



Customer Care Standards – The Spoken Word

(From KCC's Charter)

In all our communications, we:

- Ensure our staff treat every user of KCC services as they would wish to be treated; with respect, courtesy and understanding.
- Be polite and honest about what we can do and what we can't.
- Give a contact name and details.
- Let people know what will happen next.
- Point people in the right direction if we can't help.

With telephone communications, we:

- Tell people when to expect a reply and offer an alternative contact.
- Ensure our answerphone messages are clear.

Further guidelines

The KCC contact centre is a reference point for excellence.

Seeing it from the customer's point of view

How do you feel if you make a call to an organisation if:

- It takes them ages to answer the phone?
- You get passed from person to person?
- They promise to do something and they don't?
- They're uninterested, impatient or rude?
- They don't have the knowledge to help you?

Bear this in mind as you answer calls for internal or external customers.

Answering a call

Each service/team should agree how they answer their phone.

- Answer the phone quickly
- Give an appropriate greeting as agreed in your team
- Give your full attention to the call – listen carefully
- Show interest, enthusiasm and empathy
- Be positive and have a 'can do' attitude
- Use effective questioning and summarising as appropriate
- Let the caller know the next step.



Additional points when making a call

- Plan your call
- Check that it is a good time to speak with the person you are calling.

Answering for colleagues

Your service/team should agree on how you answer calls for each other

- Don't make absent colleagues look bad. Give a standard reply such as "Sorry 'X' isn't here at the moment – can I take a message?"
- When taking messages, get all appropriate information and pass it on.
- Have a standard message form to make sure you take all the details.

Using answerphone, voicemail and minicom

Your service/team should agree when it is appropriate to use these.

- Arrange for a person to answer calls wherever possible. This is particularly important where calls are received from the public.
- Answerphone and voicemail messages should be short and clear. They must include an alternative contact.
- Check your messages regularly.
- If your service/team has a minicom, make sure staff know how to use it.

Advice and information on telephone communication

There are training courses available KCC-wide. Some services also offer specific training relating to the types of calls you are likely to handle.