

Customer Care

Our Promise



We aim to **provide** an independent confidential, accessible and friendly service to **the public** about health and social services.

We will give **advice and information** about health and social care rights, we will **listen** to views and respond to queries and needs. We will help to make the public's voice heard.

What to expect when you contact the Eastern Health and Social Services Council office:

In person

1. You will be greeted immediately by a member of staff. Staff who are dealing with you will introduce themselves by name.
2. Staff are identified to you through wearing name badges at all times.
3. If your enquiry cannot be dealt with immediately, a member of staff will contact you within 24 hours of your call.
4. If you have to wait you will be shown to our waiting area and will be offered tea/coffee. Cloakrooms are available for use.
5. Information leaflets relating to patients rights/entitlements in health and social services are available for you in the Council waiting area.
6. If you are attending an appointment you will not have to wait more than five minutes beyond the appointment time. If there is an unexpected and unavoidable delay you will be informed of this as soon as possible and offered another appointment if necessary.
7. A friend, relative or representative may accompany you to any meetings at the Council.
8. If you do not have an appointment and a Senior Manager is free you will be seen within ten minutes. If a Senior Manager is not free

you will be given the opportunity to make an appointment.

9. Facilities are provided for people with physical disabilities, hearing difficulties and visual impairments.

10. If required, a sign language interpreter or a translator can be arranged to help you during meetings.

11. Appointments to meet you will be made for a time and place that most suits you.

By Telephone

1. If you telephone the office your call will be answered by a member of staff within six rings.

2. You will be offered assistance with any enquiry immediately.

3. Staff will introduce themselves by name when assisting you on the telephone.

4. If the member of staff required is busy you will be informed of this. You will then be given the opportunity to 'hold' or leave your own telephone number/message and an appropriate member of staff will call you back.

5. You will not be left on 'hold' for longer than 20 seconds at any one time.

6. Staff will reply to your call within one working day if unable to reply immediately.

7. If you are calling from a telephone box or if it is going to be a long telephone call staff will offer to call you back.

8. An answer phone is available for you out of office hours with a clear message stating opening times and how to leave a message.

9. If you have hearing difficulties, you can contact the Council using a minicom system.

10. A freephone telephone number is available allowing you to contact the Council at no cost.

In writing

1. All correspondence from you is treated as confidential but you can address correspondence directly to a Senior Manager marked private and confidential.

2. Letters received from you requesting information will be replied to in writing within five working days or by telephone within one working day if a telephone

number is available.

3. Correspondence received by the Council which cannot be dealt with is forwarded to the appropriate organisation within two working days and you will be informed of this.

4. Letters of complaint about health and social services which are sent to the Council are acknowledged within two working days and with your consent will be forwarded to the appropriate health and social services organisations.

Complaints procedure:

We aim to provide a quality service to all our customers, but if you are in any way unhappy with the service you have received from us then we would like to hear from you immediately.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within two working days with a full response within twenty working days or an explanation for any delay. At any stage a meeting can be arranged to discuss your complaint when you may be accompanied by a relative or friend.

A separate complaints leaflet is available

If you are still dissatisfied you can contact the Department of Health and Social Services to request an 'Independent Review.' If a review will help, your complaint will be looked at again by an independent panel composed of three independent people not associated with the Council.

An 'Independent Review' may be requested by contacting:
Mr David Galloway
Acting Director of Planning and Performance Management
DHSSPS, Dundonald House, Stormont
Upper Newtownards Road, BELFAST BT4 3SB
Tel: 028 9052 2193

Suggestions/comments:

We welcome comments from our customers. Please help us to continue to improve our service by telling us what we do well or could do better.

A suggestion card is available which can be posted to us (no stamp required) or placed in our suggestion box in the office.

Eastern Health and Social Services Council, 1st Floor, McKelvey House, 25-27
Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6GQ
Freephone: 0800 917 0222 Fax: (028) 9032 1750 Minicom: (028) 9032 1285
E-mail: enquiries@ehssc.org