

Customer Access & Experience Strategy

Public consultation summary

Help us shape how people access and experience Council services in Rochdale

Why we are asking for your views

Every day, people contact the Council for information, advice, services and support. Sometimes this is a straightforward task. At other times, people may be asking for help during a difficult period in their lives.

We want it to be easy to get the right help, whether you contact us online, by telephone, face-to-face or with support from someone else. You should not need to understand how the Council is organised to get help. We want you to experience Rochdale as one Council.

We have developed a draft strategy and now want residents to help us shape the final version.

Our vision

People can reach the right support in a way that works for them.

We want Council services to be:

- easy to find, understand and use
- clear about what will happen next
- joined up, so people are not passed around unnecessarily
- accessible in different ways, depending on people's needs
- respectful and inclusive
- able to provide extra help when it is needed
- focused on helping earlier where this may stop a problem becoming more serious

The key idea

Make straightforward things simple and convenient, while making sure human support is there for people and situations that need it.

Our six priorities

These are the six areas we think will make the biggest difference to how people experience Council services. We want to know whether you agree.

1 Give everyone a consistent experience

We want clear information, honest timescales and clear responsibility wherever and however you contact us. People should feel listened to and respected, including when we cannot provide the outcome they hoped for.

Our aim: A consistent and respectful experience across the Council.

2 Make it easier to get things resolved

People should not have to keep contacting us just to find out what is happening. We want better updates, fewer unnecessary hand-offs and less need to repeat information.

Our aim: Make it easier to get things resolved and keep people informed.

3 Make online services easy, while keeping support available

Online services should be simple, accessible and convenient where they are suitable. Telephone, face-to-face and assisted support should remain available where people need them.

Our aim: Give people choice and make sure nobody is excluded.

4 Help people earlier and closer to home

A conversation with the Council can sometimes show that someone needs wider help. We want to recognise those opportunities and connect people to the right support, including within neighbourhoods and communities.

Our aim: Help people earlier where we can and connect them to the right support.

5 Use information and feedback to improve services

We want to understand why people contact us, where journeys are difficult and why people need to contact us again. Feedback, complaints and customer information should help us improve.

Our aim: Listen, learn and use what residents tell us to make services better.

6 Work as one Council

People may need help from more than one Council service. Those services should work together rather than expecting residents to navigate different teams and processes themselves.

Our aim: Make the Council feel more joined up from the residents' point of view.

Our pledges to you

We are also proposing nine simple pledges. These describe what you should be able to expect when you deal with the Council.

1. Listen and treat you with respect

We will listen carefully, treat people fairly and recognise that people sometimes contact us in difficult circumstances.

3. Take ownership

We will try to resolve your enquiry and make the next step clear when somebody else needs to help.

5. Make our services fair and accessible

We will provide support and reasonable adjustments where needed and recognise that people may need to contact us in different ways.

7. Protect your information

We will use and protect your personal information responsibly.

9. Provide a safe and respectful environment

We will treat residents with respect and ask that Council staff and other service users are treated with respect too.

2. Give clear and accurate information

We will use plain language, be honest about what we can and cannot do, and explain decisions clearly.

4. Keep you informed

We will explain what happens next, give realistic timescales and tell you when something changes.

6. Treat your circumstances with care

We will communicate respectfully and try to avoid making you repeat difficult information unnecessarily.

8. Put things right and learn

When something goes wrong, we will try to put it right and use feedback, complaints and compliments to improve.

What we ask of residents

Good customer service works both ways. Where possible, we ask residents to give us the information we need, keep us updated, attend agreed appointments or let us know if they cannot, treat people with respect, use online services where these work for them, and tell us when something has gone wrong so we have an opportunity to put it right.

Your feedback will help shape the final strategy and the customer standards we use across Council services.