

Arts Council of Wales

Customer Service Standards

October 2018





Arts Council of Wales is committed to making information available in large print, braille, audio, Easy Read and British Sign Language and will endeavour to provide information in languages other than Welsh or English on request.

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Customer Service Standards

Introduction

We are the country's official funding and development organisation for the arts. Our principal sponsor is the Welsh Government. We also distribute funding from the National Lottery and raise additional money where we can from other public and private sector sources.

Working together with the Welsh Government, we support and promote the important contribution that the arts make to Wales. We want to foster an environment in which the arts are able to flourish – an environment which identifies and nurtures creative talent, wherever it's found in Wales, to its full potential.

Our work is informed by the principles that govern us as a public body. We take a pride in providing high quality services and aspire to working in ways that reflect well on the Arts Council's status as a public body. For the purposes of this policy, the word "customer" is used to cover the wide range of internal and external individuals and organisations with whom we come into contact within our day-to-day work.

These Standards reflect our commitment to overarching principles:

1. We are a publicly funded organisation and should provide the quality service that the public expects;
2. We aspire to the highest standards of service, courtesy and behaviour in all that we do
3. We aim to deliver the services that we provide in an accessible and timely fashion;
4. We work through the medium of Welsh and English
5. We are committed to improving and raising our standards – we welcome feedback on our performance.

Our commitment to excellent customer care is a vital part of our culture – and an essential underpinning of our success as an organisation. Our standards ensure that every person understands what is important to us in achieving good customer care – about how we work together as a team –and how we put our customers at the centre of what we do.

Customers will be treated in the same respectful manner and will be offered services that take into account their needs and circumstances. We will pay particular attention to any barriers or impediments that our customers might face. Successful services depend on a two-way relationship between those providing the services and the people being served. We will monitor these standards regularly to ensure that they are being delivered and listen to feedback from our customers about what works and what doesn't work in order to continue to improve what we do and how we do it.

These Standards have been developed in accordance with a number of our own policy documents covering various aspects of the Standards in more depth. These documents are listed at the end of this document. We've also attached hyperlinks so that you can easily access them if you want more information about any aspect of the standards.

As a busy organisation with many of our staff working around the country, we encourage our customers to contact us digitally as this can often be the quickest way of providing the information that our customers need.

However, whichever route our customers choose, we will:

- Treat them as an individual with dignity and respect and protect personal information.
- We will listen, respond to needs, inform and communicate clearly.
- Wherever possible, answer the enquiry at the first point of contact. Where appropriate, we will put them in touch with other members of staff or organisations for specialist assistance.
- Provide easy to understand, useful and up to date service information in a clear format and simple language.
- Give options on how to access services by preference and acknowledge and accommodate any specific disability related requirements.
- Ensure our staff are appropriately trained and competent to deliver our services.
- Deliver all of our services bilingually in Welsh and English.

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When you use our website, we will:

- Make it easy for you to find the information and services you want.
- Have an accessible and useable website that is easy to navigate, with up to date information.
- Ensure that all the information is available in both Welsh and English.

When anyone telephones us, we will:

- Answer the call bilingually.
- Advise you of services and information from our website relevant to the nature of your enquiry.
- Aim to resolve your enquiry at first point of contact, avoiding unnecessary duplication and delay.
- Where necessary, pass your enquiry on to the member of staff that can help you, ensuring that your details and the nature of the enquiry are passed on, so that you do not have to repeat yourself.
- Answer our calls promptly, aiming to avoid the use of voicemail wherever possible. Where voicemail has to be used, staff will ensure that it is up to date and will respond to messages within 2 working days (starting from return to the office if they are on leave).

When anyone writes to us, we will:

- Respond to the letter in full within 10 working days and ensure that they know who to contact if you require more information.
- Respond within 20 working days to requests managed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (this is a statutory obligation).
- Where we are unable to respond in full within the timescales stated above, we will advise you of this and provide detail of when a full response will be provided.

When anyone emails us, we will:

- Respond to your email in full within 5 working days and ensure that you know who to contact if you require more information.

- If a member of staff is unavailable, there will be an out of office response that will tell you when they expect to return to the office and who to contact if your email is urgent.
- Where we are unable to respond in full within 5 days, we will advise you of this promptly and explain when a fuller response will be provided.

When anyone asks us a question on Facebook and Twitter, we will:

- Aim to respond to the question within 4 hours within office hours (9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm on Friday).
- Where we are unable to respond in full within the timescales stated above, we will explain when a fuller response will be provided.

Applying for a Grant:

- Grant applications will be impartially and confidentially considered. All staff handling grant applications will follow the Arts Council of Wales' current grant application procedures for [Individuals](#) and [Organisations](#) Grant decisions will be made in accordance with the Arts Council's grant-making processes (including where these are delegated to staff). Staff will also abide by our [Code of Best Practice](#).
- Grant applications will be initially acknowledged within 7 working days to confirm their receipt. The acknowledgement will also include the name of the officer responsible for processing the application and the date on which a decision can be expected.
- Grant decisions will be made within the following timescales:
- Small Grants: within 6 working weeks of relevant deadline date
- Other Grants: within 9 working weeks of relevant deadline date.
- Grant decisions will be conveyed to applicants in writing within ten working days of the decision being taken.
- Where an application has been refused we will give a clear explanation of the decision so that the unsuccessful applicant can understand why their application was not successful.
- All eligible grant payments will be dealt with promptly, subject to the allocation of sufficient funds from the relevant sponsor body.

- Applicants will be notified if the Arts Council of Wales is unable to follow its normal procedures when processing grant applications for any reason.
- We aim to resolve any informal complaints about our grant making as quickly as possible. Any formal complaints regarding the implementation of the grant making process should be handled through our formal [Complaints Procedure](#).

When anyone visits us, we will:

- Keep our Cardiff, Carmarthen and Colwyn Bay offices open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm on Friday. As we do not have a staffed reception desk, we prefer that you contact us in advance before arriving at our offices in person. We can then arrange for the right member of staff to be available to meet you, deal with your query and any requirements that you may have.
- Greet you promptly on your arrival.
- Access help immediately if you have communication or access needs.
- Meet any dietary requirements you may have if catering is provided.

When we visit another organisation or individual, we will:

- Ensure that, where appropriate, we will have made an agreed prior appointment at a time and place, mutually suitable to you and us.
- Aim to arrive promptly. If we are delayed we will make contact to let you know in good time.

What we expect from our customers:

- To help you by providing all the information needed to progress the enquiry and treat them as they would wish.
- To let you know in advance if they need assistance with access to the office or our services.
- To treat our staff with courtesy and respect. We will not tolerate the use of physical or verbal abuse in any form, including the use of foul and abusive language. We will not continue to offer a service in such circumstances.

Monitoring the Standards

- We will undertake annual assessments of our achievement of the standards through Best Practice Reviews exercises. We will monitor operational targets throughout the year using our management systems.
- Complaints and positive feedback will be logged and responded to and used to improve performance.

How did we do?

- If we exceed expectations, we are encouraging customers to let us know so we can make sure staff who are performing well are acknowledged.
- If we fail to meet expectations or if anyone would like to provide us with suggestions as to how we can improve our services, they are encouraged to go [contact us](#) on our website for details on how to do this.
- We value feedback as an opportunity to improve the way in which we deliver our services. All feedback will be responded to in full within 10 working days. We will act quickly if we've got it wrong and take appropriate action to resolve issues wherever possible.
- To make a formal complaint about the Arts Council of Wales customers should use our [Complaints Procedure](#).

How to get in touch with us

Office contact details

Central Office

Arts Council of Wales
Bute Place
Cardiff
CF10 5AL

Tel: 03301 242733 (All calls charged at local rates)

SMS: 07797800504 (Messages charged at caller's standard network rate only)

Email: Governance@arts.wales

See our [location on a map](#).

Regional Offices

North Wales

Princes Park II
Princes Drive
Colwyn Bay
LL29 8PL

Tel: 03301 242733 (All calls charged at local rates)

SMS: 07797800504 (Messages charged at caller's standard network rate only)

See this [location on a map](#).

Mid and West Wales Office

The Mount
18 Queen Street
Carmarthen
SA31 1JT

Tel: 03301 242733 (All calls charged at local rates)

SMS: 07797800504 (Messages charged at caller's standard network rate only)

See this [location on a map](#).

Links to our Related Policies and Procedures

[Policy for Promoting and Facilitating the use of Welsh Language](#)

[Strategic Equality Plan](#)

[Freedom of Information Act](#)

Data Management – [Privacy Policy](#)

[Complaints Procedure](#)