

CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY



“Success through Customer Care”

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DoFM Customer Care
www.york.ac.uk/admin/dfm/customer-care

FOREWORD



Our aim is to provide services to the University community and visitors that are accessible, flexible, welcoming and appropriate to our customers’ needs. Customer Care is central to all of the activities we undertake. A service has to be experienced, and will result in the customer feeling well or badly served. It is vital that each and every one of us fosters an environment that makes our customers comfortable and satisfied with the service they have received.

This strategy sets out how we will achieve a customer-focused environment in each of the services we offer.

Day to day communication, such as the image we project over the telephone, in letters and how we speak to our customers face to face, is critical to the way in which the Directorate is perceived and will affect the value placed on our services by the University community and visitors. This is one element in a range of standards which we must maintain in order to attract people to make use of our services and facilities, and continue to use them on a regular basis.

Working to this strategy will help to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our customers and support the delivery of our key strategic objectives.

Keith Lilley
Director of Facilities Management

“Success through Customer Care”

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Traditionally, when we think about customer service, we tend to consider staff serving customers over a counter or communicating by telephone. However, we need to remember that customer service is provided by the Directorate across the University and in a multitude of areas and disciplines.
- 1.2. Good customer care is about:
 - 1.2.1. Meeting our customers' needs;
 - 1.2.2. Knowing how to deal effectively with our customers in all circumstances;
 - 1.2.3. Building good working relationships with our colleagues;
 - 1.2.4. Managing communication, expectation and perception;
 - 1.2.5. Securing a competitive edge in recruitment and retention.

2. Who are our customers?

- 2.1. Almost everyone we come into contact with is our customer. The Directorate of Facilities Management (DoFM) offers a range of services. Some Sections of the DoFM have unique categories of customers whilst others provide services to the whole community, including visitors.

The Directorate has two main types of customer:

- 2.1.1. External customers - examples may include: students and their families; visitors; conference guests; business partners; funding partners; public agencies; etc.
- 2.1.2. Internal customers comprising colleagues from the Directorate and staff from each of the University's administrative and academic departments.

3. Aim of the strategy

- 3.1. The strategy will provide us with the framework to maintain a high level of customer care that is responsive to the requirements of our customers. In preparing and implementing this strategy we are demonstrating our commitment to providing service and service support which meet the highest standards. In order for the strategy to be successfully implemented, every member of staff will be key in providing a personal and caring service which will contribute to our customer's experience.
- 3.2. The Director of Facilities Management will manage delivery of the strategy in conjunction with each Head of Section. Responsibility for drawing up supporting policies and procedures will lie with Section Heads, in conjunction with the DoFM Staff Training and Development Office. The Directorate will develop its customer care standards through the Customer Care Steering Group which will consist of Directorate and customer representatives and which will meet on a quarterly basis.

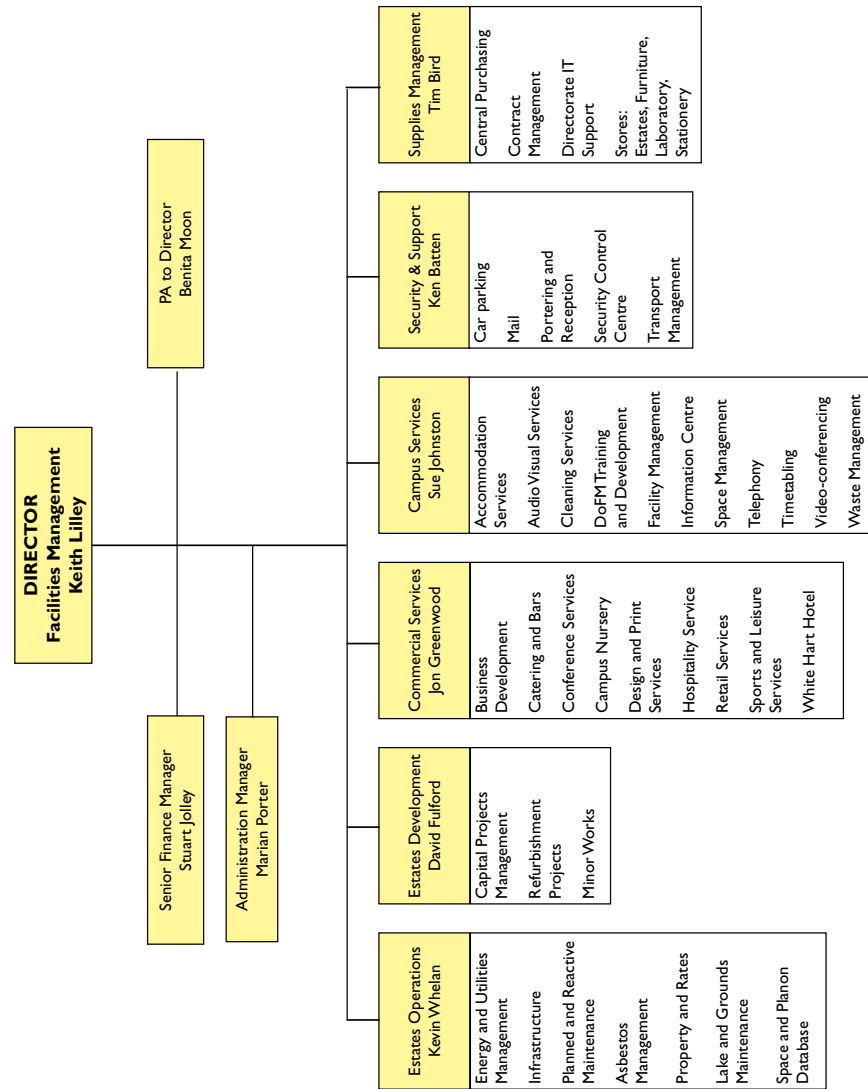
4. Objectives to support delivery of the strategy

- 4.1. Over the next three years we aim to:
 - 4.1.1. Establish straightforward standards for customer care within each Section of the Directorate. These will recognise the many and various services which we provide. The standards will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they properly reflect operational activity and customers' needs.
 - 4.1.2. Put in place a framework for training and developing our staff so that they are able to meet the customer care standards in place. This will involve identifying training needs and appropriate sources of training, and arranging formal and workplace training activities.
 - 4.1.3. Continue to develop the means by which we obtain feedback from our customers of their experience in terms of customer care and whether they consider that it meets the standards set out by the Directorate and each of its Sections.
 - 4.1.4. Monitor and evaluate working methods, and associated training activity, to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose in supporting delivery within the workplace of our customer care standards.
 - 4.1.5. Provide high-quality, accessible and value-for-money services which support the University's plans and the requirements of our customers.
 - 4.1.6. Achieve a nationally recognised and accredited quality standard for customer care, namely the 'Customer First' Standard.
 - 4.1.7. Maintain our customer service standards by creating a Customer Care Steering Group and Focus Groups whose members will be drawn from each Section of the Directorate and our customer base.
 - 4.1.8. Establish a visual identity for the Directorate which supports our objective of maintaining consistent and high quality standards in all of the services we provide.

5. Documentation which supports the strategy

- 5.1. This strategy has been devised and prioritised using the following sources of information:
 - The Directorate's Business Plan;
 - The Customer First Standard;
 - DoFM Organisational Diagram (Appendix 1);
 - University of York Statement on Equal Opportunities;
 - Terms of Reference of the Steering Group;
 - Directorate Customer Care Standards (Appendix 2);
 - Directorate Customer Care Charter (Appendix 3);
 - Feedback Procedure (including Comments, Suggestions and Complaints) (Appendix 4);
 - The Directorate's Customer Care Action Plan.

APPENDIX 1: THE DIRECTORATE OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT – ORGANISATIONAL DIAGRAM



www.york.ac.uk/admin/dfm/downloads/dfmtree.pdf

APPENDIX 2: DIRECTORATE CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

Everyone we deal with, and everyone that our colleagues and partners deal with on our behalf, are our customers and will be shown the same consistent level of professionalism, respect and understanding, no matter where, when or how we interact with them.

To ensure consistency of approach, the 'minimum' customer care standards expected by the Director of Facilities Management are set out below. These standards are based on those successfully adopted by other organisations and illustrate good practice. Each Section also has its own, more detailed standards, identified through their Service Level Agreements (SLAs). These standards are reinforced within the **Customer Care Charter** (Appendix 3).

At all times:

- Be courteous, welcoming, helpful and professional;
- Acknowledge customers as soon as possible;
- Be attentive to customer needs;
- Honour commitments given;
- Appraise customers of progress in relation to their enquiries;
- Use accurate information to inform, support and consult;
- Where applicable, agree the outcomes and/or solution to issues raised;
- Maintain adequate service cover during business hours;
- Ensure your contact details are correct.

Face to face:

- Be clean, tidy and presentable;
- Wear correct uniform where appropriate;
- Use positive body language.

Making a call:

- Always identify yourself and your service or Section;
- Explain/introduce the call you are making or forwarding;
- If you are forwarding a call to another Section or service, advise both the caller and the recipient.

Answering a call:

- Identify yourself when answering all calls – greet appropriately, give your name and service or Section;
- Be aware of the need for a timely and full response;
- Let your customers know if you cannot respond within the agreed timescale;
- Return calls as soon as possible;

APPENDIX 2: DIRECTORATE CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

- If an enquiry is not within your area of responsibility, advise the caller and transfer or direct them to the appropriate person;
- Make appropriate arrangements for handling telephone calls in your absence;
- Use voice mail effectively: temporary greetings, when used properly, enhance the use of voice mail. Record your own personal greetings and include contact details of co-workers where appropriate.

Using e-mail:

- Follow the Directorate protocols (see www.york.ac.uk/admin/dfm);
- Deal with e-mail messages promptly;
- When forwarding an e-mail to another service or Section for action, always inform the sender (take care not to forward an e-mail if it contains confidential or sensitive information);
- Activate your 'out of office' facility on the e-mail system prior to taking leave and other absences.

Meetings:

- When arranging a meeting, find out if anyone attending the meeting has any special requirements (attendees at meetings should also inform the organiser of any special requirements in advance);
- Provide as much notice as possible of upcoming meetings and give an indication of how long they may last;
- Provide documents for meetings as far in advance as possible (documents should not be tabled);
- Prepare properly so that you are able to fully participate in the meeting you attend;
- If you cannot attend a meeting, let the organiser know in advance;
- Be punctual;
- Work to an agenda so that the meeting is structured and attendees focus on the objectives.

Correspondence:

- Attach a cover note when sending letters/notes/faxes between services and Sections;
- If it is appropriate to refer to another service or Section for action, inform the sender;
- Appraise customers of progress, with interim replies if appropriate;
- Fully respond to customers' correspondence on a timely basis;
- Arrange for correspondence to be dealt with in your absence;
- Set realistic deadlines when requesting responses from others.

APPENDIX 3: DIRECTORATE CUSTOMER CARE CHARTER**Introduction**

For all services the Directorate's aim is to get it right first time, every time, on time and for everyone. We are committed to the following standards that explain the level of service you can expect. These standards will be reviewed annually, taking into account your comments.

When working with you we will:

- Resolve your enquiries at the first point of contact whenever possible;
- Respect your confidentiality;
- Keep you updated on the progress of your enquiry;
- Be courteous, respectful and responsive to your needs;
- Ensure that our staff are trained to help and give advice, or are able to refer you to the right person to answer your query.

When answering your telephone calls, letters, faxes and emails we will:

- Respond to your enquiry promptly and professionally;
- Use plain language and avoid unnecessary jargon.

When you visit us in person we will:

- Aim to provide clear signage and information to meet your needs;
- Where possible, ensure areas are accessible, clean, safe and tidy;
- Greet you and deal with your enquiry promptly;
- Where appropriate, offer the use of a private meeting room;
- Be on time to meet you or let you know if we have to cancel or alter an arranged appointment;
- Display name badges in front-of-house service areas.

Suggestions, compliments and complaints

- Your views are important to us; we will record your suggestions, compliments and complaints and, where practicable, use them to improve our services;
- We will treat complaints confidentially and in accordance with appropriate policies and procedures;
- We will apologise when things go wrong and do our best to put them right.

APPENDIX 3: DIRECTORATE CUSTOMER CARE CHARTER**Keeping you informed**

- We will provide useful, timely and up-to-date information about our services;
- We will inform you how to access information in other formats or languages, such as large print or British Sign Language.

Feedback

We are always looking for ways to improve and enhance our services and we welcome any comments you wish to make. You can use the link to fill in our online comments form or go to one of our receptions for information on how to obtain the appropriate form.

APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK PROCEDURE

This outline relates to our complaint handling systems and procedures. Specific complaint handling procedures in different Sections may require different steps and these will be set out in their Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

The Directorate of Facilities Management complaint handling guidelines follow best practice, which includes the following.

Solicit All Customer Feedback

- Encourage more customer feedback;
- Provide suitable and sufficient feedback mechanisms for instance, feedback forms, phone, e-mail.

Record All Feedback

- Use a local recording system;
- Record important details that can be used to analyse data and implement long term corrective actions.

Investigate and Resolve

- Gather additional information;
- Inform and engage additional departments, individuals or outside agencies;
- Record all action steps.

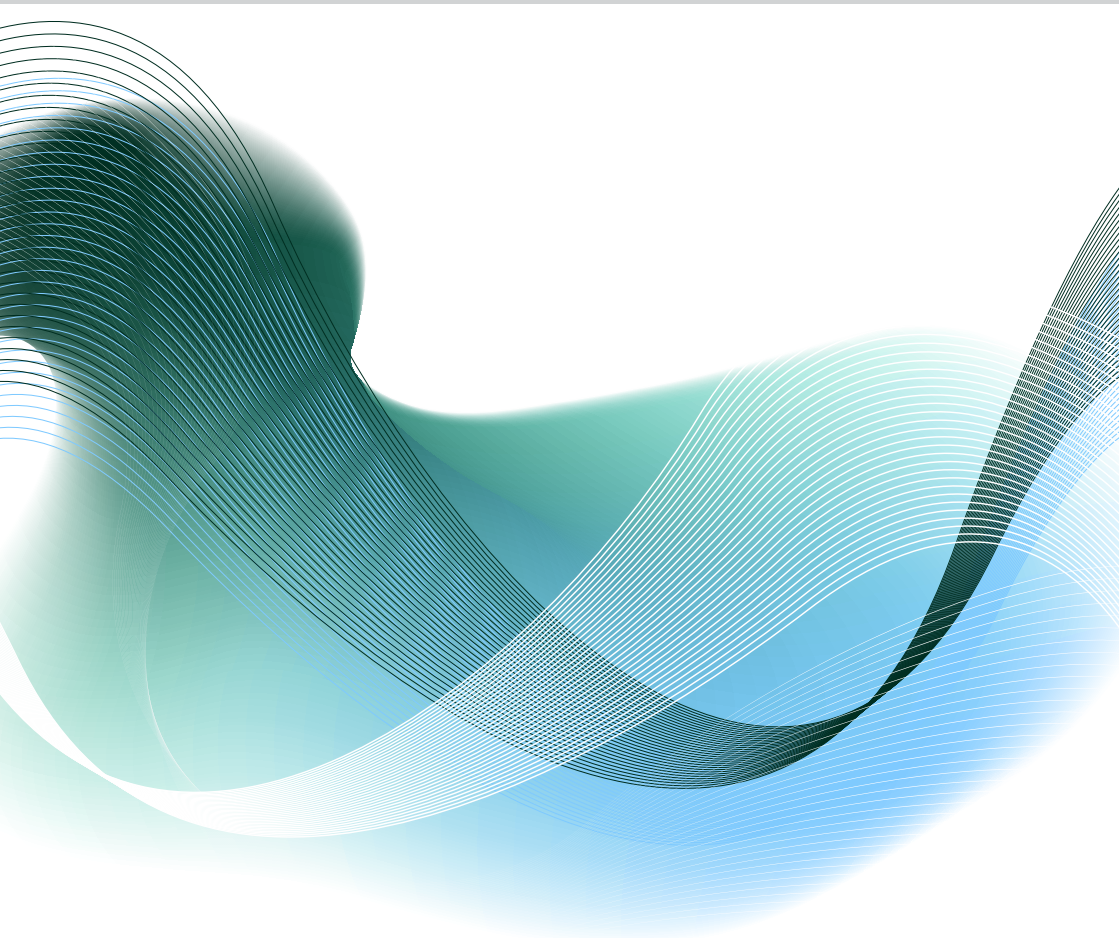
Communication with the Customer

Where appropriate:

- Acknowledge feedback, both positive and negative;
- Communicate the outcome/progress of any actions being taken.

Analyse, Improve and Inform

- Periodically analyse feedback data to identify trends and frequencies or patterns;
- Develop corrective and preventive action plans to address systemic problems;
- Communicate feedback and outcomes to individuals, teams and managers.



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