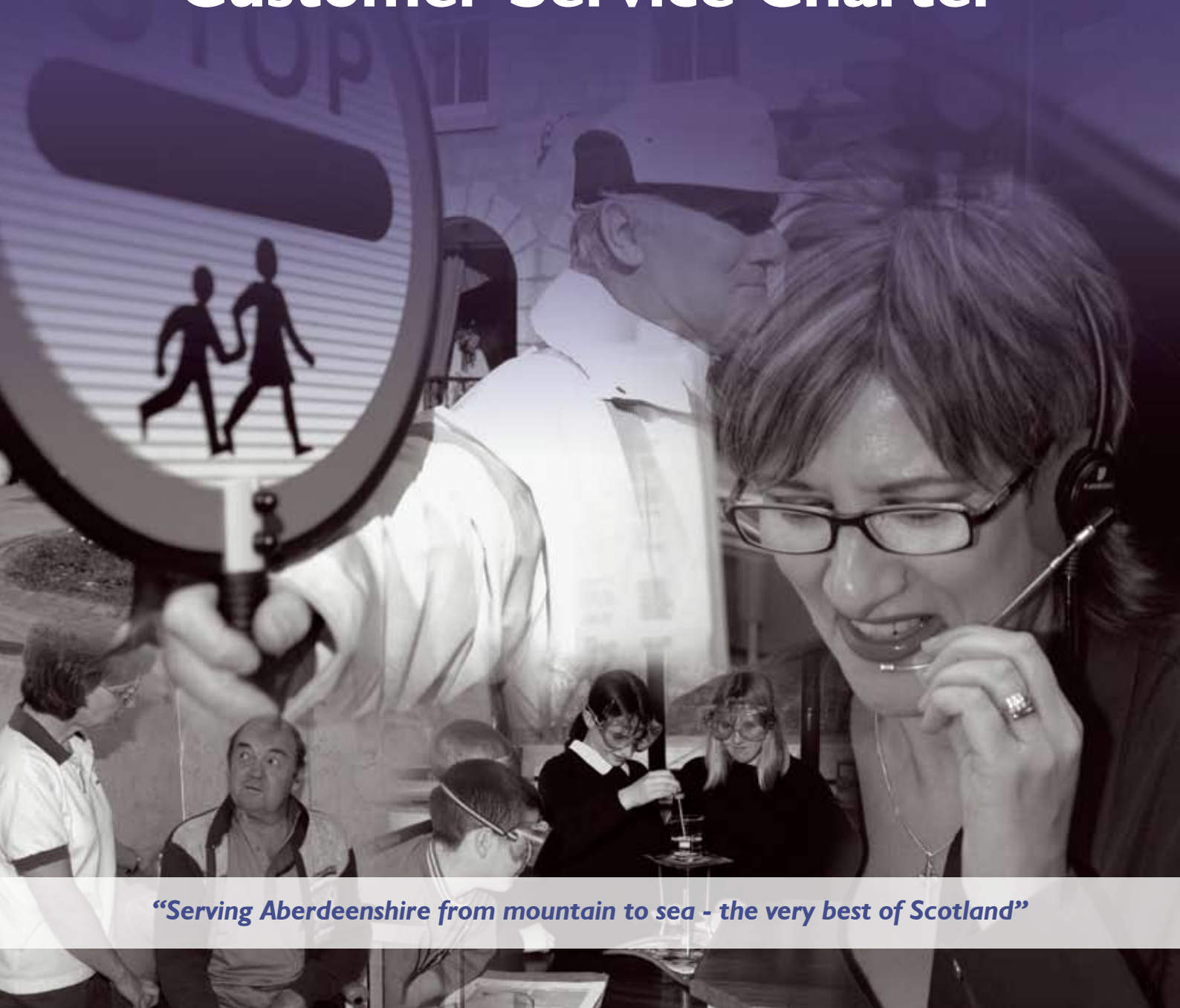




**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL

# Aberdeenshire Council Customer Service Charter



*“Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea - the very best of Scotland”*



# Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

## **The best area**

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through . . .

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

## **The best council**

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by . . .

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

## Our aim

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to providing high quality services and delivering high standards of customer service.

As a customer of Aberdeenshire Council, you have the right to be treated fairly and considerately when using any of our services whether in person, by phone, in writing or by e-mail. These standards outline the level of service you should expect and gives you the opportunity to challenge us if we do not deliver them.

We will deal with you as an individual and ensure that you are treated fairly and equally, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

When dealing with all customers, we will:

- Be friendly and accessible
- Understand your needs
- Meet your expectations wherever possible and explain when we cannot
- Treat you as we would expect to be treated ourselves
- Respect confidentiality
- Provide a quality service and work continually to improve this service
- Wear identity cards at all times

## Contacting Aberdeenshire Council - Our Pledge

If you contact us by phone, we will:

- Answer your call promptly, politely and give a name
- Listen carefully to what you say
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- If required, help you to complete forms
- Take clear and concise messages and ensure your message is passed on to the appropriate person
- Deal with your enquiry at first point of contact, whenever possible
- Always pass on details if we have to transfer your call to someone else
- Specify when we will get back to you if we are unable to give you an answer straight away

### If you contact us in person, we will:

- Make sure that, where practicable, our offices are accessible to everyone, particularly people with disabilities and people with pushchairs or buggies. If any office is not accessible to an individual, we will make reasonable efforts to arrange alternative arrangements for a service to be provided, e.g. home visit
- Display our opening hours and emergency out of hours telephone numbers
- Make sure our reception areas are clean, tidy and safe
- Greet you at our main reception area within 5 minutes of your arrival
- See you on time if you have an appointment or keep you informed if there is any delay
- Offer you somewhere private to talk to us where applicable
- Let you bring along a friend, relative or support worker to your appointment
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages, as well as Braille, on audio tape and in large print
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- Arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter if you would prefer to use sign language
- If required, help you to complete forms
- Deal with queries at first point of contact, wherever possible.

### If you e-mail or write to us, we will:

- Acknowledge your enquiry within 5 working days of receipt, and give a full reply within 20 working days or earlier if possible. If we can't give a full response within 20 working days, we will write and explain why.
- Use plain English in our reply
- Give the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the person dealing with your enquiry
- Give you at least 24 hours' notice if we need to visit your home
- Visit you within 5 working days of your request for a home visit, or sooner if the circumstances demand
- Arrange to provide, on request, information in different languages, as well as Braille, on audio tape and in large print

### If we visit you at home, we will:

- Show our identity card(s) when we arrive
- Arrange to use Language Line or an interpreter if you have difficulty speaking English
- Arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter if you would prefer to use sign language
- If required, help you to complete forms
- If you are out when we arrive, leave a business card, giving the name and telephone number of the person to contact
- Not smoke
- Not make unnecessary use of mobile phones in your home
- Not enter parts of your home unnecessarily or which are not affected by the nature of our visit
- Not use your facilities such as, electric power, kitchen, toilets, etc without your permission
- Not use your private telephone
- Not use radios or similar equipment
- Be responsible for providing any power necessary for carrying out work
- Leave your home clean and safe at the completion of each working day

### What you can do to help us?

There are ways that you can help us to help you. When you phone us, call at any of our offices or when we visit you at home, it will help if you:

- Have with you any letters or documents which relate to your enquiry and by giving us any information we ask for
- Let us know in advance if you might need an interpreter or if you might need information in a different language, Braille or large type
- Let us know if you have particular access needs
- Attend appointments on time, or let us know if you will be late or can't attend – this helps us keep waiting times down for everyone
- Can be patient – sometimes the offices are very busy and we will do all we can to keep waiting times to a minimum

The council has respect for all its customers and employees and our aim is to provide all our customers with a high level of service. You can help us by:

- Treating our staff with respect
- Not using bad language, being abusive or acting in a threatening manner
- Respecting the privacy of other customers
- Remembering that we are here to help and assist you

## Customer Feedback Scheme - What do you think about our services?

We aim to provide quality services that meet customers' needs and to maintain and improve our standards.

To help us do this we rely on feedback from customers to ensure that we are doing what we say we will do and to help us make improvements to our services.

If you feel we have fallen short of our standards, we want to know where things have gone wrong, so that we can put them right and also improve our services. We will deal fairly and effectively with anyone wanting to complain about our activities, or appeal against any of our decisions.

In every council office and facility there are "Have Your Say" leaflets, which can be used if you want to comment on, compliment or complain about our performance. Alternatively, you can write a letter or send an e-mail, ask someone to write for you, telephone or visit [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay). Aberdeenshire Council welcomes all feedback, positive and negative. We take feedback seriously as it helps us with the continuous improvement of our organisation.

Aberdeenshire Council follows the basic principles of effective complaints handling through our Customer Feedback scheme. This means the scheme is:

- Easily accessible and well publicised
- Simple to understand and use
- Speedy, with established time limits for action and keeping people informed of progress
- Fair, with a full and impartial investigation – consistent with legal rights
- Confidential, to maintain the confidentiality of both staff and complainants
- Effective, addressing all the points at issue and providing appropriate redress
- Informative, providing information to management so that services can be improved

### Definition of a complaint

When you contact the council the first time asking for something or reporting a fault this is a service request. If this is not carried out, it then becomes a complaint.

A complaint is considered to be any expression of dissatisfaction or concern about the standard or way a service is provided, or about the lack of action. If we fail to adequately respond to first comments that are made, a complaint would be justified.

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you have the right to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk) or Tel 0800 377 7330, who may decide to undertake an independent investigation on your behalf.

## Contacts

- If you want to find out something about Aberdeenshire, the best thing to do is to go to our website at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)
  - If you want to visit us, then call at one of our offices in any of the major towns in Aberdeenshire. The offices are listed on our website and in the telephone book
  - If you want to speak to someone and have a name, then e-mail, telephone or write to that person
  - If you don't know who you need to speak to, phone us on 08456 08 12 07 and tell us what you need. Or e-mail/write to us at your local Area Manager's office:
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Banff and Buchan Area Office<br/>St Leonard's<br/>Sandyhill Road<br/>Banff<br/>AB45 1BH<br/><a href="mailto:banff.buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">banff.buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garioch Area Office<br/>Gordon House<br/>Blackhall Road<br/>Inverurie<br/>AB51 3WB<br/><a href="mailto:garioch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">garioch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buchan Area Office<br/>Arbuthnot House<br/>62 Broad Street<br/>Peterhead<br/>AB42 1DA<br/><a href="mailto:buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">buchan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kincardine and Mearns Area Office<br/>Viewmount<br/>Arduthie Road<br/>Stonehaven<br/>AB39 2DQ<br/><a href="mailto:kincardine.mearns@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">kincardine.mearns@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formartine Area Office<br/>29 Bridge Street<br/>Ellon<br/>AB41 9AA<br/><a href="mailto:formartine@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">formartine@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marr Area Office<br/>School Road<br/>Alford<br/>AB33 8TY<br/><a href="mailto:marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a></li></ul>  |

Alternatively, you can write to:

Alan G Campbell  
Chief Executive  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Woodhill House  
Westburn Road  
Aberdeen  
AB16 5GB

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