



Customer Experience Framework – Calderdale Council

Getting it right the first time, every time

Introduction

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About Calderdale

Calderdale, in West Yorkshire, lies between Leeds and Manchester. It features stunning landscapes, vibrant towns, a thriving arts scene, and diverse communities.

- Part of the Leeds City Region.
- Home to 206,600 residents across 140 square miles, with over 80% being rural.
- Rich in cultural diversity, including communities from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- Three-quarters of the population live in urban areas.

The Council

The Council employs over 2,700 people and works with partners and communities to provide more than 600 services for residents, businesses, schools, and visitors. These services support people at all life stages.

Context: Why Do We Need This Framework?

Our vision for Calderdale is to be a place defined by kindness and care. We strive to ensure all customers, whatever their needs, have a positive experience when they interact with us. Whether or not your voice was heard in the past, we are committed to listening and improving.

Providing high-quality customer service is central to delivering efficient and effective public services. This framework applies to all staff, not just those on the frontlines. While we aim to deliver exceptional services, we recognise that customer satisfaction can vary and commit to continuous improvement.

This framework seeks to:

- Establish a shared understanding of what good customer experience feels like.
- Outline what is needed to achieve it, drawing from internal and external best practices.
- Embed a culture of resilient, efficient, consistent, fair, and inclusive service delivery.



I am really pleased to be able to present this Customer Experience Framework for Calderdale, we believe it embodies our Calderdale values throughout and are committed to continuing to improve the service delivery to our customers, As Cabinet Member for Public Services I believe this highlights the work we put into Calderdale in trying to make our Borough a better place to live, work and visit. We hope that you enjoy reading it!



Cllr Durrans

Our Key Challenges and Opportunities

- **Council Resources**

As funding continues to become more limited, we must deliver high-quality customer service in cost-effective ways. Clear communication about what we can and cannot do ensures customers know when, how, and what to expect from us.

- **Cost of Living**

Rising living costs, combined with existing vulnerabilities, put many households at risk. We will ensure support is accessible to those who need it most.

- **Increased Demand and Customer Expectations**

Customers expect 24/7 access to services via digital platforms. Managing this demand while optimising limited resources is critical to improving customer experiences.

- **Digital Exclusion**

Not everyone can access our online services due to lack of Internet access or accessibility needs. We will provide support and equipment at public buildings to address this gap.

- **Equality of Access**

Our diverse communities face unique barriers and support needs. Identifying and addressing these ensures equitable and respectful service delivery.

- **Listening to Our Customers**

By capturing and analysing customer feedback, we can continuously improve. Understanding customer interactions helps us shape services to meet evolving needs.



Our Customers

By “customers,” we mean any user of council services, including residents, visitors, businesses, students, and service users. Key statistics:



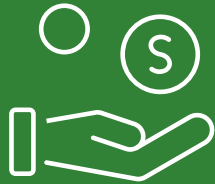
208,700

2024 ONS Data



36,746

Children attending school



96,095

Council Tax Payers



9554

Business Rate Payers



47,500

Refuse collections per week



95,000

Recycling collections per week



£15 million

Made in online payments



1,942

Customer First Face to Face Support



3,642

Social Media Enquiries answered by
Customer First



56,536

Emails received by Customer First



215,196

Phone calls received by
Customer First



400,000

forms completed via our website.



Over 9 million

Website visits

Our Customer Promise



Our goal is simple: “Getting it right first time, every time.” This promise reflects our commitment to delivering services that meet customer needs and expectations. These principles apply not only to staff who work directly with customers but to all council staff, including support services like Human Resources, IT & Digital, Finance, and Health & Safety. This ensures a consistent approach to providing the best customer experience possible.

You can help us keep our promise by:

- Treating us and other customers with respect.
- Informing us of any specific needs.
- Providing all the information we need to help you.
- Giving us feedback on our service so we can learn and improve.

Standards and Commitments

We've updated our promise to reflect what you value most:

1. Quality and Accuracy:

- We will ensure all information provided to customers is accurate and complete the first time.
- Staff will undergo regular training to improve service quality.



2. Responsiveness and Communication:

- We commit to responding to enquiries within agreed timeframes and providing regular progress updates.
- Customers will be informed of delays, with clear explanations and timelines.



3. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- We will offer flexible contact methods—phone, email, in-person, and online options—ensuring no one is left behind.
- Our services will meet accessibility standards and accommodate diverse needs.



4. Accountability and Transparency:

- We will measure the success of the framework using specific metrics, including response times, customer satisfaction scores, and first-contact resolution rates.
- Feedback from customers will be published annually, along with progress updates on actions taken.



5. Continuous Improvement:

- We will involve customers in testing and improving digital processes, such as online forms and the Council website.
- Lessons learned from customer feedback will directly inform our service improvements.



Ways to Contact Us - Our Standards



Website

- Available 24 hours a day, all year round.
- Continually reviewed and improved to meet your needs.
- Accessible and easy to use.



Written communication

- Service email addresses will have an automatic reply explaining what happens next.
- Aim to respond within 10 working days. At busier times, we will inform you of delays.



Telephones

We will:

- Aim to answer calls within 10 minutes. At busier times, we will inform you of delays.
- Voicemails responded to within one working day.



Face to face

We will:

- Public buildings will be welcoming, safe, and accessible.
- Staff will wear name badges for easy identification.
- Estimated waiting times will be communicated during busy periods.



Social media

We will:

- Queries will be responded to promptly while protecting your privacy.

If there are issues with any of these methods, we will inform you of alternative ways to contact us.

What We Achieved

2023-25

- **Quality Assurance in Complaint Handling:**
 - Conducted quality assurance for formal complaint responses, reducing escalations to the Ombudsman.
 - Improved investigation skills through Ombudsman-led training.
- **Staff Development:**
 - Delivered customer service training, emphasising customer-first approaches.
 - Implemented customer journey mapping to enhance experiences.
- **Digital and Face-to-Face Access:**
 - Enhanced website accessibility based on Government Digital Service principles.
 - Expanded digital access facilities at libraries and Customer First offices.
- **Leadership and Accountability:**
 - Prioritised customer issues and complaint's themes at Corporate Leadership Team meetings for swift action.
 - Celebrated compliments to highlight areas of good practice.

Our Focus for 2025-2027

- **Working Together with Customers:**
 - Engage with diverse groups to define excellent service.
 - Use surveys, focus groups, and direct feedback to shape services.
- **Digital Transformation:**
 - Promote digital-first services while ensuring accessibility for all.
 - Analyse customer needs to determine effective digital solutions.
- **Enhancing Face-to-Face Support:**
 - Provide support in public buildings and libraries for digitally excluded customers.
 - Design physical spaces for better accessibility and support.
- **Supporting Vulnerable Customers:**
 - Show empathy and provide tailored support for customers in challenging situations.
 - Offer clear guidance to connect them with appropriate resources.

Measuring Success

Customer Feedback

- Annual surveys to track resident satisfaction.
- Service-specific satisfaction surveys and complaints analysis.

Councillor and Staff Input

- Work with Councillors to identify areas for improvement.
- Gather staff insights through surveys, team meetings, and open communication.

Data-Driven Insights

- Regularly evaluate metrics such as complaints, contact volumes, and journey mapping data.
- Adapt resources to address peaks and trends.

Conclusion

This framework sets out our commitment to delivering outstanding customer service in a challenging environment. By building on past achievements and focusing on continuous improvement, we will ensure all customers experience kindness, care, and excellence in every interaction.

