

## Revenue Service Customer Charter

### Who we are and what we do?

The Revenue Service is part of Financial Services and operates from Cunninghame House, Irvine. Our main role is to provide every household and business in North Ayrshire with an accurate and timely bill for council tax and non-domestic rates and to send an invoice to any person who has received goods or services for a Council service. The Revenue Service is also responsible for the collection and recovery of the council tax, non-domestic rates or other debts due to the Council.

The Revenue Service bills and collects council tax and non-domestic rates from around 65,000 households and 5,000 businesses.

The income received from council tax and non-domestic rates is used to deliver vital Council services to all residents in North Ayrshire such as education, roads and lighting, cleansing and social services.

We provide advice, information and assistance to both taxpayers and businesses in the following main areas: -

### Council Tax

- When to pay and methods of payment
- Exemptions
- 25% single person discounts
- Status discounts
- Change of address
- Disabled persons relief
- Payment arrangements & managing debt
- Recovery procedures & enforcement

### Non Domestic Rates

- When to pay and methods of payment
- Small Business Bonus Scheme
- Sports Club relief
- Charitable relief & Disabled relief
- Rural relief
- Empty property relief
- Transitional relief
- Payment arrangements & managing debt
- Recovery procedures & enforcement

## **Other debts due to the Council**

- When to pay and methods of payment
- Payment arrangements & managing debt
- Recovery procedures & enforcement

The level of service you can expect when dealing with North Ayrshire Council's Revenue Service is: -

## **Customer Care**

We will:

- Be friendly, welcoming, polite, respectful, helpful and treat you sensitively;
- Wear name badges where appropriate so you can recognise us;
- Carry and show identity cards when we visit people at home or visit business premises;
- Provide an efficient and effective service from the first point of contact; through to conclusion;
- Observe your privacy and confidentiality where appropriate;
- Respond to your needs in order to access our services;
- Monitor, evaluate and publish our performance; and
- Ask for your views on our service.

## **Telephone Calls**

We will:

- Answer 90% of calls on the first attempt
- Always give our name when we answer your call
- Try and resolve your query while you are on the phone & close 80% of calls at the first point of contact
- Call you back if the query is more complicated. We will provide you with a timescale for a call back and we will ensure that we meet that timescale.
- Call you back within 24 hours if you leave a message.
- Only transfer calls if it is necessary; and
- Transfer calls quickly and correctly. We will tell you who you are being transferred to and tell the person taking the call who you are and why you are calling.

## **Written Correspondence, Fax and Email**

We will:

- Provide a response to general correspondence within 10 working days. In cases where there is going to be a delay, we will provide an interim reply explaining the position and when you can expect a full response.
- Send you an application form you have asked for within three working days.

## **Personal Callers**

We will:

- Speak to you within 15 minutes of arriving, however, at peak periods this maybe longer.
- Where possible try to arrange the most suitable dates and time for a personal appointment that is convenient for you.
- Provide, if required, private facilities for your appointment and ensure that our accommodation is accessible, clean and safe.
- Leave a calling card when we visit you at home and you are not in.

## **Confidentiality**

We will:

- Provide private interview facilities for use on request.
- Keep your personal information secure, both on computer and in paper files and comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Complaints**

If you are not satisfied with our service the quickest way to have the matter dealt with is to discuss it with the member of staff you are dealing with or submit a written complaint to the Chief Financial Officer or complete a Listening & Learning form. These are available at all Council buildings including libraries. The form can also be completed on-line by visiting the Contact Us section of the Council's web site at [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

We will:

- let you know we have received your complaint either by making personal contact, telephoning or writing to you within 3 working days;
- reply to your complaint in writing within 20 working days;
- apologise to you, if appropriate, and take action to solve the problem; and consider your complaint when we review our service.

## **Performance Standards**

The Revenue Service aim to provide the following standards of performance:

We will:

- Set targets each year to increase the in-year collection levels for council tax, non-domestic rates and sundry debt and publish our performance on the Council's web site and at our enquiry counter.
- Publish the cost of collection of council tax on the Council's web site and at our enquiry counter.
- Respond to or amend a customers Council Tax account depending on the notification received as follows:

| Type of Correspondence             | Number of working days taken to amend account |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Change of Address – Owner Occupier | 10  |
| Change of Address – Private Tenant | 10  |
| Change of Address – Council Tenant | 5   |
| Single person or status discount   | 10  |
| Exemption                          | 10  |
| General Enquiry                    | 10  |
| Complaint                          | 20  |
| Urgent Mail                        | 5   |
| Deceased Notification              | 5   |

- When issuing Council Tax bills we will aim for 100% accuracy level.
- Amend a customers non-domestic rates account within 10 days of receiving a business change or a relief application.
- Answer any correspondence relating to an invoice within 5 working days. If your enquiry has to be passed to another Council Service to answer you will be advised in writing of the service your correspondence was passed to and the date this took place.

### **Collecting council tax, non-domestic rates and other income due to the council**

We will:

- Advise you of the best method of payment to pay your council tax and non-domestic rates including direct debit, telephone payments, Internet payments, Post Office payments, payment at a local Council office, by cheque or cash, by standing order and for council tax only - paypoint and payzone. For Sundry Debt invoices payment can be made by telephone payments, payment at a local Council office and at a bank by bank giro credit.
- If you are having problems paying your council tax, non-domestic rates or sundry debt then we will provide guidance and advise you, as best we can. We can also arrange for you to see a welfare rights officer or debt advisor.
- Make reasonable payment arrangements to help you pay your debt.

### **Listen and Communicate**

In order to do this, we will:

- Carry out customer satisfaction surveys;
- Listen and learn from any comments or suggestions made;
- Publish information on our web site and in the Council's own newspaper (NOW);
- Offer to provide Council leaflets and bills in different languages, larger print, Braille or audio.

## What we expect from you

We expect that you will

- Treat our staff with respect.
- Pay your bill or invoice by the due date.
- Provide us with information that we request and within the time we specify.
- Contact us as soon as possible if you are having difficulty paying your bill.
- Tell us as soon as possible about any change in your circumstances.
- Keep appointments or let us know in good time if you will be unable to attend.

## How to Contact Us

Opening hours are –

|                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Monday and Tuesday           | 9.00am to 4.45pm  |
| Wednesday                    | 10.15am to 4.45pm |
| Thursday                     | 9.00am to 4.45pm  |
| Friday                       | 9.00am to 4.30pm  |
| (Except for public holidays) |                   |

Help us by using our reference number in all correspondence.

Please note we are closed every Wednesday morning from 9.am to 10.15am for staff training. This training is essential in continuing to provide a quality service to all our customers.

The Revenue Service is located on the ground floor East of Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE where there is a public counter to help customers with any enquiry relating to council tax, non-domestic rates or other income due to the council. Application forms or information leaflets are also available at the public counter.

The following telephone service is provided:

| Service  | Telephone contact Number |
|--|--------------------------|
| Council Tax – payment arrangements only                | 01294 324901             |
| Council Tax – all other enquiries                      | 0845 603 0592            |
| Non-domestic rates                                     | 01294 324503             |
| Invoices for goods or services provided by the Council | 01294 324518             |
| Facsimile number                                       | 01294 324534             |

[www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

We can on request give you a copy of this leaflet in other languages, Braille, large print or audio.