

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

CUSTOMER CHARTER

Hackney Council aims to offer high quality, value-for-money services in line with the needs of our customers. This document sets out the standards and the quality of service customers can expect from Hackney Environmental Health Services.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Environmental Health is responsible for making sure food businesses comply with Food Hygiene and Food Standards law to protect customers from the risks of poor food hygiene.

We ensure commercial businesses such as shops, offices, warehouses, catering and leisure activities comply with Health and Safety law to prevent work-related accidents and ill-health.

We are also responsible for the control of public health issues within commercial premises and/or land, and the control of infectious diseases within the borough.

Environmental Health focuses on:

- Carrying out planned inspections on food hygiene and food safety of food businesses and the health and safety of business premises in Hackney.
- Enforcing smoke-free legislation within workplaces and public places.
- Promoting good standards of food safety and health and safety management through the provision of advice, guidance, support and training to food business operators.
- Investigating food poisoning outbreaks associated with businesses operating in Hackney.
- Investigating all Legionella outbreaks, infectious disease and notifiable disease complaints in accordance with the agreed protocol with the Health Protection Unit.
- Taking appropriate action in response to Food Alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency.
- Investigating complaints and other situations (found as a result of inspection or sampling) where it is alleged that there is a failure to comply with the law.

OUR CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

When you contact us by telephone we will:

- Answer the phone in five rings in a polite and friendly manner.
- Listen to your enquiry and inform you whether we are able to deal with your request for advice or assistance. If we are not able to help you, we will explain why.
- Direct you to the most appropriate person and if they are not available, pass your details onto them.

When you write to us by letter, fax or email we will:

- Give a full reply within 20 working days or a progress report to advise when you will get a full reply.
- Keep you informed on the progress of your enquiry.
- We will answer emails within ten working days.

When we visit your home or business we will:

- Show you our Council identification and authorisation and provide you with our contact details if requested.
- Clearly explain the nature of the visit made without prior appointment.
- Let you know what follow-up action you can expect from us and the timescales.

When you visit our office we will:

- Greet you within five minutes of entering our reception area and aim to deal with your request as quickly as possible.
- Make sure that our reception area meets your needs and is accessible, clean, tidy and welcoming with clearly displayed opening hours.
- Provide consistent, up-to-date information about our services.
- Provide free courtesy telephones when you need to call another service.

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

- We will respond to food complaints and reports of unsatisfactory workplace conditions within three working days from the receipt of notification.
- Where we are the enforcing authority, we will respond to and investigate all fatal workplace accidents within 24 hours.
- We will investigate and respond to all food poisoning and Legionnaires' disease outbreaks within one working day from the receipt of notification.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We will:

- Treat all personal information about you in confidence.
- Pass on your information with your agreement or where legally necessary and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.


EDUCATION

We will:

- Inform and educate the local community and businesses through training, displays, events, meetings, the Council website and other appropriate communication channels.
- Promote healthy eating, nutritional standards and other health initiatives, such as TB (Tuberculosis) awareness.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We will:

- Be polite and helpful and guarantee confidentiality and equality.
 - Write in plain English and provide translations and a British Sign Language interpreter when requested in advance.
 - Provide relevant information and leaflets in community languages, on tape, or in Braille, at the customer's request.
 - Arrange for home visits if needed.
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PERFORMANCE AGAINST STANDARDS

We will:

- Consult you to develop and improve the service and inform you of the results and changes made.
- Publish quarterly on how we perform against our standards.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST OUR SERVICE

We will:

- Acknowledge complaints about our service within three working days and complete the investigation within 15 working days.

YOUR VIEWS ON OUR SERVICE

- We welcome your compliments and comments and will investigate your complaints, as they can help us to improve our service and shape our future plans.

Please complete the feedback slip on our web page and send it to us either by post or email using the contact details below.



Hackney Council Environmental Health Services

Environment and Consumer Protection

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