

Bereavement services customer standards

How to contact us

T: 028 9032 0202

E: enquiries@belfastcity.gov.uk

 [@belfastcc](https://twitter.com/belfastcc)

 www.facebook.com/belfastcitycouncil

Cecil Ward Building,
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast, BT2 8BP

What we ask of you

In return you:

- treat our staff with courtesy and respect.
- be considerate and polite to other customers.
- provide us with further information if requested.

Complaints, comments and compliments

Your feedback is important to us.

Let us know if we've delivered a good service or if you've a suggestion for improvement.

As our customer you have every right to expect the best possible services. And, when we fall short, you have the right to complain. A copy of our complaints, comments, and compliments policy can be found at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/feedback.



Bereavement services customer standards

Our City and Neighbourhood Services Department aims to offer a high quality, value for money bereavement service to meet the needs of our customers. This document sets out the standards and the quality of services that customers can expect.

1



Set standards and perform well

- We'll set standards and aim to exceed statutory and corporate standards, wherever possible. These standards will be made widely available to our users.
- We'll provide detailed information about our bereavement services.
- We'll provide an efficient, professional and dignified people focused bereavement service by trained staff
- We'll maintain our cemeteries to good horticultural standards and set a twice yearly grounds maintenance programme.
- We'll maintain the crematorium building to a high standard so that its customer facilities are regularly cleaned, refurbished and maintained.

2



Actively engage with stakeholders (bereaved families, partners, staff)

- We'll consult our users regularly and deliver a bereavement service that is tailored to their specific requirements, wherever legislatively and operationally possible.
- We'll analyse and take action from the results of complaints and customer feedback.
- We'll work with a range of other service providers to create overall improvements for customers and future customers who want to use our bereavement services.

3



Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice

- We will treat all customers with fairness, privacy and dignity.
- We will provide a wide range of bereavement services and make them accessible to all, using new technology and innovative ideas wherever possible.
- We will recognise and support the needs of the ethnic, religious and non-religious groups who require our bereavement services

4



Continuously develop and improve

- We'll strive to continually improve our bereavement service.
- We'll demonstrate that users are satisfied with the quality of our service.
- We'll do our utmost to put right any failures or problems highlighted through our complaints procedure or other means.
- We'll develop a business plan annually that will incorporate those actions and improvements identified from our customer requirements.

5



Use your resources effectively and imaginatively

- We'll provide best value for all our customers.
- We'll regularly monitor our budget and make this information available on request.
- We'll benchmark against other local authorities and private sector providers through the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management standards charter.

6



Help improve opportunities and quality of life in our neighbourhoods and surrounding communities

- We'll promote aspects of difference cultures and lifestyles within our bereavement services.
- We'll continue to improve safety for visitors to our cemeteries.
- We'll seek the views of neighbouring communities and encourage their interest and support.
- We'll acknowledge statutory environmental issues and respond accordingly.

Planning Applications – 10 Operating Principles

Helping our customers get a timely planning decision that benefits our city.



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www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning



Belfast
City Council

Planning Applications – 10 Operating Principles

Helping our customers get a timely planning decision that benefits our city.

1



We make sure we have the right information to support an application at the start of the process.

- We tell our customers what information we need with their application before they submit it. Our **Application Checklist** will set out what information is required and when.
- We check if the required information has been submitted and ask for it if it is missing.
- If the information we need and ask for is not provided we may refuse permission.

2



We make sure we consult the right people.

- We consult the right people at the beginning of the process and follow the correct consultation procedures.
- We will use a **Consultation Checklist** to help us do this.

3



We get on site as soon as possible

- We can only properly assess a proposal once we have been on site. We get on site no later than 21 days after an application is valid.
- We record site visits on the back-office system so that we can measure our ability to get on site quickly.

4



We make sure that we understand our customers' requirements

- We need to understand why our customers have submitted their proposal and the timescales required for their project. This will enable us to help our customers achieve their objectives (if this is possible) within the planning rules.

5



We decide the 'path' of an application as soon as possible (whether it will be approved, refused or if changes are needed).

- This means that any problems with an application are dealt with at the outset, where possible, and that our customers know at an early stage about how we will deal with their application.

6



We inform the applicant or agent as soon as we know that there is a problem with an application and try to find a solution.

- Our customers need to know our views on their application. We give them an opportunity to address problems as soon as possible, where there is a likely solution.

7



We provide a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) service so that issues can be identified at the beginning of the process, before the application is made.

- This leads to better quality planning applications which should be determined in a more timely manner.
- If applications do not accord with officer advice pre-application, we may refuse permission. This is because it can undermine the PAD process and our ability to process applications quickly and efficiently.

8



If there's a fundamental problem with an application which can't be resolved following discussion with the applicant, we will immediately refuse the application.

- Unacceptable applications should be determined as quickly as possible in the interests of the efficiency of the overall service.

9



We take advice from technical consultees into consideration but always ask, "Must we follow this advice in this particular situation?"

- While we're obliged to consult and take account of advice from the relevant technical consultees, we take a proportionate approach to the handling of each planning application.
- If we do not receive a response from technical consultees in time, we may need to ask ourselves whether we can go ahead and make the decision without it.

10



We keep the work moving at all times!

- Any blockages in the process cause delays. We make sure that the blockage is never at our end. We constantly manage our work to make sure that the 'ball is always in the applicant's court, not ours'. We keep the work constantly moving!

Our customer vision

Our customers are:

- ✓ at the core of everything we do, anyone who comes into contact with us for any reason.
- ✓ residents and everyone who works, visits, learns or does business here.

We want to:

- ✓ be an outstanding service provider and will strive to always provide a high standard, cost effective and consistent level of service.
- ✓ be helpful, courteous and respectful.
- ✓ get things right – first time, every time.
- ✓ make sure our customers have fair access to the services we provide.
- ✓ use Plain English when we write or speak to you.
- ✓ provide services that meet our customers needs both now and, by continuous review and improvement, in the future.
- ✓ respect your confidentiality at all times.

Our customer commitment

First time resolution



We want:

- to get things right first time.
- you to receive a seamless, joined up service – regardless of the issue.

Value for money



We want to make sure:

- you get value for money.
- our services are cost effective.
- we provide efficient services.

Accessibility for all



Our services will be:

- designed around your needs
- available when and where you need them
- simple and easy to access.

We will:

- use technology to improve accessibility and flexibility.
- design services to be digitally accessed and offer more self-serve opportunities.
- provide support if you need help getting online.

Improvement



We will:

- use your feedback to make our services better, faster and easier to use.
- involve you in developing new ways of delivering services.
- investigate all complaints thoroughly, within the agreed timescales and learn from our mistakes.
- continually monitor our performance and report back to customers on how we have performed.

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