



Cairt Chustaiméirí Customer Charter



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Cairt Chustaiméirí

Customer Charter

Introduction

Tipperary County Council's Vision Statement is *"Tipperary Together - Ambitious for our communities, demanding of ourselves and working to a shared purpose to deliver prosperity across the County"*.

In pursuance of the commitment given in the Tipperary County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019 this Customer Charter has been put in place and sets out the standards of service you, as a customer, may expect from Tipperary County Council.

Our Customers

Given the diversity of our activities, the Council has a wide range of customers including members of the public, business, community and voluntary groups, elected representatives, other local authorities, government and non-government agencies, our own staff and other visitors to the County. A number of specific services are provided directly to members of the public.

Internal Customers

We aim to:

- Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

The Council is committed to recognising its staff as internal customers and to acknowledging the important role they play in contributing to the Council's performance – particularly in terms of delivering a high quality service to all our customers. Internal customer service is a two-way process: we are all customers of each other. Good external and good internal customer service share the same qualities – timeliness, courtesy, respect, openness and consistency. We acknowledge the contribution, input and views of the people who work with us.

Our Commitment to you

Courtesy – Consideration – Openness – Impartiality

Meeting your needs is important to us and we aim to achieve this by:

- Giving you the best possible service and providing helpful advice;
- Treating you properly, fairly, impartially and with courtesy;
- Aiming to ensure that your rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation are upheld in the delivery of our services;
- Aiming to meet any special needs you may have;
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality, where necessary;
- Be honest and open in dealing with you;
- Discuss any aspect of your dealings with us;
- Explain the decision-making procedures.

Our Performance

We undertake to:

- Review and evaluate our performance;
- Examine the development and delivery of our services in order to meet the needs of all customers;
- Provide appropriately trained employees to ensure quality services delivery;
- Maximise the benefits of Information Technology to continuously improve service delivery;
- Carry out surveys on an ongoing basis to assess the quality of services being provided.

Telephone Calls

If you telephone us:

- Our Customer Services Desk Staff will answer your telephone enquiries promptly and politely;
- We aim to answer your calls within an overall average of 30 seconds;
- We will give our name;

- We will aim to answer your questions straight away. If we cannot do so, we will either put you through to the relevant Section/District or record your details and notify the relevant Section/District on the same day;
- Be as helpful and informative as possible;
- If it is necessary to transfer your call to a different Section, we will tell you why and give you the name of the person we are transferring you to.

Note: It is Council policy not to permit the electronic recording of phone calls by our customers.

Visiting our Offices

If you call to see us we will:-

- Ensure that the Customer Services Desk is staffed during office hours;
- Identify ourselves and be courteous in all interaction with customers;
- Respect your privacy and ensure that all matters are dealt with in a confidential manner;
- Deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible;
- Aim to answer your questions fully; If we cannot do this we will arrange to phone you, or write to you if you prefer;
- Try to arrange meetings at a time that suits you and will not keep you waiting unnecessarily;
- Aim to provide private meeting rooms to discuss your query, where necessary;
- Ensure that our public offices comply with occupational health and safety standards;
- Ensure that our public offices are accessible for people with disabilities; Our main offices providing direct information or services to the public – Clonmel, Nenagh, Tipperary Town, Thurles, Carrick on Suir and all our libraries are accessible for people with disabilities and special needs;
- Continue to proactively support a culture of universal accessibility for all our services.

Note: It is Council policy not to permit the electronic recording of conversations or meetings by our customers.

Written and Electronic Communication

If you write to us we will:-

- Acknowledge your correspondence in clear plain language within 7 working days. We will issue a comprehensive reply within 3 weeks of receiving your correspondence. If we cannot do this we will write to explain why and tell you when you can expect a full reply – this undertaking does not in any way affect statutory deadlines.
- If your correspondence relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will direct the correspondence to that body and inform you accordingly;
- Ensure that all correspondence includes a printed contact name, a contact number and a reference number where appropriate;
- Use automated email responses when employees are out of the office;
- Reply “as Gaeilge” when correspondence is received through Irish;
Note: We have a dedicated council address:
customerservices@tipperarycoco.ie for all customer enquiries.

Service in Irish

We aim to ensure that:

- Customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so, within the resources available to us;
Note: Documents such as the Annual Report and Corporate Plan are available in both Irish and English;
Information leaflets on various schemes are available in Irish and English;
Our website www.tipperarycoco.ie includes content in Irish for certain services and information.

Our Service Through Other Languages

We aim to:

- Accommodate in so far as possible all our customers who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Sign Language or other languages.

Customer Responsibilities – Help us to Help You

Customers also have an important role to play in assisting the Council achieve its service commitments. By adhering to the following principles you will greatly assist us in delivering a quality service to you;

- **Providing Accurate Information**
 - Quote reference numbers, where available, in all correspondence and communications with the Council;
 - Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of schemes before filling out applications/forms and provide all necessary supporting documentation;

- **Providing Contact Details**
 - Provide a daytime telephone number or email address, if available, in all correspondence;

- **Adhering to Closing Dates**
 - Ensure, where applicable, that applications/forms are submitted in sufficient time to meet specified deadlines;

- **Responding to Requests for Additional Information**
 - Respond as soon as possible to any queries raised, including supplying any additional information requested in support of applications;
 - Inform us of any changes in circumstances which may have a bearing on a decision made by the Council;

- **Making appointments**
 - If you need to visit the Council regarding a complex matter, please make an appointment in advance. This will ensure that the appropriate

officials will be available and that any necessary preparations can be undertaken;

- **Cooperating with Council Staff**

- Treat staff of the Council with the same courtesy and cooperation you would like to receive;
- Accord staff the due respect and freedom to carry out their duties and refrain from intimidating or threatening staff in any manner whatsoever. The following behaviour is not acceptable from any member of the public in any of our facilities, or in the provision of any of our services
 - Harassment of staff by use of abusive, racist or threatening language;
 - Use of violence or threat of violence towards staff members;
 - Behaviour which is disruptive and interferes with delivering a quality customer service.

Customers are advised that where a staff member is subjected to such treatment, contact will have to be terminated. For further details please see Appendix 3 attached: "Policy on dealing with abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints".

Complaints

1. We aim to provide the best possible service to you. However, should it happen that you are not happy with the service provided we will deal with your complaints in a timely, courteous and helpful manner.
2. In the first instance, we would advise you to write to or phone or ask to see the Section Head in question.
3. If you do not receive a satisfactory response to your complaint you may send a written complaint to the appropriate Director of Services/Head of Function.

4. Please address your letter to the appropriate Director/Head of Function, to either Civic Offices, Clonmel or Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh and provide as much information as possible to enable your complaint to be dealt with in a speedy and appropriate manner. We will acknowledge your complaint within 7 working days. The matter will be investigated and a response will be issued to you within 21 days. You can also email customerservices@tipperarycoco.ie.
5. We will aim to deal with all complaints concerning delays in services, mistakes and poor customer service within 21 days of receipt of complaint. If we cannot forward a full reply in that time, we will write to you and inform you of the delay and the reason for same.
6. Should your complaint consist of complex, technical or legal aspects, we would advise you to put your complaint in writing in order to avoid any mistakes or misunderstandings.
7. When we make a mistake, we will apologise for same, explain why it happened and rectify the matter immediately.
8. We will include information on internal and external appeals and complaints procedures in all our documentation, publications and forms.

The Office of the Ombudsman: If you feel that you have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with our decision on your complaint, it is open to you to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of our administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction in your dealings with us. The Ombudsman provides a free, impartial and independent dispute resolution service. Contact details are as follows:

Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: Lo-call 1890 22 30 30

Tel: (01) 639 5600

Fax: (01) 639 5674

E-mail: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie Ombudsman Website
(<http://www.ombudsman.ie>)

Feedback

The Council is committed to consulting with its customers and to evaluating its services. You can help us by:

- Providing comments or suggestions regarding the service you receive;
- Completing and returning any customer survey forms that we may send you.

If you want to forward a suggestion on how we could improve our service to you, please email customerservices@tipperarycoco.ie or send your suggestion directly to:

Administrative Officer, Customer Services Desk, Corporate Services, Tipperary County Council, Civic Offices, Emmet Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Note:- Customer Care contact forms are available in all of our public offices/libraries and online at www.tipperarycoco.ie (attached).