

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE STANDARDS

SEPTEMBER 2015

INTRODUCTION

All customers who contact the Environmental Health Service Group, whether in person, by telephone or in writing, should expect an excellent standard of customer care. To ensure that our standards are transparent and clear, for both our officers and our customers we have provided a summary of the minimum standards of care customers should expect from our service areas.

The service standards do not affect statutory timescales, which officers are legally bound to comply with and which are detailed under the relevant service.

WHAT OUR CUSTOMER'S CAN EXPECT FROM US

- ❖ We will aim to answer the telephone within five rings;
- ❖ We will advise you who is dealing with your case/query and provide details of the name of the officer and their contact details;
- ❖ We will provide information as to what we will do next and how we will handle your case/query and how you will be informed of progress;
- ❖ We will advise what you can expect from our investigation, after we have made preliminary enquiries and what potential action may be taken;
- ❖ We will ensure that all open complaints are monitored and reviewed at least once a month;
- ❖ We will treat all matters in complete confidence, giving you the right to remain anonymous if you wish;
- ❖ We will keep a record of any service requests or complaint details on our database;
- ❖ We will make appointments for visits, whenever possible except for situations where our action may be compromised, if we were to do so; e.g. where the visit is part of an ongoing investigation or a statutory food hygiene inspection;
- ❖ We will give you helpful and accurate advice by trained staff based on the facts provided;
- ❖ We will always provide a polite and professional service.

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

We ask our customers to provide officers with full and correct details of their enquiry and treat our officers with respect and courtesy.

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR OFFICERS CONDUCT

Where a complaint or enquiry results in a visit to a business or where statutory enforcement is being taken, all officers will:

- ❖ Show identification;
- ❖ Be polite and courteous at all times;
- ❖ Have the necessary qualifications for the task being carried out;
- ❖ Keep appointments or give a full explanation if they are broken;
- ❖ Give feedback from any inspection or visit, such as information about hazards, which have been identified and guidance on how they should be avoided;
- ❖ Clearly distinguish between what must be done to comply with the law and what is recommended because it is good practice;
- ❖ Give reasons in writing for any action you are asked to take;
- ❖ Explain where there is an apparent breach of law and a statement of what that law is;
- ❖ Give reasonable time to meet statutory requirements, except where there is an immediate risk to public health;
- ❖ Outline procedures for appealing against local authority action where relevant;
- ❖ Follow the Department's Enforcement Policy when taking enforcement action.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you wish to make a complaint the first step is to contact the member of staff providing the service you want to complain about or you can contact their manager. The officer will try to sort out your problem and in many cases they will be able to deal with your complaint straight away.

If this does not happen, you can make a complaint by contacting the h&f InTouch Team, who are responsible for overseeing the Council's Complaints Procedure and can provide you with advice about making a complaint. You can contact the h&f In-Touch Team by telephone on 020 8753 2456.

Stage 1 The first step is to contact the member of staff providing the service you want to complain about or you can contact their manager. Tell them the problem and they will try and sort it out. In many cases they will be able to deal with your complaint straight away. If this does not happen, you can make a complaint by contacting the h&f InTouch Team, they are responsible for overseeing the Council's Complaints Procedure and can provide you with advice about making a complaint. Once your complaint has been recorded, a response will be sent to you within 15 working days.

Stage 2 If you are not satisfied with the response you received at Stage 1, you should write to the h&f InTouch Team and explain why. The response you received at Stage 1 will explain how to do this. The h&f InTouch Team will then consider your complaint and make a decision whether it will be recorded at Stage 2.

If your complaint is recorded at Stage 2, a senior member of staff will then investigate your complaint and a response will be sent within 20 working days. If your complaint is not recorded at Stage 2, the h&f InTouch Team will explain why.

The Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service that investigates complaints about councils. You can seek advice from the ombudsman at any time but they will refer a complaint back to us if you have not been through the Council's complaints procedure.

Contact

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint

Fax: 024 7682 0001

Text: 'call back' to 0762 480 3014

SERVICE STANDARDS IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAMS

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

- ❖ We will provide an initial response/acknowledgement to a food safety or health and safety service request within 1 working day;
- ❖ All new food businesses will be inspected ideally within 28 days from receipt and processing of the application. We aim to inspect all new premises within 2 months of receipt of the application as far as is practicable;
- ❖ A written on-site report will be left with the business operator after every food safety and health and safety inspection which may also be followed up by a letter;
- ❖ We will send a letter to a business who has received a food hygiene/food standards inspection within 10 working days;
- ❖ Following a food hygiene inspection and in line with the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme an officer must rate and send out the sticker and rating form within 7 days of the inspection (business then has a 14 day appeal period);
- ❖ On receipt of a request for a Right to Reply form (Food Hygiene Rating Scheme) we will respond within 24 hours;
- ❖ We will respond to a Food Hygiene Rating appeal (providing it is within the 14 day appeal notice period) and provide a response within 7 days of receiving it;
- ❖ Following the service of a food safety or health and safety Improvement Notice the business operator will be given a minimum of 14 days in which to comply or appeal the notice;
- ❖ We will operate in line with relevant legislation, national codes of practice and guidance;
- ❖ We will regularly monitor our staff to assess their ongoing competence and performance, through an accompanied inspection programme and a work verification system;
- ❖ We will send a letter to a business following a health and safety intervention within 10 working days;
- ❖ We will respond to a letter relating to food safety or health and safety within 5 working days.

PEST CONTROL

- ❖ Provide an initial response / acknowledgement to a service request received by the team within 2 working days;
- ❖ Offer a domestic pest treatment within 3 days of request;
- ❖ Provide a commissioned written inspection report following a survey within 5 working days;
- ❖ Arrange a date for a contract visit within 5 working days of receiving payment;
- ❖ Respond to service complaints within the Departmental timeframe.

TRADING STANDARDS

- ❖ Provide an initial response / acknowledgement to a service request within 1 working day;
- ❖ Respond to a letter within 5 working days of receipt.

LICENSING

- ❖ Provide an initial response / acknowledgement to a service request within 1 working day;
- ❖ Respond to a letter within 5 working days of receipt;
- ❖ Licencing will work to legal timeframes that are stipulated in various licensing application processes.

PRIVATE HOUSING

- ❖ Assess service request within 36 hours;
- ❖ Where inspection is necessary it will be schedule within five working day and the same working day for urgent matters;

- ❖ Where inspection not necessary a letter will despatched within 5 days confirming action required;
- ❖ Process all licensing applications for houses in multiple occupation within 8 weeks
- ❖ Operate in line with relevant legislation, national codes of practice and guidance issued;
- ❖ Officers will be regularly monitored to assess their ongoing competence and performance, through a work verification system.

NOISE AND NUISANCE

- ❖ Provide an initial response / acknowledgement to a service request with 1 working day;
- ❖ All correspondence to have case reference included in the subject line;
- ❖ A case reference number must be given by officers to all customers;
- ❖ E-mail are to be responded to within 2 working days;
- ❖ Following the witness of a statutory nuisance complaint a warning letter 3 and/or an abatement notice must be issued.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

- ❖ Provide an initial response / acknowledgement to a service request with 1 working day;
- ❖ Respond to contaminated land enquiries within 10 working days of receipt of payment.