

Natural England Standard

Customer Service Standard



1:0 About this standard

Introduction

All our customers have the potential to help us achieve our aims for the places we cherish and the natural resources we want to protect. Nearly everything we do for the natural environment is achieved through others. Without their contribution our ability to protect and enhance the natural environment diminishes. So only by considering and understanding the needs of our customers will we be able to make the most of their contribution. Our corporate plan and our statutory duties remain unchanged; this standard addresses how we deliver, not what we deliver.

What does this standard cover?

Our approach needs to be one where customers are valued for their contribution to delivering better outcomes. To achieve this aim this standard sets out principles that describe how we will work with our customers and the expectation on our staff to achieve the most from our customer relationships.

Who is this standard for?

The Customer Service Standard applies to all staff in Natural England and is applicable to both internal and external customers.

2:0 The Standard

This standard provides:

- 2.1 A set of [principles](#) for Customer Service standard.
- 2.2 A list of [mandatory requirements](#) that all staff must follow including links to supporting guidance.

2.1 Principles for Customer Service standard

Be available to our customers	<p>Our customers have told us that ease of contact is important to them. We have a responsibility as a public body to offer a professional and helpful service and should make sure that we are accessible to our customers in line with the services we offer.</p>
Communicating with customers	<p>Every interaction with internal and external customers should count for the natural environment. As a public body, we need to communicate with our customers in a way that suits them wherever possible, whilst meeting our published response times.</p> <p>Striking the balance between quality and speed, your communications should be personalised, easy to understand and leave your customer with a positive impression of the organisation.</p> <p>Always seek to go the extra mile for your customers. If we get our communications with a customer right first time, we spend less time clarifying messages and dealing with disputes.</p>
Customer service culture	<p>So much of our work is delivered with and through others meaning our customer relationships are fundamental to Natural England's delivery for the natural environment. To be successful we need to be helpful, practical, trustworthy and impartial when building relationships and communicating with our customers.</p>
Customer insight	<p>Only by considering and understanding the needs of our customers will we be able to make the most of their contribution. Improving customer insight is the key to this, and will lead to customers feeling valued for their contribution, delivering better outcomes for the natural environment.</p>

2.2 Mandatory requirements

	What
2.2.1	<p>Be available to our customers</p> <p>Make sure that you are accessible to your customers in line with the services that you offer and your customers' needs by following Natural England's relevant guidance.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Communicating with customers</p> <p>Give the best possible service to your customers and offer personal contact over written and email correspondence in accordance with Natural England's relevant guidance.</p> <p>Explain your decisions and convey difficult messages helpfully and sensitively, ideally through personal contact.</p> <p>Keep an audit trail of decisions made (whether they are made by telephone, email, letter or face-to-face) as set out in the Record Management Standard.</p>
2.2.3	<p>Customer service culture</p> <p>Take personal responsibility for your interactions with customers by being practical, helpful, trustworthy and impartial and by demonstrating our corporate core behaviours and following Natural England's relevant guidance.</p>
2.2.4	<p>Customer insight</p> <p>Take personal ownership to resolve any customer complaints and use these, along with any other feedback, compliments or suggestions to learn from and do things better in accordance with Natural England's relevant guidance.</p>

Quick reference

Type of Standard	Strategic standard.
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Draft 0.2	Incorporating changes following input from Guy Thompson	Helen MacVicker	30/03/2012
Final 1.0	Wording agreed with Rob Aubrook and Simon Sheppard	Helen MacVicker	30/03/2012
Final 2.0	Hyperlinks to supporting guidance added	Kate Heveron	02/5/2012
Draft 2.1	Draft to refresh content in line with the commissioned review of standards and organisational change	John King	27/01/2014
Draft 2.2	Incorporating changes following input from Sue Jones	John King	10/03/2014
Final 3.0	Signed off by Ken Roy Director of Performance and Resources	John king	17/03/2014