

# Customer Services Strategy 2021 – 2026



SUPPORT



ASSISTANCE



CUSTOMER SERVICE



CONTACT US



## Working together for a better future

### The Council Priorities and the Vision



#### Your services

“Providing the best services we can afford to help you



#### Supporting you

to help you improve your life”

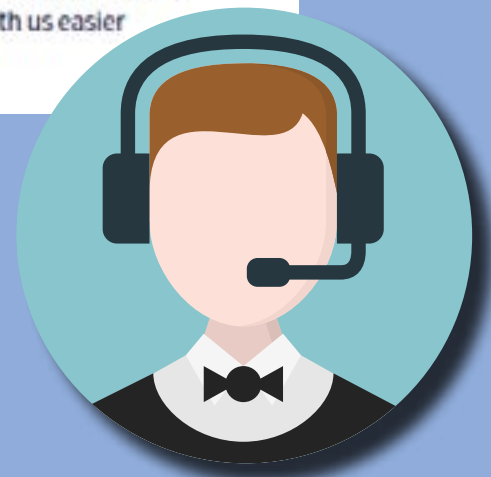


#### Your future

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 / Aims and objectives

**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
- continue to develop online services which are easy to access using any device, quick to use and available whenever they are needed
- asking customers for their feedback and use this feedback to improve our services
- Promote self-reliance whilst continuing to support those that need our help. Consult with focus groups to understand and accommodate access needs and assist with adapting our services
- 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 possible
- Set out clearly how we share customers information with our partners by working with our partners to make it as convenient as we can for our customers to get help and support, whilst keeping personal information secure
- Measuring satisfaction with our services, reviewing measures of success and the Strategy and Charter each year and report our progress every year and publish on our website
- Working continuously to improve our Customer Services and have a detailed action plan in place to make sure we deliver efficiently and on time.

## 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 statistical information to understand what our customers need so that we can respond appropriately.

**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 including assisted self-serve.

**Working Efficiently** – 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. This should be encouraged across all Service Areas.

**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.

## Response times to our customers

When you contact us we will aim to acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within 2 working days, and provide a full response within 10 working days. Where a full response may need more time we will let you know when this can be expected.

**Complaints** – if a customer wants to make a formal 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](http://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 may 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.





## 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 adaptive mobile services
- 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 customers 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.

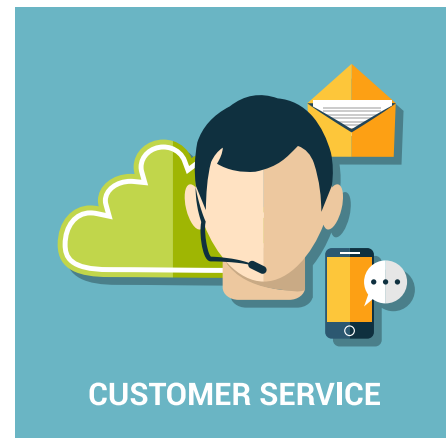
### **Email and paper communication**

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.

## **Next steps**

Available on our website at:

[www.arun.gov.uk/customerservices/nextsteps](http://www.arun.gov.uk/customerservices/nextsteps)



## 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 satisfied with the help and guidance we give you.

Taking ownership of your enquiry 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.

### 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.

#### The Council commits to:

Being transparent and publicising service performance, budgets and expenditure.

Constantly looking for ways to improve our services.

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.

## 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.

### How will you know if we're improving:

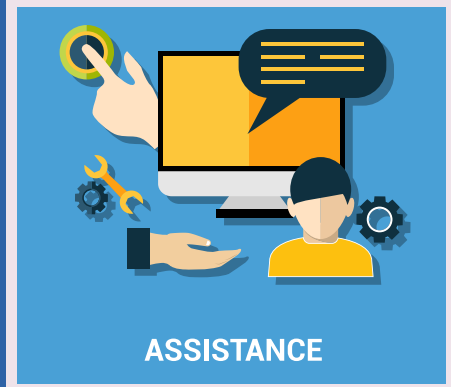
Our overall measure of success will be customer satisfaction with our services

Review the measure of success and the Strategy every year

Report our progress every year and publish on our website

Continuously improve our customer services using a detailed action plan to make sure we deliver efficiently and on time

Ensure improved customer service becomes part of the normal way we work.





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

01903 737500  
[customerservices@arun.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@arun.gov.uk)  
[www.arun.gov.uk](http://www.arun.gov.uk)