

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Library and Resident Services (L&RS)

Enquiries Standard

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

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. TITLE

Enquiries Standard

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Customer care in answering enquiries is covered by the Customer Care Standard.

3. PURPOSE

This standard covers enquiries received at all staffed Library and Resident Services (L&RS) hubs and Library service points. All enquiries should be answered so that the customer in all cases should receive an answer appropriate to their needs. This Standard is designed to ensure a consistent practice for dealing with all enquiries that will give the best possible service to customers.

4. SCOPE

Enquiries are a key element in the public library service. Enquiries cover a great diversity of subjects, including information about the library arrangement, leisure interests, fiction, educational projects and work related topics such as business. They may be answered using lending or reference stock including on-line resources. The way enquiries are answered and the accuracy of any information given is of critical importance to these library users. A key element of the statutory library service is that the library can be trusted to provide unbiased, accurate and current information.

5. OBJECTIVE

Including the following main topics:

- Definition of enquiries
- Customer waiting times
- Time taken to answer enquiries
- The enquiry interview
- Referral of enquiries
- Staffing
- Training

6. POLICY DETAILS

6.1. Definition of Enquiries

An enquiry is a 'non-administrative' question in which information is requested or assistance is asked for. The main types of enquiry are defined as follows:

Directional Enquiries

- any directions to a desk or section of stock within the library
- location of the catalogues

Routine administrative questions should not be included as enquiries. For example:

- how to join the library
- Renewals and issues
- telephone renewals
- requests for assistance in using equipment

Information Enquiries

Enquiries are requests for information on any subject that require staff directly to assist customers in finding the answer in bibliographies or books, computer databases or the Internet, or other information resources in the library or elsewhere.

Some business, local studies or family history enquiries may be charged for. Charges must be agreed by Full Council.

Enquiries of all kinds may be received at any library, at an enquiry desk, issue pod, or via the Borough website.

6.2. Customer Waiting Times

Enquiries in person

Enquiries should be answered as quickly as possible, consistent with good customer care and provision of the right information at the right level for the customer.

The presence of a customer at an enquiry desk should be acknowledged as soon as possible and at least within two minutes. Customers visiting the library in person should not normally wait longer than the following times for staff to attend to their enquiry:

- Maidenhead Library: Four minutes
- Other Libraries: Three minutes

6.3. Telephone enquiries

Telephone enquiries and those received in person should so far as possible be dealt with in the order in which they are received. When in doubt the customer at the information point should be dealt with first.

Telephone calls should be answered as promptly as possible. Where calls are received centrally and cannot be forwarded to the appropriate desk, staff should offer to take details of the caller's name, phone number and enquiry for the call to be returned at the earliest opportunity (i.e. at least 80% within one hour; 100% within four hours or at the caller's convenience).

6.4. Time Taken to Answer Enquiries

All enquiries should be dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with providing an appropriate level of answer.

Directional Enquiries

All should be completed within one to two minutes.

Information Enquiries in Person and by Phone

Maidenhead and Windsor: at least 90% of enquiries completed within fifteen minutes

All other information points: at least 50% of enquiries complete within fifteen minutes

Information Enquiries by post and email

Urgent enquiries should be responded to on the day of receipt. All enquiries should be acknowledged within two working days.

Wherever possible answers should be completed with 10 working days. If it is not possible to answer in this time (e.g. complex local studies enquiries), the acknowledgement should state what action is proposed and how long it will take. All answers should be supplied within the time stated. No reply should take longer than four weeks.

If enquiries are likely to take more than 30 minutes to research (e.g. some Local Studies enquiries) customers should be informed of the possible charge and their agreement to pay sought beforehand: . [Faxes, microforms and microfiche | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead \(rbwm.gov.uk\)](#)

6.5. The Enquiry Interview

All information enquiries should be treated seriously. Staff should always try to establish the true nature and level of the information required and provide answers that are accurate and consistent with the customer's expressed needs.

Inaccurate or out of date information inappropriate to the customer's needs should not be given. If information is not the latest available but is appropriate to the customer's need it should be offered with an explanation of its status. The customer should be made aware of the data and source of information they are given as appropriate.

6.6. Referral of Enquiries

Customers can make enquiries at any library and while many can be answered there and then, some will need to be referred to specialist staff or other libraries.

If it is not possible to give an answer that fully meets the customer's needs but information is likely to be available elsewhere, the enquirer should be referred to where that information is available e.g. the Local Studies Team.

Wherever possible internal referrals should be made by email while the customer is in the library so as much detail as possible can be included in the email.

6.7. Staffing

Information Points at Maidenhead and Windsor libraries should be staffed for all hours the library is open by suitably trained staff. One or more officers should be available at all times to be called upon if needed.

6.8. Training

All library staff should be trained in referral techniques and should be aware of correct procedures for dealing with enquiries, so that if they are not able to answer an enquiry the customer should be referred correctly first time.

All staff who work on information points in larger libraries should, in addition, be familiar with the full range of resources available at that library. All staff in these libraries should have access to information on the full range of resources available within the Borough.

Colleagues with specialist responsibilities for an aspect of stock or enquiries in major libraries should be able to give accurate advice to staff working with them or who may refer enquiries to them, on resources and procedures. This may include resources outside Library and Resident Services.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Library and Resident Contact Lead

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

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