EASTBOURNE
Borough Council
www.eastbourne.gov.uk

Revenues & Benefits Customer Charter 2010/11

Introduction

The Revenues and Benefits service is responsible for administering the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit schemes, the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme and for the billing and collection of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates).

Our Customer Charter tells you:

- What our promises are to you
- What we expect from you
- How to make comment on, or complain about, our service
- How you can contact us

Our Promises to you

The aims of the Benefits Service are to:

- Help people claim the benefits they are entitled to
- Deal with your claim for benefit within 14 days
- Deal with any changes you tell us about within 12 days
- Return any documents you send us within two days
- Help you understand how your benefit has been worked out
- Tell you how to appeal if you do not agree with our decisions
- Reply to your letters and emails within 10 working days
- Answer your telephone call within 6 rings
- See you within 15 minutes of you arriving in our reception area
- Take firm action to discourage benefit fraud and prosecute where necessary
- Have fully trained staff
- Listen to you and improve our service where possible

Our Promises to you

The aims of the Revenues Service are to:

- Recover all taxes that are due
- Send bills and letters that are clear and accurate
- Give you a choice of payment methods
- Reply to your letters and emails within 10 working days
- Answer your telephone call within 6 rings
- See you within 15 minutes of you arriving in our reception area
- Have fully trained staff
- Listen to you and improve our service where possible

Different languages

If your first language is not English, you are unable to understand or communicate in English and you have no relatives or friends that are able to help, we will assist you by providing a translation service.

Home Visits

If we have to visit you at your home we will:

- Give you notice of the visit if possible
- Respect your property, privacy, dignity, religious and cultural beliefs
- Wear and show Council identification

What do we expect from you?

- To be polite and courteous to us. Abusive language or threatening behaviour towards our staff will not be tolerated
- Tell us immediately about any changes in your circumstances that might affect your benefit or Council Tax
- Pay Council Tax and Business Rates when they are due
- Repay overpaid housing benefit

How do I make a comment or complain?

We want to deliver our services in the way that best meets our customers' needs. If you have any suggestions let us know.

The Council has a Corporate Complaints Procedures. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact us in person, in writing, by email or over the telephone. Details of the procedure are available in all council offices and on our website http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/council/complaints/

How can I contact you?

In person at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 09:30 to 17:00 on a Wednesday.

By telephone between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 09:30 to 17:00 on a Wednesday to make a call to the following departments please call

- Housing Benefits Enquiries 0845 3006715
- Council Tax Enquiries 0845 3006715
- Business Rate Enquires 01323 415806
- Benefit Fraud Confidential Hotline 0800 7317039
- Main Council Switchboard 01323 410000

By email to housingbenefits@eastbourne.gov.uk for a Benefits enquiry
By email to counciltax@eastbourne.gov.uk for a Council Tax enquiry
By email to businessrates@eastbourne.gov.uk for a Business Rates enquiry