

Customer Services Strategy 2021 – 2026



24/7 SUPPORT



ASSISTANCE



CUSTOMER SERVICE



CONTACT US



2020 VISION

Working together for a better future

The Council Priorities and the Vision



Your services

“Providing the best services we can afford



Supporting you

to help you improve your life”

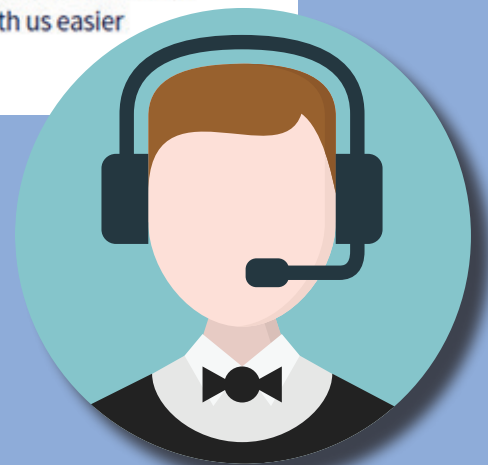


Your future

We will continue to deliver our priorities without it costing you more by:

- Offering an improved customer experience
- Building better relationships with other organisations and the community
- Providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier
- Becoming smaller but more effective

The Customer Services Strategy aims to put customers first in everything that we do – the following pages sets out how we will do this, and what our customer should expect.



Customer Services Vision

We aim to be a customer focused organisation – we will work to understand our customers better and put them at the heart of everything we do, and we will support customers to do more for themselves.

This includes:

- encouraging all our staff to 'think customer' before acting
- invest in training for our staff to understand how to deliver the best customer care
- being committed to treating people fairly, to respect privacy and dignity and to pay attention to people who need more support
- making sure this continues to be an important part of our culture
- asking customers what they think and use their feedback to improve our services
- providing help and support for people across Arun following a wide range of inquiries, and understanding what customers need and use this to change our services.



Aims and objectives

We will:

- ask for feedback from customers about their experiences of dealing with us and use the results to learn from this to improve our services
- continue to develop online services that are easy to access using any device, quick to use and available whenever they are needed
- promote self-reliance; whilst continuing to support those who need our help
- talk to focus groups to understand and accommodate access needs
- measure how satisfied people are with our services, publish and learn from the results.

Priorities, challenges and opportunities

Our key challenges include:

Rising customer expectations and demands – customers expect to be able to contact us 24 hours a day, seven days a week using our website and social media. They expect flexible and more personalised services.

Using customer intelligence to inform and shape service delivery – we will use good information to understand what our customers need so that we can respond better.

Digital exclusion – we must allow for people who don't have access to the internet at home, and which may mean that they can't access our information and services online. Where needed we will help people who don't have access to the internet by providing support to use at venues across the District.

Reducing council resources – the need for us to provide high quality customer service does not go away as our funding reduces. We must develop more cost effective ways for our customers to contact us and encourage and support our customers to use them.

Workforce development – a training and development plan will be produced for customer services.

We will:

- invest in training for all our staff which will include equality awareness and data protection training
- include customer service awareness in our appraisal process.



Community and partnership working

Community engagement

We have a unique community leadership role among providers of public services, working with partners, local businesses, voluntary organisations and communities themselves to create positive conditions in the District.

We will strengthen partnership working, and work with communities to achieve the long-term wellbeing of people in the District. We will encourage residents to play a part in their communities and help them to do this where we can. We aim to be a trusted source of information, advice and guidance, using our website and other self-service options.

- get to know our communities better and improve the way we work with them
- improve the information available and access to it as easy as possible.

Partnership working

We work closely with partners across the District and beyond to make sure our customers get the right help and support. We will set out clearly how we share customer's information with our partners. We want our customers to be confident that we are protecting their privacy but also using important information effectively to make sure they get the help and support they need.

- work with partners to make it as convenient as we can for customers to get help and support
- keep personal information secure.

What we will do, how and when

We're committed to providing a range of customer contact options supported by clear information, advice and guidance.

We will continue to develop well-designed options which customers can use whenever they need to request a service, complete an application, make a payment or report an issue.

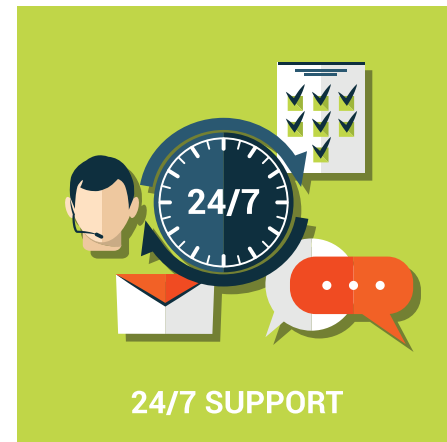
We will promote online options and help customers to use them by:

- investing in online options including our website, automatic telephone lines, SMS text, social media and mobile phone apps
- supporting the roll out of superfast broadband across the District to help more of our customers access the information they need and the services they want in the most convenient way
- providing equipment in a range of buildings and helping people to use it
- identifying and working with individuals or groups who need extra help to access services
- helping customers to access online options through live web chat and our telephone contact centre teams.

Aim to resolve enquiries first time around

To achieve this, we will invest in staff training and make sure staff have access to good information. Key actions will include:

- gathering feedback from customers to help us design our services better
- developing common standards of service for all contact





- publishing clear information, reducing the need for customers to contact us
- reducing the number of different telephone numbers we publish
- providing automatic telephone options for simple requests and enquiries.

Email and paper communication

We aim to reduce the amount of direct email, post and paper communication by increasing the range of services available on our website and increasing the ability of customers to self-serve. We will only use letters where essential.

Service standards

Our Strategy is a demonstration of our commitment to our customers. We aim to deliver a consistently good service whenever our customers contact us and strive for excellence in everything we do.

Customer Charter

Values – Getting it right - Going the extra mile

Customers can expect:

Our knowledgeable and committed staff to put your needs first.

To be kept well informed.

Staff who want to help, and are courteous and engaged.

A single point of contact, and resolution of your enquiry, with clear signposting of services.

The Council commits to:

All our staff being committed to putting your needs first.

Ensuring that all information is up-to-date and correct.

Make sure you are always delighted with the help and guidance we give you.

Being joined up and not passing you around the organisation.

Innovating - Learning from experience

Customers can expect:

Us to put things right when they go wrong.

To be consulted about changes to the services we provide.

For us to improve our services based on your feedback.

For us to constantly think about ways of improving everything we do.

The Council commits to:

Apologising if we make a mistake and fixing it quickly and fairly, and learning from our mistakes.

Making it easy for you to have your say in what we do and how we do it.

Using your feedback to make changes and removing any unnecessary bureaucracy.

Delivering continuous improvement and increased satisfaction.

Customer Charter

Spending wisely - Every penny counts

Customers can expect:

Information about what is being spent where and why.

Modern and responsive services based on what works for you.

That we continually look for ways of keeping costs down by becoming more efficient.

Simplified processes services.

The Council commits to:

Being transparent and publicising service performance, budgets and expenditure.

Constantly looking for ways to improve our services and save money.

Always looking for ways to save money.

Reducing the cost of a request through efficiencies.

Many talents – One aim

Customers can expect:

Knowledgeable teams who can help you when the unexpected happens.

A consistent standard of service, whichever part of the council you contact.

Us to do more when you need us most.

An integrated and seamless service.

The Council commits to:

Making sure we are here to help you quickly when things go wrong.

Ensuring that staff are clear about what is expected of them.

Working across the organisation to help you with any emergencies.

Having effective internal and external communication systems.

Customer Charter

Listening - Responding

Customers can expect:

Clarity about the services we offer and honesty about what we can and can't do.

A prompt response to resolve enquiries with committed service standards, be it by phone, in person or online.

To be treated with courtesy, respect and understanding.

To be involved in decisions which directly affect you.

The Council commits to:

Keeping our promises by doing what we say, when we say.

Making sure your experience is as efficient and helpful as possible.

Understanding your needs, pressures and situation.

Providing you with choices where we can do so.



Response times to our customers

When customer contact us either by post or by email we will aim to respond within 10 working days and will aim to acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within 2 working days.

A full response or resolution, depending on the nature of your enquiry, may take longer. Customers will be given a timescale for a response with an acknowledgement.

Complaints – if a customer wants to make a complaint, they are able to do so via our complaints procedure, the full details of which can be accessed via our website: www.arun.gov.uk

In return we expect that you will:

- be respectful and polite to our staff
- be considerate of other customers
- use our online services if you can, and be willing to try new ways of contacting us
- keep us informed of personal changes which might affect the services we provide to you
- keep to agreed appointments or let us know if you need to change them
- provide us with feedback about your experiences to help us to learn and improve.

How will you know if we are improving?

We are determined to improve the service we offer our customers.

Our overall measure of success will be customer satisfaction with our services.

We will make sure that customers can contact us easily and make more services accessible online.

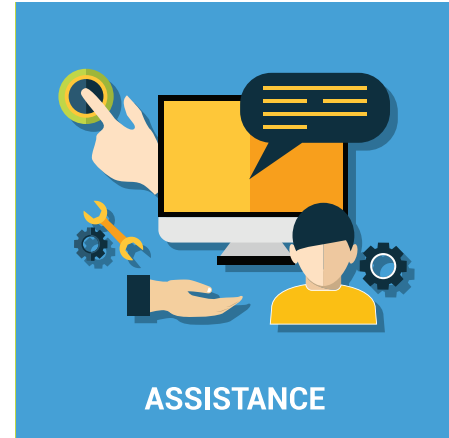
We will measure some customer contacts in detail, such as complaints and feedback, and how many customers use our online services and need to contact us.

We will:

- survey customers regarding satisfaction with our services
- ask customers for feedback as part of the way we work
- take advice from those who face the greatest difficulty in accessing services
- review the measures of success and the strategy every year
- report our progress every year and publish on our website.

We will work continuously to improve our customer services and have a detailed action plan in place to make sure we deliver efficiently and on time.

We will strive to ensure that improving customer service becomes part of the normal way we work.



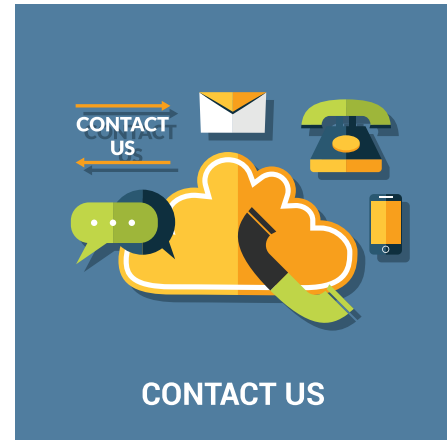


Action Plan

Available on our website at:

www.arun.gov.uk/

(this to be precis version of full plan).





Customer Services
Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Street
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN17 5LF

01903 737500
customerservices@arun.gov.uk
www.arun.gov.uk