

TRADING STANDARDS 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 Trading Standards.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Trading Standards ensures fair and safe trading in Hackney and protects the interests of consumers and businesses.

We enforce a wide range of consumer legislation, and provide advice to Hackney residents and businesses.

Trading Standards focuses on:

- Providing advice and information to consumers on fair trading and consumer rights.
- Preventing the use of inaccurate weighing and measuring equipment by businesses.
- Preventing the sale of age-restricted goods, including cigarettes, alcohol, fireworks and knives to underage individuals.
- Preventing the misleading pricing of goods and goods being displayed without prices.
- Preventing traders selling counterfeit goods, including clothing and DVDs, tobacco and perfume.
- Preventing the sale of unsafe goods, including toys, cosmetics, furnitures, electrical and gas appliances.
- Preventing the sale of goods and services which are misleading such as, false car mileage and misdescribed jewellery.
- Preventing the sale of misleading services, such as holiday scams and home repairs.
- Preventing restrictive notices, such as 'No refund –exchanges only'.

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 the complaint is of a criminal nature, we will investigate, if it is of a civil nature, it will be referred to Consumer Direct for civil advice. For elderly or vulnerable customers, we will endeavour to investigate civil complaints.
- 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 within this timescale.
- 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.
- Make an appointment whenever appropriate and inform you when an appointment is running late or has to be cancelled.
- Clearly explain the nature of the visit made.
- 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 will 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 acknowledge your complaints within three working days and inform you who the investigating officer is.
- If you report a short measure or weight relating to a purchase, we will investigate and test the accuracy of weighing or measuring equipment (that we can test) within seven working days of the request.
- We will inspect all high-risk businesses trading in the borough at least once a year.
- We will carry out five projects or awareness campaigns aimed at improving safety or fair trading in the borough per year.
- We will provide people wanting to start a business with advice within ten days of receipt of request.

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's website and other appropriate communication channels.

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 where 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.

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 we 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 Trading Standards

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