

Annex 1 – NRW B O 9.14

Draft Customer Care and Service Standards

Our commitment to good customer care and service:

Introduction and Purpose

1. We are Natural Resources Wales. Our purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future. To do this we need to work closely with people and businesses and organizations in Wales to achieve environmental, economic and social improvements through our wide range of services and responsibilities. This service commitment explains what you can expect from us and our aspirations for the service we provide.

What you can expect from us

2. Whenever you need to contact us we will make sure the service you receive is consistent, timely and responds to your individual needs. Our customers are at the heart of what we do and we are committed to improving the service you receive.
3. We will:
 - Provide a timely and high quality service
 - Give you the information that answers your enquiry
 - Be professional at all times
 - Work with you to meet your needs
 - Seek feedback to make sure we provide the right advice and deliver good customer service.
4. Sometimes, however, things may not go to plan and if you feel we have not lived up to your expectations, or that we could improve our service in some way, please let us know. We will acknowledge your query and follow this up with a call, within 10 working days, to discuss your concerns.

Our commitment to you

5. You can contact us in several ways via e-mail, post, telephone and on-line. We have set clear targets to respond to you, depending on the service we are providing. We will acknowledge your correspondence within 10 working days of receiving it, and let you know when you can expect a full reply.
6. Whenever possible we will aim to respond sooner. If we need longer to respond due to the complexity of your request, we will let you know.
7. All office or mobile telephone calls will be answered bilingually and promptly-within 5 rings if we are available. If the member of staff is not available, diverts will be set up to voice mail or to a colleague. If we cannot answer your query at this point, we will let you know when a reply can be expected.
8. All written correspondence will be written in plain language avoiding jargon and acronyms.

Providing Information

9. If you make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations we have a legal responsibility to respond within 20 working days. The Data Protection Act also requires us to provide a full response within 40 days. We may charge you for providing the data, but will let you know beforehand if we need to do this.

Working with you

10. We will ensure that the service we offer to our customers and communities is free from discrimination and accessible to everyone. Our [Welsh Language Scheme](#) describes how we treat the Welsh and English languages equally. This means that:-
 - You may choose to access our services in Welsh or English
 - We offer you the choice of language when providing services.
11. If you wish to speak to someone and your first language is not Welsh or English, or if you are disabled, elderly, have a medical condition or learning difficulties and need assistance, we can help you. For more information please contact our Customer Care Centre.
12. Our diversity and equality web page is currently being developed. (Link to be added.)

Contacting us

13. Our Customer Care Centre aims to provide a 'one-stop shop' service for our customers. We are committed to giving you a high standard of service and will deal with your enquiries politely and quickly, aiming to meet the standards set out below.
14. If you contact our Customer Care Centre, one of our advisers will pick up your call within 15 seconds and will try to answer your enquiry there and then. If the person answering your call cannot help you, we will take a message, and get the appropriate person to return your call.
15. We will respond to e-mails received by 3pm the same working day. We will reply to e-mails received after 3pm by midday the next working day.

Incident Response

16. Please call our Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 if you wish to report an environmental incident. This service is available 24 hours a day.
17. Please not use e-mail to report an incident, as this could delay our response.
18. See [Incidents](#) for more information.

Our Flood Information Service

19. We offer a Flood line service on 0845 988 1188 (24 hours) where you can listen to recorded information about flood warning information in your area. You can also speak to an adviser. If you request flood information from us we will send this to you the next working day.

Flood warnings

20. We aim to issue flood warnings from major rivers and the sea at least two hours before flooding occurs. You can register to receive our [flood warning service](#) on line or by calling Flood line.

Planning Advice

21. Natural Resources Wales is a statutory consultee in the planning system. Our main role is to provide advice to developers and decision makers on the natural heritage and resources of Wales and how these could be affected by planning policy and development proposals. We work with others to help make good development happen in the right place.
22. We are aiming for a national planning service within NRW that provides clarity, certainty and consistency to our customers to help deliver a faster, more efficient planning process in Wales by focusing on strategic and development plans, on the pre application stages of development management and on ensuring timeliness of response, meeting statutory deadlines. During 2014/15 we will be developing a Service Statement for Planning together with a Planning Publication Scheme.

Permitting Service

23. We will aim to process all applications within the relevant statutory timescales or service levels. We will always do this more quickly where we can and keep you informed about the progress of your application. See [Permits](#) for more information.
24. We recommend that you apply for permits in good time, with all the necessary information and have regard for the determination timescales. Applications that are complex, have a high level of public interest, or impact of a sensitive location may require a longer period to determine.
25. Our Permitting Publication Scheme is being developed to ensure customers continue to receive a good standard of service. See [Permitting Publication Scheme](#) for more information.
26. If you see a possible breach of permit or offence, please contact the Customer Care Centre or Incident Communication Centre.

Grants

27. Grant windows are open at certain times of the financial year.
28. If you apply for a grant, we will let you know as soon as possible if you are eligible once the grant window is closed (please make sure you send us all the information we ask for). See [Grants](#) for more information.

Our Visitor Centres and National Nature Reserves

29. You are welcome to visit our Visitor Centres and National Nature Reserves. For more information on when to visit, please check our [website](#) or contact our Customer Care Centre, where we will be able to provide you with the most up to date information.

Further information

30. We hold a variety of information on our [website](#). Publications are also available in English and Welsh. Please contact our Customer Care Centre for further information.

Making a complaint

31. If you are not happy with the service you have been given, you can escalate this through our complaints process. Initially we will aim to resolve this through contacting the person you dealt with or the service you used and discussing what went wrong. This will take no longer than 10 working days. If your complaint is not resolved it can be followed up with an internal investigation. For more information, please refer to our [complaints process](#).

Feedback

32. It is important to us that we understand your needs and how we can work with you. We carry out surveys to measure the standards of the service we deliver, so your feedback is valuable to us.
33. If you are not satisfied with the service you have received please contact our Customer Care Centre on 0300 065 3000, or enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk where one of our advisers will help you.

To contact us:

34. Call our Customer Care Centre on: 0300 065 3000 (Monday – Friday 08:00-18:00)
35. Our Incident Hotline: 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)
36. Floodline: 0845 988 1188 (24hrs)
37. Website:
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
38. Email:
enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
ymholiadau@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
39. Write to us at:

**Natural Resources Wales
Cambria House
29 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0TP**

Our opening hours are 08:00– 18:00 Monday – Friday

Due to the nature of some of our work, not all of the local offices are staffed during this period, however if you need to contact a member of our staff please call the Customer Care Centre who will be happy to help you.