitment to putting our Customers First in line with our Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017, which influences our culture, policies and procedures and clearly states our approach to how we carry out our business, communicate with and keep in touch with, our customers, visitors and partners.

### ***Our Values***

Our values represent the beliefs and expected behaviour of everyone working for Conwy County Borough Council. Our values, which aim to support quality services, are:

- To be customer focused
- To be respectful and fair
- To be reliable and accountable
- To be innovative
- To support and develop our team

### ***Our Priorities***

There are 8 Citizen Outcomes that form the framework for our long term plans. The heart of the Outcomes is the focus on people, and working to support them to have better lives. The 8 Citizen Outcomes form the basis of the Conwy Local Service Board integrated community plan (One Conwy 2012-2025).

- People in Conwy are educated and skilled
- People in Conwy are safe and feel safe
- People in Conwy live in safe and appropriate housing
- People in Conwy are healthy and independent
- People in Conwy live in a County which has a thriving economy
- People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment
- People in Conwy live in a County where heritage, culture and Welsh language thrive
- People in Conwy are informed included and listened to

*CCBC Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017*

2.2 The following sections deal with each of our Customer Standards. The descriptions are as practical as possible and apply to all of our Services and our Elected Members who also support the standards laid down in this document. There may be variations to the way the standards are put into practice, but this will not mean a reduced quality of customer service. We aim to ensure that we always put you first.

### 3. Have your say – contact with us

Conwy County Borough Council is committed to improving our services and it is important that we listen to what you, the community, say. We welcome your comments or suggestions for improvements for the Council to consider at anytime of the year, so please let us know

*CCBC Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017*

All members of the public shall be entitled to receive, use or communicate with any of the Council's services in Welsh or English. The services delivered through the medium of Welsh shall be of as high a standard as those delivered through the medium of English.

*CCBC Revised Welsh Language Scheme 2009*

#### 3.1 ***When you visit us at our buildings that are open to the public:***

- 3.1.1 The opening hours and phone numbers of the resident services will always be clearly displayed outside those buildings, on Council leaflets and on our website.
- 3.1.2 We aim to greet you within 5 minutes of your arrival within the building, in a friendly, professional and bilingual way, e.g. –

#### ***Bore da / Good morning or Prynhawn da / Good afternoon.***

- 3.1.3 Members of staff will wear identity cards/badges and/or a uniform, as appropriate, so that you can identify them easily.
- 3.1.4 Welsh speaking staff will wear a "Cymraeg" badge or lanyard, particularly those who regularly deal with the public.
- 3.1.5 If you have an appointment, we will always try to see you on time. If you have to wait we will aim to tell you how long your wait will be.
- 3.1.6 If you ask for the appointment to be private, we will use a private interview area if we have one available, or try and look for a suitable alternative.
- 3.1.7 If you need another appointment, it will be at a mutually convenient date and time.
- 3.1.8 If you require assistance or support for an appointment, such as a British Sign Language interpreter or other suitable communicator to help you, this can be arranged. If your enquiry can not be dealt with without assistance or support then we will arrange an appointment.
- 3.1.9 If you don't have an appointment then we will aim to arrange for someone to speak with you within 15 minutes to discuss your needs. If your enquiry can not be dealt with immediately, a mutually convenient appointment will be arranged and we will offer you a Welsh/English language choice when arranging appointments (see also 3.1.5 to 3.1.8 above).
- 3.1.10 If Welsh or English is not your preferred language we can arrange for a translation service. In most cases this will be provided via Big Word, a facility for translations over the phone. There are multi-lingual posters explaining this service clearly displayed in all Council reception areas.

### 3.2 ***When you telephone us***

- 3.2.1 We will aim to answer the telephone within 5 rings or a maximum of 30 seconds.
- 3.2.2 The phone will be answered in a polite and courteous manner with a standard greeting in Welsh and English, e.g. –

#### ***Bore da /Good morning or Prynhawn da / Good afternoon***

- 3.2.3 Our published telephone numbers will always be answered during usual opening hours.
- 3.2.4 If there is no one available who can help with your query when you telephone us and you ask us to ring you back, we will aim to do so by the end of the same working day.
- 3.2.5 Voice mail messages will be bilingual, with the Welsh message first. Please leave your contact details and any preferred times, so that we can call back when it is convenient for you. We will aim to return all calls by the end of the same working day.
- 3.2.6 If you have difficulty speaking Welsh or English we can arrange for a telephone translation service.

### 3.3 ***When you write to us***

- 3.3.1 We will make a full response as soon as possible, but normally within a maximum of 10 working days from receipt of your communication in whatever format (e.g. email, letter, fax).
- 3.3.2 If it is not possible to give a full and detailed response within the time limit (e.g. if the issues you raise are very complex), then we will still seek to notify you of the delay within 10 working days (e.g. away from office messages, issues being complex and being looked into).
- 3.3.3 With developments in technology we are aware that you could expect a quicker response to an email. Whilst we may be able to occasionally manage this, we will not routinely treat an email any differently to other forms of written communication (eg letter) and therefore the same maximum timescales also apply for responses.

### 3.4 ***When we write to you***

- 3.4.1 All letters, faxes and e-mails from our offices will be typed and written in clear, plain language in the language and format of your choice if these are known to us on request. We can provide information in an easy read format, in large print, CD and Braille.
- 3.4.2 We will give you suitable contact details, for example:
  - a. the name of the person or team to contact
  - b. switchboard or relevant direct-dial phone numbers
  - c. e-mail and website addresses
  - d. textphone, BT text relay service and fax numbers, if available
- 3.4.3 We will tell you clearly if there is anything you need to do.

## 4. Information and Openness

Customers value accurate and comprehensive information that is delivered or available through the most appropriate channel for them. Putting customers first can be an important step towards providing effective communications. Listening to views about the service provided can be just as important as achieving key performance targets. Comments, feedback and complaints can help us to make vital adjustments to improve services.

*CCBC Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017*

The Council aims to communicate clearly, openly, accurately and regularly with staff, councillors, local residents, customers, businesses and partners to promote a common understanding and thereby deliver better services for the benefit of the people of Conwy.

*CCBC Communications Strategy 2013*

- 4.1 **Clear** – When we deal with your enquiries we will answer you as clearly as we can. We aim to publish information written in plain language so that it is easy to understand, without any jargon or unnecessary abbreviations.
- 4.2 **Simple** – When we provide you with an application form, we will try to make it as easy as possible to understand and fill in. We will provide guidance to help, which may include explaining why we need certain information and what we will use it for. If you need help to complete the form then we can help you with this.
- 4.3 **Convenient** – Information about services will be available in various locations across the County Borough for example in Council offices, libraries and leisure centres. Information that we publish, including leaflets and forms, will also be available on our website for you to look at or download.
- 4.4 **Appropriate** – We understand our Customers have different needs. On request, we can provide information in a variety of formats, for example easy read format, in large print, CD and Braille, to ensure that it is accessible and easy to understand by all members of the community, in accordance with their individual needs.
- 4.5 **Helpful** – We will give you the information and advice you need to help with your needs, your rights and the Council's obligations to you. Our staff will take responsibility for helping you. This could mean providing advice on our policies; helping to fill in application forms or putting you in touch with other services where appropriate. If we need to put you in contact with another Council officer who is able to deal with your issue, we will tell you who this is and how to contact them. We will also make sure they are aware of what your needs are and let you know how they are dealing with your enquiry so you do not feel you are being passed from 'pillar to post'.
- 4.6 **Open** – The public have a general right to access information that we hold. We have a requirement to comply with our Council policies on the Freedom of Information Act which covers access to general information, and the Data Protection Act which covers the security of personal and sensitive information.
- 4.7 **Responsive** – however you communicate with us (eg letter, email, phone) we will always aim to respond to you and deal with your enquiry / service request in a timely manner.

## 5. Equality, Diversity & Respect

We are committed to integrating equality considerations into all our day to day activities that we carry out, both as a service provider working in a diverse community in Conwy, as well as a major employer in the area.

*Equality and Diversity Policy*

Conwy is committed to improving equality of opportunity for everyone through its commitment to achieving its 6 Key Equality Objectives which set out to reduce inequalities in :

- Access to information, services and the built environment
- Health
- Education
- Employment
- Personal Safety
- Representation & Voice

*Strategic Equality Plan 2012-2015*

We will treat our colleagues and customers with dignity and respect. Treating people with respect is about treating people fairly, according to their needs. It is not about treating everyone the same. In return we expect customers to treat our officers with the same dignity and respect. We will take seriously any form of harassment.

*Conwy's Respect Booklet*

- 5.1 **Visiting our buildings** – We aim to ensure that our buildings are accessible to everyone who wants to visit us, therefore, we will:
- 5.1.1 Make sure that all public entrances and routes are clearly signed and where necessary and reasonably possible, adapt or modify facilities
- 5.1.2 Provide accessible parking bays in all of our car parks for use by people with disabilities.
- 5.1.3 Ensure all our buildings are 'smoke-free' environments as required by law. Clear 'no smoking' signs will be displayed.
- 5.1.4 Work towards equipping our meeting rooms and reception points with appropriate hearing enhancement systems, such as Induction Loop Systems.
- 5.1.5 Work with you to identify your specific needs and your preferred way of contacting us; and, wherever possible, will put in place the solutions agreed with you.
- 5.1.6 Provide private interview space where this is possible (see 3.1.6)
- 5.1.7 Continually monitor our buildings to ensure that they are clean and well maintained.
- 5.2 **Visiting you at home** – If you cannot visit the office or are unable to phone us (e.g. if you have a disability), or use any of our self-service facilities, we may be able to visit you at home. When we do visit you at home we will:
- 5.2.1 Arrange the time and date with you before we come and let you know the purpose of the visit, in writing, if time allows.



- 5.2.2 Offer a Welsh or English language choice and identify how we can support you with any other language or communication needs you may have before visiting.
- 5.2.3 Arrive for the appointment on time and show you our identification card or provide any agreed password and give our name. If we are delayed for more than 15 minutes, we will aim to let you know.
- 5.2.4 Treat you, your beliefs, your home and belongings with respect and always talk directly to you, even if you have a carer or translator to help you.
- 5.2.5 Explain, before we leave, what we are going to do next and whether we need you to do anything; we will also leave you information in a format you can understand or our contact details so you can contact us if you have any questions.
- 5.3 **Your Responsibilities** – Respect is a two way process and we expect you to show consideration to our staff and other customers.
  - 5.3.1 We understand that sometimes you may feel angry, frustrated or upset and our staff will do their best to help you with the issue that is causing you concern. However, we cannot allow our staff to be abused and will refuse you a private interview or a home visit, ask you to leave the office or end a phone call if our staff are subjected to threats or intimidation, including:
    - a. being violent
    - b. being rude
    - c. making nasty or abusive remarks
    - d. swearing
    - e. saying things deliberately to annoy our staff
    - f. not being able to back up any criticisms with evidence
    - g. behaving or saying things deliberately to cause offence
  - 5.3.2 Please also be considerate and polite to our other customers. We will ask you to leave our offices if you do not behave in a reasonable manner towards other members of the public or if your behaviour is frightening, abusive or giving other customers cause for concern.
  - 5.3.3 Please be on time for appointments or let us know if you are running late or not able to make the time arranged.
  - 5.3.4 Give us more information if we ask you to.

## 6. Consultation and Involvement

Outcome 8 - People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to

*Conwy Corporate Plan 2012-2017*

- 6.1 We regularly ask people what they think of services provided directly by the Council or by organisations working on our behalf. We want to talk with and listen to our customers and try to act on what you tell us if we are able to. We encourage our customers, and the organisations that represent them, to tell us how they think we are doing and what is important to them. There are many ways we can do this:
- 6.1.1 **Consultations** – When we need to seek your views on specific issues, particular service developments, or to comply with our statutory obligations.
  - 6.1.2 **Community Involvement** – When we involve you in developing services and policies.
  - 6.1.3 **Customer Satisfaction** – When we ask you how happy you are with our services and how we could do things better.
  - 6.1.4 **Comments, Compliments or Complaints** – When you tell us your views on things or tell us when we are doing really well or when something has gone wrong.
  - 6.1.5 **Councillor** – Your Elected Member may well be your first point of contact when you have a question, issue or concern and can bring these to the attention of the Council on your behalf.
- 6.2 As part of our drive to continuously improve the services we provide, we will use what you tell us to help us improve our services: if we are not able to make the changes you have suggested, we will tell you why.
- 6.2 Have your say by going to [www.conwy.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/haveyoursay) Alternatively:
- a. You can contact us by email or letter as listed at the back of the Charter
  - b. You can telephone us on 01492 574000 (main switchboard)
  - c. You can visit us during normal opening hours
  - d. You can enter your comments in our Visitors' Books which are available in many of our buildings which are open to the public

Please remember to leave your own contact details if you would like any feedback to your enquiry.

## 7. Service Performance

We want to see more public services delivered digitally so they are easier to access and become more efficient and convenient.

*CCBC Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017*

- 7.1 As a Council, we have to respond to increasing expectations for high quality services and how you want to access those services, not just services we provide as an individual organisation but those we provide in partnership with other organisations.
- 7.2 The One Conwy Strategy has been developed in partnership with other public, voluntary and community organisations, and sets out what the communities of Conwy told us their needs were and their vision for the future.
- 7.3 The Council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2017 sets out our aspirations and priorities and how we will deliver the part of One Conwy that is our responsibility. We are answerable to you for how we deliver what we have promised in the Corporate Plan and will ask you how well you think we have done.
- 7.4 We publish an Annual Corporate Performance Report which looks at how we manage our risks and whether we are delivering against our Corporate Plan, our Improvement Agreements and our national statutory performance indicators – the things that the Welsh Government have told us they want us to measure.
- 7.5 Individual services produce more detailed annual plans which say how they will deliver against the priorities within the Corporate Plan. They also listen to what their customers tell them so that the services that are delivered help meet the needs of the community.
- 7.6 This corporate Charter for Customer Service Standards sets the level of expected performance for all our Services. Individual services may also have their own Customer Service Standards, which are tailored to the specific needs of their customers; but the level of service you can expect will not be lower than the standards identified in this Charter. We will also review our performance to show how we are performing against the standards within this Charter and any other related performance indicators.

## 8. Further Information

### 8.1 *Publications supporting this Charter*

The following documents are available for you to see:

- Compliments and Complaints - How to Contact Us
- Corporate Plan 2012 – 2017
- One Conwy 2012 – 2025
- Annual Corporate Performance Report
- Strategic Equality Scheme
- Revised Welsh Language Scheme

Any of the above can be downloaded from our website by searching and following the links from [www.conwy.gov.uk](http://www.conwy.gov.uk) Printed copies are also available at our main offices and at our main libraries. Alternatively, please contact us using the details shown below.

## 8.2 **How to Contact Us**

The person who has responsibility for making sure that the Council works to the standards set out in this document is:

Mr Iwan Davies  
Chief Executive  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Bodlondeb, Bangor Rd  
CONWY  
LL32 8DU

For all general enquiries:

### **Online:**

Useful web links  
[www.conwy.gov.uk/a-z](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/a-z)  
[www.conwy.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/contactus)

You can find us on Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/ConwyCBC>

Follow us on Twitter @ConwyCBC

### **Email us:**

[information@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:information@conwy.gov.uk)  
[customer.services@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@conwy.gov.uk)

**Telephone our Main Switchboard during Office Hours:** 01492 574000

For the telephone numbers of our main services, please see our advert in the Phone Book or refer to the A – Z section of the latest Council Tax information sent to you. You can contact us by web forms, email, phone, letter or face to face. If you have a hearing impairment and wish to use the free, BT text relay service then just add 18001 in front of any of our telephone numbers.

### **Write to us:**

Conwy County Borough Council  
Bodlondeb  
Bangor Rd  
CONWY  
LL32 8DU

### **Compliments and Complaints:**

**E-mail:** [compliments@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:compliments@conwy.gov.uk)  
[complaints@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@conwy.gov.uk) for all  
complaints except Social Services when  
you should use [cssc@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:cssc@conwy.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01492 576070 or

**Write to:** Corporate Information & Customer  
Services at the address above.