



## Customer response standards

Newcastle CVS takes very seriously its relationship with members, clients, individuals and organisations that use our services.

How well we respond to people who contact us is an expression of how much we value our relationship with members, clients and partners. These response standards provide an overarching approach for all Newcastle CVS staff to adopt. Individual sections or projects may be subject to more specific standards which they are required to apply.

These response standards should be read in conjunction with other Newcastle CVS policies and procedures. In particular see NCVS Employee Handbook, Equality and Diversity Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy.

### Guiding principles

#### As an organisation we will be

- Courteous, helpful, open and honest in delivering high quality services
- Professional and positive in our approach and take pride in what we do
- Well informed so that our members, clients and partners know what they can expect
- Effective in listening to our members, clients and partners when they express dissatisfaction or complain
- Treat all individuals and communities equally and fairly, acknowledging different physical, sensory or cultural needs, characteristics and abilities

### General principles when dealing with an enquiry

- Listen carefully to the enquiry
- Identify and address any special needs with sensitivity, tact and diplomacy
- Record contact details accurately
- Ensure that the nature of the enquiry is understood clearly
- Aim to resolve enquiries (80%) at the first point of contact

### Telephone Calls

- Aim to answer the telephone within five rings
- Greet callers in a polite and courteous manner saying, “Good morning/afternoon, Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service/[Advocacy Centre North](#)/[Ellison Services](#) [as appropriate] (insert first name) speaking, how can I help you?”
- Take ownership of the call, resolving the caller’s enquiry wherever possible
- When taking a call for a colleague, take an accurate note of the enquiry and make sure the caller is called back
- End the call with a thank you and confirm the outcome with the caller



## Use of Voicemail

- Ensure recorded messages are personalised, audible, accurate, and appropriate and where possible, provide alternative contact details
- Give the caller an option to leave a message
- Respond to all messages within 24 hours or the next working day if the message is left over a weekend or Bank Holiday.
- Regularly update your voicemail message

## Face To Face Contact with visitors to Newcastle CVS offices

- Aim to greet the visitor and introduce ourselves within 1 minute of their arrival in the office
- Be welcoming, courteous and helpful at all times
- Give your full attention to the visitor
- When a visitor has special needs, find out what they need and aim to provide it
- When discussing personal information, always arrange to do so in a meeting room

## Face To Face Contact at events

- Aim to greet visitors and introduce ourselves within 5 minute of their arrival at the event or stall
- Be welcoming, courteous and helpful at all times
- Give your full attention to the visitor
- When a visitor has special needs, find out what they need and aim to provide it

## Written Communication

- This covers letters, faxes and e-mails
- Reply to letters requiring a response within 10 working days, if this is not possible we advise you why and give you a response date
- Respond to emails within 5 working days
- Ensure the presentation of all written correspondence is easy to understand, professional and accurate, using plain English guidelines
- Meet the needs of people with visual impairment, through the use of Braille, large print or other specialist services
- At times when you will not be in the office and unable to access your email for more than 1 day ensure you set up an Out of Office message that includes when you will be back in the office and alternative contact details if the matter is urgent