



## **NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

### **Customer Service Strategy**

**April 2015**

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## **CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY - AN OVERVIEW**

The Authority is fully committed to developing and maintaining an excellent customer focused service for all its stakeholders. Its ultimate aim is to enshrine the principles of Customer Service Excellence and provide an efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering service for all stakeholders who use its services.

A customer focus is considered to be an essential central component of the Authority's engagement with users and interest groups particularly those who have traditionally been under-represented because of difficulties in making contact. Failure to embrace this approach and ethos will impact on the positive delivery of the Authority's strategic and working level objectives and in turn the national IFCA vision which represents the ultimate goal in achievement.

This strategy is supported by a number of other key policies including: The Authority's 'Consultation Strategy' which sets out the principles and methods of positive consultation and dialogue with stakeholders; The Authority's 'Feedback Strategy' which provides an essential mechanism for stakeholders to comment, complain or complement the service that they receive from the Authority's staff and the Authority's 'Code of Good Conduct for Officers' which outlines the standard of conduct expected of the Authority's Officers when carrying out the enforcement of regulations.

This strategy sets out the Authority's ambitions to meet the principles of Customer Service Excellence and the level of service that stakeholders should expect from the Authority and its Officers.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Authority's commitment to customer service includes the following core objectives:

- ❑ Ensuring that customer service is at the heart of everything we do;
- ❑ Delivering high standards of customer service;
- ❑ Providing information on our services and the standards which our customers can expect;
- ❑ Ensuring that all our customers have access to our services and information on them regardless of any special needs they may have;
- ❑ Providing efficient and effective best value services;
- ❑ Providing so far as practical within the resources available, services which meet the priorities and needs of stakeholders;
- ❑ Listening to our customers and learning from what they say; and
- ❑ Measuring our performance and reporting to our customers.

Since its inception the Authority has already implemented many customer service initiatives including strengthening its administrative support team to improve the service delivery associated with fishing permit schemes, furthering the appropriate training and development of staff, improving the Authority's website and on-line facilities for stakeholders to access services, revitalising its public notice board network and ensuring the circulation of regular information newsletters and updates.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the Authority continues to meet its commitment to positive delivery and development of customer service provision by providing a framework within which the Authority's customer service plans are further developed and implemented;

## **OUTLINE STRATEGY**

In order to realise its commitment to Customer Service Excellence, the Authority has agreed the following strategy:

## **I. Commitment to customer service**

***Commitment to Customer Service will be given at the highest level of the Authority and we will:***

- Put customers first when setting our objectives
- Develop customer service policies, service delivery and action plans based on relevant, timely and comprehensive information
- Balance the short and long term pressures and requirements, taking into account the effect on customer service
- Reflect the principles of Best Value
- Communicate our policies and plans effectively
- Regularly review, and when necessary, update and improve policies and action plans that affect our customers
- Take customer service into account when allocating resources, setting budgets etc., balancing the priorities and needs of all stakeholders
- Use suppliers with a commitment to high standards of customer service and service delivery

## **2. Our Managers**

***Our managers will engender a culture for customer service in their staff and will:***

- Act as role models in customer service and promote the Authority's Aims that put the customer first in everything we do
- Define priorities for improving customer service
- Be active and personally involved in activities to improve customer service and services
- Enable and encourage individuals to identify ways of improving customer service and participate in activities and processes for doing so

- ❑ Use the creative talents of staff in incremental and break through improvements
- ❑ Recognise and celebrate excellent customer service to sustain involvement and empowerment
- ❑ Make customer service an important feature in service delivery planning and performance management
- ❑ Include customer service when setting objectives and targets and discuss regularly at staff meetings
- ❑ Establish and implement training plans and review the effectiveness of training on customer service

### **3. Our Employees:**

***We will ensure that our employees have the knowledge, skills and attitude to provide a high level of customer service and will:***

- ❑ Take customer service into consideration when identifying competencies in our recruitment procedures
- ❑ Build our requirements on customer service into our induction procedures
- ❑ Discuss with staff their performance in customer service at performance reviews and set targets to improve performance in customer service when necessary
- ❑ Ensure staff have the information they need about the services they provide and the level of performance expected of them
- ❑ Encourage staff to express their perception of and ideas for improving customer service and service delivery through Senior Management Team Meetings and Staff Meetings.
- ❑ Provide training as necessary before introducing changes and communicate changes effectively

#### 4. **Access to Services**

***We will ensure that all of our customers can access our services easily and will:***

- Ensure that our customers have easy access to relevant information on the services we provide in a format which meets their needs
- Ensure that we tailor the delivery of our services to meet the individual needs of our customers
- Maintain confidentiality when appropriate
- Work in partnership with Government and other public, private and voluntary organisations to provide seamless services to our customers
- Ensure that buildings to which our customers have access are easily accessible to all and are maintained in a good and safe condition, are comfortable and welcoming
- Provide information points and confidential interview facilities which reflect the needs of our customers

#### 5. **Our Processes**

***We will ensure that our processes are efficient, effective and customer-focused and will:***

- Define and identify the key processes which impact upon our customers
- Establish and monitor standards of operation and apply quality systems
- Regularly review and improve processes using relevant data and information and involving staff to ensure ownership
- Resolve interface issues inside the Authority's organisation and with external partners and contractors
- Identify and prioritise methods of improvement, both incremental and breakthrough
- Identify and agree challenging performance targets to support policies and action plans
- Seek and use new principles of design, technology and operating philosophies where

they can improve customer service and performance

- ❑ Use “Feedback” to stimulate innovation and creativity in process management
- ❑ Review changes to processes to ensure predicted results are achieved

## **6. Listen to Our Customers**

***We will listen to what our customers say and use their comments to improve our services and will:***

- ❑ Use appropriate methods to measure customers’ perception of the Authority’s services and customer service, including the Feedback System and the methods set out in the Authority’s Consultation Guidance Document.
- ❑ Ensure that the public can easily express their perception of the Authority’s services
- ❑ Work to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction in everything we do, whilst recognising that the conflicting ideals of some customers (e.g. in enforcement) will lead to dissatisfaction

## **7. Measure our success:**

***We will measure our success in customer service and service delivery and use the information to continuously improve our services and will:***

- ❑ Analyse all Feedback on our services and use the information to improve and develop them
- ❑ Assess the impact of new technology, new processes and other changes introduced on customer service and service delivery
- ❑ Benchmark ourselves where possible against other IFCA’s, organisations and businesses as appropriate
- ❑ Report to our customers on the progress we have made in improving and developing our services and customer service



## **8. Safeguard our Members and our Staff:**

We will safeguard our Members and our staff from inappropriate behaviour from members of the public and will:-

- ❑ Ensure that Members and staff engaged in consultation meetings or delivering a face to face service are in an environment free from the threat of violence or aggression or foul or abusive language by putting in place mechanisms under which any person not respecting our Members or our staff are asked to leave the premises immediately or by termination of the meeting in question.
- ❑ Ensuring that staff delivering a service by telephone are not subjected to verbal abuse or foul language by putting in place mechanisms under which the member of staff concerned will terminate the conversation after first politely giving the customer the opportunity of ceasing the abusive behaviour.

## **9. Customer means:**

Any person or body affected directly or indirectly by any act or omission of North Eastern IFCA or any member of staff acting in an official capacity.

From time to time there may well be conflict between the Authority's enforcement duties and some of the provisions of the Customer Service Strategy. In resolving such conflict the Authority will be guided by the provisions of its overall aim and will adopt a position consistent with that aim.