

## Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

### Libraries and Resident Contact (L&RC)

# CUSTOMER CARE STANDARD

This policy is applicable to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library and Resident Service

#### DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## **1. TITLE**

CUSTOMER CARE STANDARD

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

Customer care is fundamental to an effective service and it is essential that this is reflected in all aspects of our work.

## **3. PURPOSE**

Customer Care is concern for our customers; it is good manners allied to efficient and helpful service.

## **4. SCOPE**

Whilst we are already attempting to facilitate staff improving their own and their colleagues' performance in this important area (through Customer Care Courses), Library and Resident Contact Services (L&RC) would like to assist all staff in a simple and direct way.

## **5. OBJECTIVE**

L&RC is aware that the majority of the staff joined the service because they enjoy working with customers and that they are always keen to provide the best possible levels of service. Good customer care helps all of us to do our jobs better.

With these aims in mind the following "common sense" guidelines have been approved as a minimum standard for us all to exceed.

## **6. POLICY DETAILS**

### **6.1 TRAINING**

Because of its importance, it follows that training in Customer Care should be given a high priority.

- 6.1.1. Training should be given to all staff.
- 6.1.2. Coaching in telephone technique is vital before staff use the telephone.
- 6.1.3. Training is required in dealing with the needs of vulnerable groups.
- 6.1.4. If training or demonstrating in a public area, breaking off to serve the customer is an essential part of the training and allows the trainee to observe good customer care. Trainees should not be left alone when the trainer goes off to deal with an enquiry, but should accompany the trainer.

## 6.2. STAFF ATTITUDES

Staff should behave to Customers in the way they would wish to be treated themselves.

They should be courteous and attentive, approachable and helpful. A pleasant manner should be matched by efficiency in the service.

All customers are entitled to the same standard of care and staff should be aware of the special needs of some readers/visitors.

## 6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Staff at the Pod/Enquiry Desk

- Staff should acknowledge each customer in a pleasant and welcoming manner. It is important to acknowledge a customer and smile – we want our readers to return! Remember, eye contact should be maintained.
- A standard greeting i.e. the same words used to all members of the public, could easily become false and insincere. *"Hello/Good morning/Can I help you? /Good afternoon Mrs Smith"* may be used according to the situation. Some customers may be put off by an over effusive or too chatty member of staff, but a friendly manner and a willingness to help are basic requirements.
- If there is a queue and more than one member of staff dealing with it, customers should be politely asked to bring their books or items for attention. *"Would you like to bring your books down here?"* is better than *"Next!"* If the customer has to wait, it is polite to apologise for the delay and if possible to say *"I won't keep you long"*.
- Staff should avoid standing with their backs to the customer and never eat or drink in the public area. They should always be aware that they are representing L&RC and the Council.
- Staff should constantly be alert to customers waiting.
- People waiting for attention should usually be dealt with before the telephone.
- Anyone shelving, shelf checking or on floor duties should keep an eye on the pod / enquiry desk to return to assist colleagues with queues, or to answer telephones.
- Customers who ask for directions should be taken to the appropriate section. An arm waved in the right direction is not enough.
- On the Container staff should be prepared to assist customers who need assistance in getting on (and off) the vehicle. Elderly customers often have difficulty carrying a heavy bag of books up steps. Where appropriate the passenger lift should be offered.

## 6.4. TELEPHONE MANNER

- No personal calls should be taken in the public area except in cases of emergency. Calls to other libraries or services should be strictly limited to business and should not degenerate into gossip.
- A greeting such as *Good morning, Ascot Library, can I help you?* is essential.
- It is only necessary to give your name as you answer a call if you are answering your own personal extension, or if the caller will require you specifically in future.

- If a transfer of call is necessary, it is important that an explanation is given to the customer first. If the line is engaged the customer must be asked if he/she wishes to hold. If appropriate, an offer to call the customer back should be given.
- If the person required is not available, an alternative member of staff can be offered, or a message taken. If a message is taken, it should be passed to the relevant member of staff as soon as possible.
- Once a call has been taken and transferred to another department, the telephone should be answered promptly. If it is impossible to deal with the call then the name and number of the enquirer should be taken and a return call made as soon as a member of staff is free.
- Anyone shelving, shelf checking or on floor duties must return to the counter to answer the telephone if other staff are occupied with customers.

## **6.5. COMPLAINTS AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS**

The customer may not always be right but a complaint must always be taken seriously and courteously. It is necessary to remain calm and polite at all times.

## **6.6. PHYSICAL ASPECTS**

- Making service points attractive and easy to use is part of Customer Care.
- Guiding should be clear and helpful and large enough to be seen by people with a visual impairment.
- The siting of various resources is important. Large print books should always be shelved in well-lit areas and if natural light is poor, consideration must be given to obtaining additional artificial light.
- Large print stock should be on shelves which are neither too high nor too low.
- Furnishings should be suitable for users. Firm high backed chairs with arms, rather than soft easy chairs are necessary for elderly users.
- For large libraries, a library 'plan' is very helpful to customers.
- Notice boards should be tidy and uncluttered and notices should be up-to-date.
- Standards of Presentation and Appearance of Libraries must be followed together with the Access Policy and Standards.

## **6.7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Records of borrowers should be accessible to the staff and that borrower only. Addresses, customer PIN numbers and other details should never be left on a screen, or given to other people. Information should not be given to the police unless it is requested in the appropriate manner. This will be managed by the DPA. Any request must be reported to the Service Lead or Team Leader who will make contact with the DPA.
- When on duty in public areas staff should never talk about members of the public, collectively or individually.
- All enquiries should be handled with tact and discretion.

- Any personal data that is left in the library should be treated as confidential and not left lying around. All staff are expected to ensure that no personal data is left either on or beside library printers, or where other members of the public can see it. Any documents containing personal data should be kept securely until collected by the customer or shredded. Lost property containing personal data [e.g. Memory stick, handbag, purse etc.] should be dealt with according to the lost property procedure.

### **6.8. SPECIAL GROUPS**

- Staff need to be aware of the problems faced by customers with a physical or mental disability. Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is a requirement for all service providers to make equal provision to users regardless of any disability.
- Help should be offered unobtrusively – customers with a disability might not want to draw attention to themselves.
- Staff should never shout at a hearing impaired person. Speaking slowly and clearly, while facing the reader is much more effective.

### **6.9. CLOSING ROUTINES**

- Closing the service at the end of the day should take place in a polite manner.
- Customers should be reminded that the service is to close shortly. A five or ten minute warning should be given, more in the case of large buildings.
- Customers who appear a few minutes before closing must be dealt with politely.
- Lights should not be turned off before all customers have left, but they may be momentarily dipped just before closing time as a gentle hint.

## **7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Library and Resident Contact Lead

Library and Resident Contact Team Leaders

The customer care standard also applies to volunteers.

## **8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

L&RS Management Team, Deputy Leader of the Council, Corporate & Resident Services, Culture & Heritage and Windsor; Armed Forces Champion

## **9. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

L&RC – Library and Resident Contact