

“Every Customer Counts” Initiative – Inclusive Customer Service Policy	19 February 2019
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Provide civil leadership to our citizens
Lead Officer	Head of Policy and Community Planning
Cost: (If applicable)	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2016 the Council agreed to participate in an initiative called “*Every Customer Counts*”. This initiative was promoted by the Equality Commission with the aim of supporting Northern Ireland organisations and traders seeking to promote accessible services. The goal was to encourage use of a free self-assessment tool to assess how open their services currently were to disabled people.
- 1.2 Council officers have been working on this initiative and a number of self-assessments have been carried out on Council facilities with more self-assessments planned to take place in the near future.
- 1.3 As a result of these self-assessments actions plans are being developed to address any accessibility issues which have arisen.

2.0 Inclusive Customer Service Policy/Statement of Commitment

- 2.1 One of the early actions identified was the need for Council to adopt an Inclusive Customer Service Policy which would also outline Council’s commitment to inclusive service delivery.
- 2.2 The Equality Commission have provided a template for an Inclusive Customer Service Policy and a copy of this template has been adapted for use by Council. Please see copy attached as **Appendix 1** for your information.
- 2.3 The Inclusive Customer Service Policy outlines the Council’s commitment to uphold the spirit and letter of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and to strive to make all possible reasonable adjustments to make our services accessible to disabled people.

2.4 It also outlines the responsibilities of managers in the implementation of this Inclusive Customer Service Policy and a range of actions that can be taken.

3.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council that the Council adopts the Inclusive Customer Service Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.

Inclusive Customer Service Policy

Promoting Accessible Services

It is important to us that every customer experiences the same high level of service from us. We therefore will make every effort to accommodate all reasonable requests for assistance from customers seeking to access the services that we offer. To assist us to do this effectively we would be grateful that whenever possible customers contact us in advance to discuss your specific needs.

If you would like to enquire about accessibility or make a specific request please contact:

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

Our Commitment To Customers

We aim to provide an exemplary and accessible customer service that all our customers can use and benefit from in a manner that respects their dignity and independence and promotes opportunity and choice.

Our aim is to provide an inclusive environment and we will make all efforts to remove any physical, sensory and intellectual barriers to disabled people when accessing our services.

This includes a commitment to uphold the spirit and letter of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and we will strive to make all possible reasonable adjustments to make our services accessible to disabled people. This is consistent with our values and our vision of being a business for everyone.

How Will We Achieve This Commitment

Our approach to promoting accessible services is fully supported by the management and has been developed in consultation with the Equality Commission Northern Ireland.

Managers have responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and we expect all our employees, customers, suppliers and service users to abide by the policy and help to promote and maintain an accessible environment for all. We will promote inclusion by taking the following actions:

- **Consider the unique needs of each customer:** we will do our best to accommodate any reasonable adjustment requests you may make.
- **Take action to make our premises, facilities and services accessible:** we will carry out regular assessments to identify potential barriers for disabled customers and make all possible reasonable adjustments to remove or minimise any barriers identified.
- **Strive to meet best practice standards for access and inclusion:** Our approach will be informed by best practice guidance promoting accessibility.
- **Train our Staff:** During induction all staff will be made aware of this policy and our commitment to accommodating reasonable adjustment requests.
- **Provide accessible web content:** Our website will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and British Standard BS 8878 Web Accessibility Code of Practice.
- **Provide auxiliary aids and assistive technology:** where reasonably possible we will provide assistive technology to make our service easier to access. This may include installing induction loops to our service counters, providing audible signage, large print documents and magnifying glasses as required.
- **Welcome assistance dogs:** we will provide a bowl of water and place to rest if our customer is going to be with us for a while.
- **Carry out effective monitoring and review:** we will regularly monitor and review progress in relation to our commitments. We will keep track of how requests for reasonable adjustments from employees and customers are managed.

- **Encourage feedback:** we will actively engage with customers in order to identify areas that require change and encourage service improvements.

**If you would like to
provide feedback about
your experience please
contact:**

Name:

Telephone:

Email: