



Corporate Services Department Revenues Division Customer Charter

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Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign

Dundee
City Council

Finance

CHANGING
FOR THE FUTURE

The Revenues Division Customer Charter

This charter tells you:

- the standard of service you can expect from us;
- what you can do to help us help you; and
- what you can do if things go wrong.

It gives information about our service if you are legally responsible for paying:

- council tax;
- an overpayment of Housing Benefit; or
- Non-Domestic Rates (business rates).

It gives information about our service if you claim:

- council tax personal discount;
- council tax property exemption;
- council tax disabled relief;
- Council Tax Benefit; or
- Housing Benefit.

It gives information about our service if you have missed payments of:

- council tax;
- Non-Domestic Rates (business rates); or
- Community Charge (Poll Tax).

Introduction

We are part of the Corporate Services Department of Dundee City Council. We provide important services to thousands of people and families in the Dundee City area. We decide who has to pay council tax or Non-Domestic Rates based on the rules set down by the UK and Scottish Parliaments. We check to see if you have claimed any type of reduction, then we work out how much you or your company should pay before we send a bill. We collect payments and send out reminder letters if you miss payments or you pay late.

We pay Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit based on a person's or family's circumstances. We also ask people to repay Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit if we have paid out too much.

We also collect payments of Community Charge (Poll Tax) which have not been paid.

Our responsibilities

We will help you in the following ways.

- We will deal with your correspondence as quickly as possible and keep you informed about our progress and decisions. We will also make it clear what information you need to give to us.
- We will be polite and easy to talk to – our staff are trained to meet your needs. We will treat you with respect and do our best to understand your personal circumstances.
- We will give you accurate and easy-to-understand advice. This includes providing leaflets written in plain English which explain our services.
- We will be fair. We will not treat you differently for any reason.
- We will be open. We will give you any information you need, if it is legal to do this.
- We will be sensitive to your needs. We will treat what you say to us confidentially. We will not give your personal information to anyone else, unless the law allows it or we have your permission to do this.

Council tax

If you are legally responsible for paying council tax, we aim to:

- work out the correct amount of council tax you should pay;
- tell you about any discounts, exemptions, reductions or benefits you could get;
- send out a bill within 14 days of working out how much you have to pay;
- issue reminder letters when needed; and
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have.

If you claim a council tax discount, exemption or disabled relief, we aim to:

- make our forms and leaflets easy to understand;
- work on your claim as quickly and accurately as possible;
- let you know our decision as soon as possible;
- let you know what your appeal rights are; and
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have.

Council Tax Benefit

If you claim Council Tax Benefit, we aim to:

- process your claim within five working days, if you send us all the information and documents we need when you make your new claim;
- work on any other new claims within 10 days of receiving them;
- work on all other claims or changes within 14 days of receiving them;
- let you know our decision within five working days of processing your claim;
- let you know what your appeal rights are;
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have; and
- make our forms and leaflets easy to understand.

Housing Benefit

If you claim Housing Benefit, we aim to:

- process your claim within five working days, if you send us all the information and documents we need when you make your new claim;
- work on any other new claims within 10 days of receiving them;
- work on all other claims or changes within 14 days of receiving them;
- let you know our decision within five working days of processing your claim;
- let you know what your appeal rights are;
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have; and
- make our forms and leaflets easy to understand.

Housing Benefit overpayments

If you are legally responsible for repaying Housing Benefit we have overpaid, we aim to:

- write to you within five working days of us working out an overpayment and tell you when and why the overpayment happened and how much it is for;
- make an arrangement for you to repay the overpayment;
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have; and
- let you know what your rights of appeal are.

Non-Domestic Rates

If you are legally responsible for paying Non-Domestic Rates, we aim to:

- work out the correct amount of rates you should pay;
- tell you about any reduction you could get;
- send out a bill within 14 days of working out how much you have to pay;
- collect payments promptly;
- issue reminder letters when needed; and
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have.

Missed payments (arrears)

If you have missed payments of council tax, Non-Domestic Rates or Community Charge (Poll Tax), we aim to:

- explain how the arrears built up;
- try to agree a suitable repayment plan to clear your arrears; and
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have.

The Department for Work and Pensions

If you claim income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support, the Department for Work and Pensions will accept claims for Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit and pass them on to us. Once your claim has been passed to us, we aim to:

- process your claim within five working days, if we have all the documents we need;
- work on any other claims within 10 days of receiving them;
- work on all other claims or changes within 14 days of receiving them;
- let you know our decision on your claim within five working days of processing your claim;
- let you know what your appeal rights are; and
- quickly and accurately answer any questions you may have.

The Housing Department

If you are a council tenant and claim Housing Benefit, we will let the Housing Department know how much benefit you get. They will reduce the amount of rent you pay to allow for this.

Your responsibility

You can help us to help you by doing the following.

Council tax and Non-Domestic Rates are charged by local authorities and you should make sure you pay them on time. If you are not able

to pay the correct amount on the correct date, you should contact us straight away to discuss a suitable repayment plan.

Please give us your reference number whenever you contact us. You can find this on any letters or documents we have sent you. This will help us deal with your payment, correspondence or call faster.

Please give us complete and accurate information. When you contact us, please give any details we ask you for. We will only ask for information we need to deal with your question or claim.

You may have to give us proof of your identity, your income and savings or any other personal circumstances so that we can deal with a discount or benefit claim. Please be prepared to give us the evidence we need. We will tell you what evidence we need and how you can provide it. By law we need proof of certain things before we can award a discount or benefit.

Tell us about changes in your circumstances as soon as possible. This allows us to update your records if we need to. If you are claiming any type of council tax reduction or Housing Benefit, legally you have to tell us about any change in your circumstances.

If we ask you for more information, please provide it as soon as you can.

Please be considerate to our staff.

Please do not smoke, eat or drop litter in our waiting areas.

Please switch off mobile phones in our public offices.

Give us your suggestions for improvement to our services.

Give us your comments on the service you received.

To help us see how our service is doing, you can leave comments which will help us improve.

If you phone us on (01382) 431205, at the end of the call the member of staff will ask you to take part in a very short telephone survey.

If you visit our office at Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, there are two touch-screen monitors in the public area. You can use either screen to make your comments. Again, this survey is very short. 😊😞😞

If you use our website, you can leave comments by following the instructions on the web page. 😊😞😞

Benefit fraud

We must also protect the public funds we handle and prevent and detect benefit fraud, and you can help us do this.

You can report possible benefit fraud by:

- using the online referral form on our website at www.dundee.gov.uk/fraud;
- phoning the Counter-Fraud Team on **01382 431247, 01382 431252 or 01382 431253**;
- phoning the **free telephone answering machine service** on **0800 085 2289** (available in the evenings after 5pm and at weekends);
- visiting our Enquiry Office at Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, the West District Housing office at 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee, or the East District Housing office at 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee; or
- writing to the Counter-Fraud Team, Revenues Division, PO Box 216, Dundee, DD1 3RE.

Contacting our office

When you deal with us, you can expect to receive advice and information that is helpful, correct and easy to understand. We aim to make our services easy to use and the reasons for our decisions easy to understand. There are several ways you can get in touch with us and we will always reply as quickly as possible.

By phone

For council tax, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit, you can phone us on 01382 431205.

For council tax or Community Charge (Poll Tax) debts, you can phone us on 01382 431201.

For Non-Domestic Rates, you can phone us on 01382 431203.

The correct phone numbers to call are shown on the documents we send to you. If you are in any doubt, you can phone us about any of our services on 01382 431205. Our phone lines are open:

- 8.30am to 5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; and
- 9.30am to 5pm on Wednesday.

We aim to answer your call within five minutes.

We will be polite and helpful, and give you all the information you need. Our staff will give you their names if you ask, in case you need to contact them again.

If we cannot deal with your question over the phone, we will explain why and tell you what to do next. We will note down any information you give us and act on it if we can. We may have to ask you to confirm certain information in writing.

By post

If we receive a form or letter from you, we aim to reply to you within 14 days.

All our letters will give contact details and a phone number. The information given in the letters will be clear, concise and written in plain English.

By email

You can contact us by email at revenues.division@dundecity.gov.uk and we aim to reply to you within 14 days.

Visiting our office

Our public office is at: Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee.

Our opening hours are:

- 8.30am to 5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday;
- 9.30am to 5pm on Wednesday

You can visit our office to:

- pay your council tax, Non-Domestic Rates, Community Charge (Poll Tax), Housing Benefit overpayments, council rent and any other bills for our services, penalty charge notices and fixed penalty charges;
- claim council tax discounts, exemptions or benefits;
- claim Housing Benefit;
- get information or advice;
- get help to fill in our forms;
- pick up leaflets telling you about our services;
- get information on how to make a comment, suggestion or complaint; and
- find out how to appeal against a decision we have made.

We have a ticket system to make sure we see everyone in the order they arrived. We aim to see you usually within 20 minutes of arriving at the office. However, at busy times, such as lunchtimes or the beginning of the month, you may have to wait longer. There is a receptionist on duty who can explain the ticket system to you.

If you want a private interview, you can ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

We have designed our public office for people in wheelchairs and people who have hearing difficulties.

We also have staff at the West District Housing office at 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee and East District Housing office at 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee. At these offices our staff will be able to help you and give you advice on council tax, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit. The opening hours for these offices are 8.30am to 5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 9.30am to 5pm on Wednesdays.

The internet

You can find out more about our services and those of Dundee City Council in general by visiting our website. The address is www.dundee.gov.uk.

Home visits

Visiting officers will call on you at home if we need more information about your council tax account, a new benefit claim or your existing benefit claim. We will also visit you if you cannot get to the office and we were not able to help you by letter or phone. Any officer who visits you will always show you their photo identification card and give you their name.

Interpreters

If you have difficulty understanding English, we have an interpretation service available at our Enquiry Office at Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, the West District Housing office at 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee and the East District Housing office at 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee. If you have difficulty understanding our forms and letters, the same interpretation service is available.

What you can do if things go wrong

We aim to provide our services as quickly and accurately as possible. We know that there will be times when we do not get it right. If this happens, we need to know about it so we can put it right as quickly as possible.

If you think we have made a mistake, please contact us on 01382 431205, call into our office at Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, the West District Housing office at 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee or the East District Housing office at 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee, or write to us at:

Dundee City Council
Revenues Division
PO Box 216
Dundee
DD1 3YJ.

We will look at our decision again and correct anything that is wrong. You can help by giving us the information we ask for as quickly as you can.

If you want to complain about our service

We are committed to providing the best possible service to the people of Dundee. This means that we do our best to get things right first time, and we will deal with any problems as quickly as possible.

We take complaints about our service seriously. Listening to complaints lets us put things right and improve our service, and helps us make sure that the same thing doesn't happen again.

The quickest way to deal with most problems is to speak to the person you dealt with originally, and they may be able to solve your problem on the spot.

If you are still not satisfied, you can speak to their supervisor.

If we can't deal with your problem straight away, we have a procedure to make sure we deal with your complaint effectively. When you make a complaint we will record it on the council's complaint system and pass it to an appropriate member of staff for them to investigate. We will tell a senior manager about very serious complaints straightaway.

You can make your complaint in any way that's convenient for you. You can make a complaint by:

- phoning us;
- writing to us;
- visiting us in person; or
- filling the complaints form on our website at www.dundeecity.gov.uk.

If you are not sure who you need to contact, phone our Customer Services Team on 01382 434800.

If you make your complaint over the phone, we aim to contact you within two working days. If you use the complaint form on our website, we aim to contact you within five working days.

If you are not satisfied with our reply

At this stage you will have to fill in a complaints form (if you have not already done so), or you can write to the Director of Corporate Services at the following address.

Mrs Marjory M Stewart
Director of Corporate Services
Corporate Services Department
Dundee City Council
Dundee House
50 North Lindsay Street
Dundee
DD1 1NZ

You should tell us who you have already spoken to and when. If possible, give us the reference number from your original complaint.

Our Director of Corporate Services will investigate your complaint and reply to you within five working days.

If you are not happy with the director's decision

If you are still not happy, you can write to our Chief Executive who will look at your case. He will aim to let you know, within 10 working days, what action he will take.

If you are still unhappy after hearing from our Chief Executive

At this stage you can take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, who may decide to carry out an independent review. If you would like a complaint form, more information, or advice about making a complaint, please contact:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	or	SPSO
4 Melville Street		FREEPOST
Edinburgh		EH641
EH3 7NS		Edinburgh
		EH3 0BR.

Phone: 0800 377 7330
Fax: 0800 377 7331
Text: 0790 049 4372
Email: ask@spsso.org.uk
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

We will be polite and fair with you when we are trying to deal with your complaint, and we hope you will do the same.

Other information

If you want independent advice and information, you can contact the following groups.

An independent adviser, such as a local welfare rights officer or a solicitor.

Your local Member of Parliament or Member of Scottish Parliament.

The Citizens Advice Bureau, Wellgate Office, Central Library, Level 4, Wellgate Centre, Dundee, DD1 1DB.

Phone: 01382 307494 Fax: 01382 431590

Information leaflets

You can also get more information from our range of leaflets.

Your guide to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions

Council Tax Benefit - are you missing out?

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit - information for landlords

Housing Benefit - Council Tenants, are you missing out?

Housing Benefit - Private Tenants, are you missing out?

Benefit Appeals

If we overpay Housing Benefit

Tenancy Agreement information

Local Housing Allowance - a guide for Landlords

Local Housing Allowance - a guide for Tenants

Local Housing Allowance - Frequently Asked Questions

Direct Benefit Payment

Reporting benefit fraud

How to make a complaint

You can get these leaflets from our office at Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, or from local libraries, local housing offices and neighbourhood centres.

If you would like any of our leaflets in large print, in Braille, on audio tape, on CD or in another language, please phone 01382 431205.

This is a document about our Customer Charter. If you need a translation, please phone 01382 431205 or call into our Enquiry Office at 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, the West District Housing office at 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee, or the East District Housing office at 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee.

Ten dokument dotyczy Karty Klienta. Jeśli potrzebuje Pani/Panu przetłumaczoną wersję tego dokumentu, prosimy o telefon pod numerem 01382 431205, bądź o wizytę w naszym biurze: Biuro Wniosków i Zapytań (Enquiry Office) pod adresem: 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, biuro Zachodniego Dystryktu Mieszkaniowego (West District Housing office) pod adresem: 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee, bądź biuro Wschodniego Dystryktu Mieszkaniowego (East District Housing office) pod adresem 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee.

這文件是有关顧客章程。如果你需要翻譯本，請電01382 431205或親臨我們位於50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee的諮詢辦事處查詢，亦可到3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee的西區房屋辦事處和169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee東區房屋辦事處查詢。

Это документ Чартер Клиента о стандарте услуг, предоставляемых нашим клиентам. Если Вам необходим перевод, пожалуйста, позвоните по номеру 01382 431205 или обратитесь в наше Справочное бюро по адресу 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, или в Жилищное Управление Западного округа (West District Housing office) по адресу 3 Sinclair Street, Lochee, Dundee, или в Жилищное Управление Восточного округа (East District Housing office) по адресу 169 Pitkerro Road, Dundee.

یہ دستاویز ہمارے کسٹمر چارٹر کے بارے میں ہے۔ اگر آپ کو اس کا ترجمہ چاہیے براۓ مہربانی 01382 431205 پر فون کریں یا پھر ہمارے انکوائری آفس بہ مقام 50 North Lindsay Street، ڈنڈی، وی ڈیسٹ ڈسٹرکٹ ہاؤسنگ آفس بہ مقام 3 Sinclair street، ڈنڈی یا پھر وی ڈیسٹ ڈسٹرکٹ ہاؤسنگ آفس بہ مقام 169 Pitkerro Road، ڈنڈی پر تقریب لائیں۔

