

Planning Enforcement Service

How we can help you



Planning Enforcement Service

This leaflet tells you all about the Planning Enforcement Service – what we do, our customer promise, our service standards, where to find us, what to do if you're not happy with our service and getting more information. We hope it covers all you need to know – but if it doesn't, please tell us.

What we do

The Planning Enforcement Service enforces the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act and associated legislation. We aim to do this in an equitable, practical and consistent manner, in accordance with the Concordat on Good Enforcement published by the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association in March 1998.

Our enforcement officers deal with the investigation and resolution of breaches of planning control across the whole borough. These are drawn to our attention either from complaints made by telephone, in writing or by email and by the monitoring of building works.

The aim of the service is to provide a courteous, responsive and efficient service where there is a clearly identified breach of planning control. Officers will investigate all alleged breaches of planning control and prioritise the most serious breaches that cause immediate, serious and irreparable harm to a neighbourhood or severe disturbance to neighbours. However, anonymous complaints will be assessed on their merits and may be given a low priority.

Our Customer Promise

We will always:

- Give you our name and section
- Be polite, helpful and honest, as we would expect you to be
- Treat you with respect, as we would like to be treated
- Treat you fairly
- Take responsibility for assisting you and not pass you around
- Listen to your views
- Make it clear what we can and cannot do
- Be accountable for the service we provide
- Consider your needs when designing our services
- Admit when things go wrong and do our best to put them right.

How you can help

In the same way that we make a promise to you, we ask that you help us by:

- Behaving reasonably towards our staff
- Producing relevant documents
- Turning up on time for appointments.

Our targets

- We provide a comprehensive and user friendly range of advice both in our reception and via our web site
- We will register and acknowledge a complaint and advise on the priority for investigation within five working days of receipt
- We will investigate a complaint within the time scales set out under a prioritisation system



- We will advise the complainant of our findings within five working days of investigation
- We will report progress to the complainant at critical stages of the enforcement process
- We will notify the complainant of the final outcome of the investigation or enforcement action taken
- When enforcement action is not necessary or possible, explain the reason to the complainant as soon as is reasonably practical.
- We cannot investigate complaints that do not relate to planning legislation, but where complaints are the responsibility of other parts of the council, they will be passed on and the complainant informed

Our prioritisation system

Complaints will be categorised according to the level of harm that is likely to be caused to neighbours and the area generally. We aim to investigate the most serious breaches that cause immediate, serious and irreparable harm to a neighbourhood or severe disturbance to neighbours within one working day. Those that cause less harm will be investigated over a longer period of up to twenty working days depending on the nature of the breach. We will inform you of the time within which we aim to investigate a breach when we acknowledge the receipt of your complaint.

Our standards

Telephone

- We aim to answer your call within 5 rings during our published office hours
- We aim to resolve your enquiry at the first point of contact – or someone will call you back within an agreed time scale
- If you leave us a message we will try to get back to you within one working day
- We aim never to let a phone go unanswered during our published office hours.

Letters, emails and faxes

- We will monitor the speed and quality of our response to customer letters
- We aim to provide a full response in under 10 working days
- If we can't, we will send you an acknowledgement after five days telling you who is dealing with the matter and when to expect a full response
- We always try to use plain language and give you our contact details

Face to face

If you can't get to our offices due to serious illness or disability, call us and we may be able to arrange for someone to visit you.

- We provide a duty planning officer to give general advice and information during reception opening hours
- We aim to start dealing with your enquiry within fifteen minutes at our reception
- If you have an appointment, we will try to see you promptly if you arrive on time – and will not make you wait if it can be avoided
- We will see you in a private area if you prefer – although you may need to book or wait
- All our reception staff will wear name badges
- We will provide you with translation and interpreting services should you require them

If you can't get to our offices due to serious illness or disability, call us and we may be able to arrange for someone to visit you.

Complaints

Stage 1 complaints will be dealt with in 10 working days and stage 2 and 3 in 20 working days.

We want to hear from you

If you have an idea for improving services, or want to comment on any aspect of what we do, we'd like to hear from you. It is only by listening to your views that we can find out what we are doing well and what needs to improve.

We are committed to continuously improving our services and will act on what you tell us. We also carry out a customer satisfaction survey every year.

Comments and compliments

We are always delighted to hear that our staff are doing a great job. We make sure they know when someone is pleased as this motivates them and makes their work even more satisfying.

We have a staff recognition scheme where you can nominate staff for an award. The forms for doing this are available in libraries, Idea stores and council offices, or on our website, at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk.

If we get it wrong

We aim to provide the best possible service but we know that sometimes things can go wrong. We welcome complaints, as they help us learn and improve our services.

If you're not happy with the way we have dealt with you, please tell us so that we can, where possible, sort out the problem.

The first step is to contact the member of staff providing the service you want to complain about, or their manager. Tell them the problem

and they will try to sort it out. In many cases they will deal with your complaint on the spot. If not, we will write to you within 10 working days.

If you don't know who to contact, ring the Corporate Complaints Team on 020 7364 4161.

Contacting us

Planning Enforcement
Mulberry Place (AH)
PO Box 55739
5 Clove Crescent
London E14 1BY

Open: Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. A duty planning officer is available for general planning advice.

Phone: 020 7364 5009

Email: planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Further information

More information about our service is available from our reception or the Tower Hamlets website: **www.towerhamlets.gov.uk**.

Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm



THPE/08/32

English	For free translation phone
Albanian	Për një përkthim falas telefononi.
Arabic	للترجمة المجانية الرجاء الاتصال هاتفياً.
Bengali/Sylheti	বিনামূলিতে অনুবাদের জন্য টেলিফোন করুন
Chinese	欲索取免費譯本，請致電。
French	Pour une traduction gratuite, téléphonez
Greek	Για δωρεάν μετάφραση, τηλεφωνήστε.
Gujarati	મફત ભાષાંતર માટે ફોન કરો.
Kurdish	بۆ وەرگیران (تهرجومه کردن) به خۆڕاڤی، ته لهفون بکه.
Lithuanian	Del nemokamo vertimo skambinkinte
Malayalam	സൗജന്യമായ തർജ്ജമയ്ക്കായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുക
Polish	Po bezpłatne tłumaczenia prosimy dzwonic
Portuguese	Para uma tradução grátis, telefone.
Punjabi	ਮੁਫਤ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਲਈ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ
Hindi	मुफ्त अनुवाद के लिए फोन कीजिए
Russian	Перевод – бесплатно. Звоните.
Serbo-Croat	Za besplatne prevode pozovite
Somali	Turjubaan lacag la'aan ah ka soo wac telefoonka.
Spanish	Para obtener una traducción telefónica gratuita llame al:
Tamil	இலவச அனுவாத்திற்குத் தொலைபேசி செய்யவும்.
Turkish	Ücretsiz çeviri için telefon edin.
Urdu	مفت ترجمے کے لئے ٹیلیفون کیجئے۔
Vietnamese	Điện thoại để được thông dịch miễn phí.

Also available in audio, large print or braille, phone

020 8430 6291

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