



CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

Personnel & Office Services

September 2011

CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

CONTENTS

SECTION	
1	Introduction
2	Mission Statement
3	Customer Contact
4	Current Standards
5	Providing Information
6	Customer Feedback
7	Further Improvements to Customer Care

APPENDIX	
1	Timescales for Dealing With Enquiries

CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Board is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Valuation Roll, Council Tax List and Electoral Register. To undertake these activities the Board staff are in regular contact with our stakeholders.
- 1.2 This contact comes in many forms from issue of questionnaires, face to face meetings, and the public promotion of our services. Our customers are from all sectors of the community and their requirements are many and varied.
- 1.3 As a result of our activities and level of contact, customer care is a vital and important component of service provision to our stakeholders. By formalising the steps currently taken, a base can be established upon which improvement can be made.
- 1.4 This policy underlines our commitment to Customer Care and provides information of our current and proposed approach.

2 MISSION STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Board has recently adopted the following as its mission and visions statements:-

“LVJB’s mission is to ensure best value and provide equitable, customer focused, high quality professional valuation and electoral services for all its stakeholders.”

“Our vision is to provide valuation and electoral services in accordance with statute and at levels of excellence which exceed expectations.”.

- 2.2 Customer care forms an essential platform upon which the goals and objectives within the mission statement can be achieved and it is only through contact and feedback from our stakeholders that we are able to evaluate the quality of our service provision.

3 CUSTOMER CONTACT

- 3.1 While our customers make contact in the normal way through letters, e-mails, telephone, they also use appointed representatives and agents, and staff regularly visit commercial and domestic properties. Often, this is the first point of contact with our stakeholders and during this meeting important information is provided and received. To ensure this meeting is productive staff must communicate in a polite, and informative manner.
 - 3.2 To satisfy the legal requirements surrounding the Valuation Roll, Council Tax List and Electoral Register the Board undertakes extensive collection of data and information by paper. For this to be effective, the forms and questionnaires supplied to our stakeholders must be customer friendly and easily understood.
 - 3.3 Where further communication arises, dedicated staff deal with all enquiries and provide additional information and guidance as requested. Correspondence should be timeously issued and meet plain English and easy to read standards.
- 4 /....

4 CURRENT STANDARDS

4.1 Performance Targets

The Board operates a range of performance targets relating to all its functions. A number of these represent national targets which are published annually, while others are maintained as internal organisational targets, aimed at achieving and improving effective service delivery.

These performance targets are used to assist with the process of improvement, ensuring higher levels of service to our customers are achieved.

4.2 Written Communications

When responding to all written communications we will in most cases reply within 10 working days. Depending on the nature of the communication it may not be possible to respond within this timescale. In such cases an acknowledgement shall be provided within 3 working days. Further details on response times are attached as Appendix 1.

4.3 External Appointments

4.3.1 Where staff are required to meet with customers outwith the office they shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Board's approved policy on Code of Conduct.

4.3.2 At all times staff will behave professionally and approach the customer in a fair, honest and helpful manner.

4.3.3 Without request, staff shall present their Board identification badge in all instances when visiting individual customers and organisations. On all occasions staff must ensure that the reason for the visit is fully explained.

4.4 Telephones

We will answer calls within 4 rings or if the line is busy the call will transfer to another line or to an answer phone. We will greet all callers in welcoming manner and aim to answer enquiries satisfactorily at the first call. Answerphone messages will be returned within 24 hours with the exception of weekend and public holidays. A dedicated team of staff provide a telephone answering service and over 80% of incoming telephone enquiries are dealt with by this group.

4.5 Requests for Information

Throughout the year the Board issues many questionnaires seeking different information. A number of these are issued under statutory authority where a return is a legal requirement. To assist with this process, all forms are regularly reviewed to ensure that, where possible, plain English is adopted and completion is straight forward.

While some forms can be provided in a number of foreign languages we can also provide a translation service via the telephone and hard copy, which is regularly utilised by customers.

4.6 Hearing Loop

At the Joint Board offices a hearing loop system is in operation. This facility provides assistance to those members of the public with hearing difficulties.

4.7 /....

4.7 Code of Conduct

The Board operates a code of conduct policy, which outlines a set of standards by which staff must abide by while in the course of their duties.

4.8 Equality Policy

The Board has an Equality Policy, the main aims of which are diversity and inclusion for everyone.

5 PROVIDING INFORMATION

- 5.1 It is important that our customers are able to access information about our services through a variety of different media. The Board hosts a website www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk which provides information and interactive methods of communication that allow direct access to the organisation. The Valuation Roll, Valuation List and Electoral Register are publicly available documents and we ensure access to these by providing copies at the Joint Board office, libraries and other council offices. In addition, as a member of the Scottish Assessors Association, further access to interactive services and information is available on the www.saa.gov.uk
- 5.2 In particular, in order to promote electoral registration to our customers the Board has a number of information and display stands which are used at such locations as shopping centres, universities and other public events.
- 5.3 Also specific, targeted advertising is undertaken throughout the year, at election periods and at the annual canvass promoting various aspects of registration.

6 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

- 6.1 While it can be seen that the Board is committed to providing customer focused services, it is essential that facilities exist which allow proper feedback and the views of our customers to be made known. It is important to establish accurate customer perception of our performance.
- 6.2 Currently, this is achieved by ensuring full contact details are provided with any communications issued and through feedback facilities on our website and that of the Scottish Assessors Association. The Board also has a Complaints Procedure through which customers can seek resolution.
- 6.3 In addition the Board has and shall continue to participate in customer based consultative forums.

7 FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO CUSTOMER CARE

7.1 Questionnaires

- 7.1.1 It can be of assistance to make direct contact with the customer in order to ascertain their views on aspects of our service. It is intended therefore to create and issue a number of questionnaires seeking feedback and comment on the level and quality of service customers have received. Further reports shall be provided to Board members outlining and evaluating the information received.

7.2 /....

7.2 Direct Canvassing

7.2.1 As much of our customer contact is by telephone, it is intended to develop methods or systems of direct canvassing during these interactions. This shall enable us to receive first hand feedback at the point services are being delivered.

7.3 Internet Canvassing

7.3.1 Many of our customers access our services and gain information via our internet site. Customer comment forms will be made available on the internet to allow ease of completion and return.

7.4 Regular Review

7.4.1 For customer care to remain a priority it is intended to periodically review this document and the methods of customer contact outlined. This shall ensure the Board continues to deliver a high quality, cost effective service to all our customers and stakeholders.

TIMESCALES FOR DEALING WITH ENQUIRIES

This document sets out the response times applicable to the principle types of enquiry received by the organisation.

The times indicated are maximum limits and it is anticipated that responses shall be given within these scales.

ENQUIRIES	
Telephone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Immediate response if certain of facts otherwise advise enquirer of how you intend to resolve. ■ If not immediately resolved then prepare a brief note of the circumstances. ■ Provide full reply within 10 working days or further advise enquirer. ■ Ensure to advise that any appeal must be made in writing.
E-Mails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respond within 2 working days or advise enquirer of how you intend to resolve. ■ Provide full reply within 10 working days or further advise enquirer.
Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acknowledge receipt in writing within 3 days. ■ Provide full reply within 10 working days or further advise enquirer.
Counter Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Immediate response if certain of facts otherwise advise enquirer of how you intend to resolve. ■ If not immediately resolved then prepare a brief note of the circumstances. ■ Provide full reply within 10 working days or further advise enquirer. ■ Ensure to advise that any appeal must be made in writing.