Our customer care commitments

Information for staff

I am more than a volunteer.

I am more than a doctor.

Our caring commitments to you

Visit our website: www.nhsayrshireandarran.com

All our publications are available in other formats
This booklet introduces our Customer care commitments.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran and you

• Our mission (where we are going) is: ‘The healthiest life possible for the people of Ayrshire and Arran’.

• Our vision (what we want to be) is: ‘Leaner, fitter, healthier’.

• Our values (what we believe and how we behave) are: Care, Efficiency, Equality, Excellence, Improvement and Teamwork.

These values are supported by codes of conduct that set the standard for how you should work and behave, whatever your job. For example:

General Medical Council – regulating doctors and ensuring good medical practice

Nursing and Midwifery Council - standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives

NHS Scotland – code of conduct for healthcare support workers
Other guidance and policies also set out how we behave and treat one another, patients, service users and visitors – and how we expect to be treated in return. For example:

**Dignity at work** – being valued, listened to and treated with respect

**Staff charter** – our ‘zero tolerance’ approach to violence and aggression in the workplace

We have been working with the public to develop a set of **Customer care commitments** that underpin all these policies and codes of conduct.
Showing we care

Our goal in NHS Ayrshire & Arran is to see exceptional customer service as the normal level of service provided by our staff and volunteers. The philosophy behind our Customer care commitments is one of Showing we care.

Communicate well
  Give people our attention

Attitude
  ‘Choose’ to act in a positive way

Respect
  Respect the feelings of service users and colleagues

Empathy
  Understand people’s feelings and put ourselves in others’ shoes

Introduction

In NHS Ayrshire & Arran we value every person, and we demonstrate this by our concern for the health and wellbeing of our staff as well as our patients and service users. Our aim is to ensure an environment where each person is cared for, valued and respected and we expect our customer care commitments to underpin this desire.
These customer care commitments place on each one of us the responsibility for showing that we truly care for our patients, service users, and each other.

To really appreciate the values within these commitments everyone must understand what we mean by customer service in NHS Ayrshire & Arran. We defined the following customer service vision along with people who work in NHS Ayrshire & Arran, our patients and service users.¹

**Our customer service vision is ...**

An NHS Ayrshire & Arran where everyone is welcomed by friendly people who treat them as individuals, people who listen carefully to what they have to say as well as showing them courtesy and respect.

**Who are our customers?**

These commitments should enhance the experience of a wide range of people:

- our work colleagues and other NHS workers
- our patients and their families or carers
- other service users
- volunteers

¹ Customer Care Survey 2010, Thematic analysis
• the wider public or community; and
• our partners

Our customer care commitments

When speaking to people:
• be welcoming and polite
• treat them with courtesy, fairness, honesty and respect
• listen to them carefully and ask your views
• demonstrate a positive, ‘can do’ attitude
• use plain language
• explain your decisions and the reasons for them
• respect their confidentiality
• be realistic about what you can and cannot do
• take ownership of their enquiry or issue

When patients or service users visit us:
• acknowledge their presence as quickly as possible, even if you cannot attend to their needs immediately
• greet people politely and introduce yourself
• if you are delayed, explain the reasons why and how long people may have to wait

• always have your photo identification badge clearly displayed

• make sure waiting areas are clean and comfortable, and make current information available about the services you deliver

• whenever possible, provide a place to discuss matters in private, if needed

**When visiting patients or service users:**

• agree an appointment time with the person in advance

• always show your photo identification badge before going into anyone’s home.

• confirm your full name; your role or title; that you are from NHS Ayrshire & Arran; and the reason you are visiting

• tell people as soon as possible if you are going to be delayed or have to cancel a meeting
When contacting people by letter, email or fax:

- aim to provide a full response to written communication within ten working days*, if one is required
- use plain language, avoiding the use of abbreviations or jargon, if abbreviations are used, also provide a definition of what they mean

* This does not affect the 20 working days time limit for Freedom of Information requests and complaints

When making or receiving telephone calls:

- aim to answer all telephone calls within 30 seconds
- answer all telephone calls politely and sensitively, providing your full name and service information
- deal with all enquiries to the best of your ability
- when transferring calls, tell the department you are transferring the call to all about the enquiry so that the caller doesn’t have to repeat themselves. In addition, make sure that you pass on accurate information to the right department when you transfer calls
- if a call cannot be answered personally, make sure calls are being transferred to an up-to-date voicemail or to another person that can answer the query
• When a message is left on voicemail or with another person, return the call within two working days, if a response is required

• if you call someone, give your full name, say that you are calling from NHS Ayrshire & Arran and explain clearly why you are calling

If you make a mistake:

• apologise promptly and put things right, where possible

• accept the person’s right to complain and provide an appropriate response

To make our services easy to access:

• make sure that everyone has equal access to your service or area by offering assistance if it is needed

• provide written translations when asked to do so for anyone who’s first language is not English

• provide language or sign interpreters, when required

• produce information in large print, audio or Braille, when asked to do so

• make sure that venues used for meetings are easy to access
• make sure that induction loops or other suitable systems are available in our main meeting venues to assist people who have hearing difficulties

**If people wish to comment on services:**

• welcome feedback including complaints, compliments and comments on how we can improve our services

• acknowledge all complaints within three working days and provide a full response within 20 working days, unless there are special circumstances, which should be explained in the acknowledgement

• pass on your comments and compliments to relevant staff as soon as possible

• when receiving a concern or question aim to answer this at the time, or as quickly as possible
Internal customer service protocol

The following protocol gives an internal focus on customer service that should be applied alongside the customer care commitments.

You should at all times:

- remember NHS colleagues are also your customers or service users;
- be courteous, polite and helpful to people working in your own and other services;
- keep colleagues updated on progress with their enquiries;
- ensure your contact details are correct on the internal phone lists (AthenA ‘My site’ and global email), and update as necessary;
- make sure voicemail or answer machine messages are up to date, hold information on how long you will take to respond, and have an alternative contact number

When making a call:

- Always identify yourself and your service, department or area;
- If you are transferring a call to another service, advise both the caller and the recipient; and
• If you transfer a call, tell the other department the reason for the transfer and the name of the person you are forwarding.

When receiving a call:

• Following your greeting, always give the caller your full name, role or title, and your service or area;
• Be courteous, helpful and polite;
• If a query or request is not within your area of responsibility advise the caller and maintain ownership of the call whilst you find the appropriate person to whom you can direct them;
• Make appropriate arrangements for handling telephone calls in your absence;
• If you work in a team, set up a call pick-up or call transfer system that ensures service users speak to a person wherever possible, rather than voicemail or answer machine; and
• Use voice mail effectively. Messages should include information on why the call is not being answered at present, how long it will be until you can return the call, and contact details for another person who will deal with urgent enquiries personally if the caller does not want to leave a message.
E-mail

- Deal with email messages from your colleagues promptly;
- Make sure your e-mail includes a courteous greeting and closing.
- Before sending emails always scrutinise the message from a reader’s perspective to ensure it comes across as polite and respectful.
- When forwarding an email to another person or service for action always inform the sender; and
- Activate your ‘out of office’ facility on your email system prior to planned absences or leave, setting up the out-of-office message to include information on how long it will be until you can respond, and details of an alternative contact for who can deal with urgent enquiries.

Correspondence

- Colleagues should get a timely and full response to all their correspondence;
- In your absence make arrangements for your correspondence to be dealt with;
• Set realistic deadlines when requesting responses from colleagues;
• Keep colleagues informed of progress with interim replies if necessary; and
• If you are unable to meet a requested deadline, inform the sender as soon as possible.

Meetings

• When arranging a meeting, find out if colleagues attending the meeting have special requirements;
• Attendees at meetings should inform the organiser of any special requirements in advance;
• Provide colleagues with as much notice as possible of upcoming meetings;
• Provide documents for meetings as far in advance as possible;
• Prepare properly to participate in meetings you attend; and
• Be punctual.
You can download these commitment from the NHS Ayrshire & Arran website at:

www.nhsayrshireandarran.com

If you wish to comment on these commitments or provide feedback, suggestions, hints or tips on any aspect of customer service, please contact us by:

**online:** http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CustomerCareFeedback

**freephone:** 0800 169 1441

**email:** CustomerCare@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

**write:** Customer Care, Patient & Community Relations Team, 14 Lister Street, Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock, KA2 0BB

**Text:** tell us to 88008 with your name and comment
All of our publications are available in different languages, larger print, braille (English only), audio tape or another format of your choice.

Tell us what you think...

If you would like to comment on any issues raised by this document, please complete this form and return it to: Communications Department, 28 Lister Street, Crosshouse Hospital, Crosshouse KA2 0BB. You can also email us at: comms@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk or comms@aapct.scot.nhs.uk. If you provide your contact details, we will acknowledge your comments and pass them to the appropriate departments for a response.

Name
Address
Comment

0800 169 1441