

WP4.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure the Barnsley Area VPA is a customer focused and customer responsive service we need to involve customers in developing the services by a range of methods including encouraging, analysing, and, responding to customer feedback.

Customer feedback is a key element in understanding customer view. It allows a basis upon which to build customer focussed services and so encourages high customer satisfaction and advocacy so building patronage from recommendations.

The customer viewing the partnership as a single face will be a challenge to deliver as commercial concerns dictate individual corporate branding and processes. This plan accepts these challenges yet looks to deliver a consistent partnership “face” to our customers. This allows for the combined experience and expertise to be utilised but under a single partnership face for the customer.

The Customer Service Plan looks to deliver this through a partnership Customer Charter and the supporting process behind it delivered in a consistent way by all partners.

THE CUSTOMER CHARTER

All parties agree to promote and support a Customer Charter of shared promises. This Charter is to align the offer to the customer and stands along with parties’ corporate charter (when relevant). The Customer Charter includes:

1. Safety and bus standard assurances.
2. Service standards re timekeeping, last bus etc.
3. Commitment to publicise performance and any actions to address under performance.
4. Customer experience promises including being welcoming, friendly, helpful etc.
5. Equality of treatment and respect for all customers.
6. Encouragement to customers to provide feedback including contact channels.
7. Commitments to investigate, respond and address feedback.
8. Compensation arrangements when service standards are not met
9. Provision of accurate, timely information by a variety of channels.
10. Consultation on future service changes.

A copy of the Customer Charter is attached as **WP4.4**

In delivering the Customer Charter, all parties agree:

1. Safety and bus standard assurances

To ensure customers can travel safely and in a clean environment.

2. Service standards re timekeeping, last bus etc.

To align with performance standards in other schedules.

3. Commitment to publicise performance and any actions to address under performance

Parties agree to publicise relevant performance information on partnership and individual external communications channels in an open and transparent way including actions to and timescales to address.

4. Customer experience promises including being welcoming, friendly, helpful etc

Parties agree to provide staff training and support to enable their staff services to be welcoming, friendly, and helpful and put in place measures to address underperformance.

5. Equality of treatment and respect for all customers

Parties agree to provide staff training to ensure that all customers regardless of ability, gender, age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief are treated equally.

6. Encouragement to customers to provide feedback including contact channels

Parties agree to actively promote and encourage customer feedback arrangements and to widely publicise in a positive manner the importance of customer feedback.

7. Commitments to investigate, respond, and, address feedback

Parties agree to a common response standard of guaranteeing a response within 10 working days of receipt to all feedback. For simple queries this will comprise of a full response whilst for more complicated feedback requiring investigation then an acknowledgement will be sent including a timescale for full resolution.

Parties also to agree a common standard of recording, tracking, and, resolving customer feedback in order to present a unified face to the customer. In the longer term a shared system of recording feedback will be investigated and a business case developed to deliver a shared customer feedback system.

Parties will work together to develop a voice, tone of response, and, generic phraseology to be used when responding to customer feedback to ensure that confusion is not caused to customers by different parties responding in providing different information to similar feedback.

8. Compensation arrangements when service standards are not met

Compensation arrangements where services fail to reach promised standards due to parties' service failures should be fairly compensated. This is proposed to be a minimum of a relevant day ticket in compensation for each day's service failure. Insurance or legal compensation claims will continue to be dealt with by way of each party's internal legal and insurance processes.

9. Provision of accurate, timely information by a variety of channels

This is provided within the Information Products Strategy contained within WP4.

10. Consultation on future service changes

This is provided within the Service Change Protocol within WP1.

11. Points of Customer Contact

SYPTE will provide a range of customer contact channels to enable customer feedback to be given. The Parties may wish to utilise these channels and/or provide to extend the contact touch points by providing additional direct customer service contact points within their own organisations. These contact points are expected to conform to the response times and standards of response as earlier stated.

12. Comments received by one Party but pertaining to another Party

Comments received by one Party but which pertain to another will be responded to by either:

- a) Responded to by the receiving Party on behalf of the other Party in line with pre agreed arrangements.
- b) Passed urgently onto the second Party to respond and the customer informed of this action.

13. Appeals

Each Party will provide details of an appeals process customers can avail upon if not satisfied with the initial response. This appeals process will include a level of appeal to an independent external organisation dependent upon the Party's relevant governance arrangements. Parties agree to abide by the decision made by the appeals processes.

Details of the appeals process will be published on partners and partnership web sites.

14. Sharing information

All Parties agree to conform to the Data Sharing Agreements when sharing customer's information in order to respond to feedback.

Non-personal information including disruption information etc. will be widely shared throughout the Barnsley Area VPA in order to mitigate delays or disruptions caused to services and so to customers. Parties will provide such known disruption or delays information to the SYPTE Contact Centre who will review and update electronic information systems as soon as practicable. Information regarding the ending of such disruptions will similarly be provided in order to return to business as usual state.

15. Business Intelligence

In order to learn from customer feedback SYPTE will provide to the Parties a monthly review of feedback received and, when available, details of the resolution and improvements delivered. In order to maximise this intelligence Parties agree to provide sufficient detail of feedback received directly by them, and responses/actions to add to this holistic analysis.

16. Last Bus guarantee

Partners will continue to work together to ensure that no customers are left without transport by the failure of the last journey opportunity which may be the last bus of the day or the last bus on a part of a route where no later one is available.

17. Customer Service Training

The Parties agree to provide Customer Service training to all customer contact staff to ensure both awareness of expectations, and ability to deliver, the Customer Service Plan. The Parties agree to train all customer contact staff to a level of customer care training of at least NVQ level 2 or Driver CPC. Should customer service issues be regularly identified then partners agree to reconsider and address any training gaps identified.

18. Summary

This Customer Service Plan seeks to ensure the Barnsley Area VPA can deliver a high level of customer service and be a learning organisation who considers positively customer feedback as an importance source of business development intelligence. This plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.