



Customer Service Standards

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## **Introduction**

At Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums are committed to delivering an excellent service to all our customers, be they general visitors, our local communities, educational or outreach groups, academics, scholars, tourists, groups, sponsors or corporate clients.

Our aim is to continue to improve our service and standards and deliver a consistently exceptional customer experience. This will help us achieve our mission and commitment to delivering a world class service. The standards are challenging but achievable and will help us to consistently surpass our customers' expectations.

Our customers are essential to us and we aspire to give each visitor the same high standards of service, from the moment they are arriving or making contact with us until they leave. In an increasingly competitive and challenging market, delivering an exceptional service is important in helping us differentiate our museums and galleries from our competitors.

Our six customer service commitments and the service standards which underpin each of these commitments cover all aspects of the customer experience and are applicable to all our venues, activities and all our staff. This booklet is designed to help us improve our service by providing a single easy to use source of information. It has been put together by TWAM staff and I welcome suggestions from you to help improve it further in the light of experience and as our customers' expectations continue to grow. If you have any ideas or wish to make any comments on the Customer Service Standards please speak to your line manager. If you prefer, please email your thoughts at [ain.watson@twmuseums.org.uk](mailto:ain.watson@twmuseums.org.uk)

My best wishes

Iain Watson

Director

## **Customer Service Commitments**

Our Commitment:

'Is to a World-class service that is innovative, imaginative, creative, totally inclusive, secure and sustainable'

To help achieve this:

1. We will provide all our customers and visitors with a warm, courteous and engaging welcome at all times
2. We will provide a prompt and helpful response to all enquiries
3. We will promote the choices and services our venues have to offer for everyone.
4. We will ensure our information is well presented, accurate, helpful, up-to-date and meets our customers' needs
5. We will ensure our venues are clean, well presented and well maintained at all times
6. We will ensure our venues are safe and accessible as far as is reasonably possible

COMMITMENT ONE: We will provide all our customers and visitors with a warm, courteous and engaging welcome at all times

1. When visitors come into the venue our staff will be proactive, stand up and provide a warm welcome, with eye contact, a smile and a greeting, e.g. good morning or good afternoon. When there is a queue we will acknowledge people in the queue and thank them for waiting.
2. At the end of a conversation or interaction with our customers we will offer a parting greeting e.g. we hope you enjoy your visit.
3. We will not have personal conversations in their presence; there will be no mobile phones, personal electronic devices nor reading in public areas. Staff who are on duty will not bring food or eat food or drink in the welcome areas of the venues.
4. Queuing times will be kept to a minimum and staff should acknowledge the customers that are waiting; subsequently thanking them for their patience when they reach the front of the queue. Management should predetermine waiting limits and initiate queue management systems when this limit is exceeded.
5. We will always act professionally, look alert and be attentive. We will be well presented, clean, smart and tidy with good standards of personal hygiene. We will dress in accordance with the relevant departmental dress code, e.g. uniform with our name badges clearly visible.
6. On our public phones, office phones and general enquiry lines, we will warmly greet customers e.g. saying good morning or afternoon, giving the name of the venue, our first name and ask how we can help.
7. When our staff are not able to answer the phone we will provide answer machine messages which will be warm and welcoming in tone, provide a greeting, the name of the venue, and for further information we will provide our website contact details and provide an option for the caller to leave a message.

COMMITMENT TWO: We will provide a prompt and helpful response to all enquiries

1. We will always be visible and make ourselves available for our customers, be ready to answer any enquiries and tailor our answers to meet our customers' individual needs.
2. We will always try to find out our customers' needs, ask if we can help and if we do not know the answer we will endeavour to find someone who does. We will ask if there is anything else we can help our customers with.
3. If we cannot find the answer to an enquiry, or offer a suitable alternative, we will take the customer's name and contact details and contact them within one working day and for all written enquiries within an agreed time frame. If we do not have a full answer we will at least acknowledge the enquiry within these time frames and let the customer know when they can expect a full reply.
4. When customers are leaving, and when appropriate, our staff will ask how their visit was. If the customer makes comments or suggestions which might help to improve our service, our staff will make a note of them on our customer comments form. The staff member will add their name to the form so reviewers know who to contact for more information.
5. We will make our best endeavours to ensure that no problems escalate into complaints. However if a customer has a complaint we will:
  - Remain polite and calm
  - Listen and find out the problem
  - Try to be helpful and aim resolve the situation
  - Escalate to a manager if required, as appropriate to the situation.

If it is still not possible to resolve we will provide the option to make a written complaint or we will take a note ourselves and take their contact details and refer to the appropriate manager. We will call them within an agreed time frame.

6. Our customer comments cards will be kept in prominent locations in TWAM venues and kept well stocked and tidy with pencils always available for customers.

COMMITMENT THREE: We will promote the choices and services our venues have to offer for everyone.

1. We will ask our customers if they have been before and if not we will offer our customers a brief introduction to the museum. This will cover the highlights of the museum, what's on and where to start their visit. If we have a guidebook, we will make reference to it and ask our customers would like to buy one.
2. When we engage with our customers, we ask if they would like to support the museum and make a donation and explain gift aid to them. If they agree, we will ask them to complete a gift aid card or, if they prefer, take their name, house number and post code and complete it for them. We will also ask if they would like to be join our free membership scheme and if so we will help them to do this online via a tablet or we will give them the website address where they can do this themselves.
3. Where we have an admission charge or charging for a temporary exhibition we will explain to our customers what the offer is and, if it includes a donation to the Museum or Art Gallery.
4. We will have well-presented signage in our reception areas promoting donations, the recommended donation, gift aid and how the money is used.
5. Our welcome desks will be kept free of clutter. Where there is a venue guidebook this will be prominently displayed for customers to pick up and purchase.
6. Our reception signage will promote what the venue has to offer and we will provide a simple 'what's on' which we can give to our customers, particularly at weekends and school holidays.
7. At each venue we will have well-presented banners or leaflets promoting our venue hire facilities.
8. There will be well presented signage promoting our menus and café opening times in the entrance areas to our cafes.
9. In all our public areas we will not wait for our customers to engage with us, we will be proactive and look for opportunities to acknowledge them with a smile and / or greeting and where appropriate ask if we can be of assistance.
10. Where feasible and appropriate our staff and volunteers will provide mini guided tours or impromptu gallery talks and will have access to equipment such as handling boxes so they can help to bring the experience alive.

COMMITMENT FOUR: We will ensure our information is well presented, accurate, up to date and meets our customers' needs

1. All our posters and leaflet displays will be kept well stocked, branded, well presented and up to date, in designated areas only. If leaflets or posters are out of date, not accurate or damaged, they will be removed immediately. If internal or external labels or signs are incorrect, out of date, missing or damaged they will be replaced or removed and where appropriate a new label will be put in place immediately.
2. All stock in our shops will adhere to TWAM pricing guidelines.
3. All our goods in our cafes will be clearly priced.
4. Our website and social media accounts will be checked regularly, kept up to date, fully functioning and accurate at all times.
5. If any of our interactives are not working and they cannot be repaired immediately, where possible they will be removed from display and if not a well presented and branded sign will be put in place straightaway:
  - Explaining what has happened to the exhibit
  - When it will be repaired by
  - Where appropriate, some alternatives for customers to use
  - Who to contact for further information
  - Apologise for any inconvenience caused
6. Where an object is missing from a display and cannot be immediately replaced a clear and well-presented label will be put in place at the same time that the object is removed, which will explain:
  - Why the object has been removed, when it may be replaced and if feasible provide an image of the object. Apologise for any inconvenience caused
7. If an area or exhibition is closed we will provide well presented branded signage or promotion in keeping with TWAM guidelines which will include:
  - What is taking place, and if we can use a visual promotion of what is coming
  - When the new exhibition or exhibit will be open
  - Provide the contact details for further information
  - Apologise for any inconvenience caused

COMMITMENT FIVE: We will ensure our venues are clean, well presented and well maintained at all times

1. We will endeavour to keep all public areas clean and tidy at all times. All our staff will always pick up litter, all our bins will be checked and emptied and toilets cleaned, re-stocked and checked they are in full working order.
2. We will ensure staff personal belongings, food and beverages are kept out of sight of the public at all times and that all desks and counters in public areas are kept, clean tidy and free of clutter and any boxes hidden from public view.
3. Our museums will be clutter free, 'A' frames, cleaning signs, banners, chairs, tables, barriers, boxes etc. which are not in use will not be left in public spaces unless they are properly screened off, so that they are not visible to the customer.
4. In line with good Health & Safety practice spillages will be dealt with immediately by any member of staff who finds one. Staff will guard the spill or put up a wet floor sign and inform the Customer Service Officer on duty.
5. The inside and outside of display cases whether on the galleries, in our shops or cafes will be kept clean, tidy and dust free.
6. Our exhibits, shop product and café merchandise will be clean, well presented in aesthetically pleasing displays and where provided bay plans must be followed.
7. We will monitor our exhibits and interactives to ensure that they remain in good working order. If they are not working we will try to repair immediately. If this is not possible we will provide a well presented temporary sign. If the exhibit cannot be repaired, we will replace the exhibit with another object or remove the exhibit and make the area good.
8. We will endeavour to carry out as much daily maintenance work before and after opening hours as resources will allow. If work is being carried out during opening hours the area will be cordoned off and kept tidy, keeping disruption to the customer to the minimum. When not in use, areas will be left clean, tidy and safe.
9. All staff placing orders will ensure that it is clear where the order is to be delivered to.
10. Any set up for events will minimise the disruption to the customer experience. Equipment will be moved through public spaces outside of museum opening hours whenever possible.

COMMITMENT SIX: We will ensure our venues are safe and accessible as far as is reasonably practical

1. We will endeavour to keep our venues accessible to our visitors and if they are not, whenever possible we will provide other means by which visitors can see what is on display.
2. Any health and safety issues in public areas will be made safe immediately and reported to the Customer and Facilities Manager of the venue.
3. All our venues will provide wheelchairs for those that need them, and one will be kept in a prominent public area in the reception area for customers to see they are available.
4. All our venues have fully stocked first aid boxes which are checked regularly and comply with Health and Safety requirements.
5. We will conduct checks every day of all exits and entrances to the museum to ensure they are kept clear at all times in the event of evacuation and evacuation chairs are checked regularly to ensure they are fully working.
6. All our staff will be aware of the TWAM's Access policy.

## Front of House and Museum Daily Checklist - Example

1. Reception:
  - Is it clear of clutter and only displaying museum information i.e. the guidebook, museum map and promotions that we have to offer?
  - Is other material either held behind the desks for handing out by the staff or in other designated leaflet displays?
2. Public Areas:
  - Are all our public areas free of clutter and boxes, barriers, temporary signs, cleaning signs, tables and chairs etc. which are not in use? If not, make sure they are taken out of a public area or not in public view and if appropriate screened off. Is everything clean and tidy?
  - Are all marketing displays, clean, tidy, well stocked, and well presented?
  - Are the interactives all working? If not can you action or report them to the appropriate department and or your line manager.
  - Are their objects missing from galleries and display cases, if so report them to your line manager.
  - Are the interpretation labels in the display cases clear and easy to read and if needed appropriately lit and are the cases clean, tidy and smudge free?
  - Litter bins – Are they clean and empty at the start of the day?
  - Visitor toilets – are they clean, well-stocked and in full working order?
3. External Areas:
  - Is there litter internally around the Museum or outside our main entrances, if so can we pick it up? Litter bins – Are they clean and empty at the start of the day?
4. Signage:
  - Temporary signage, both internally and externally – Do you really need it? Does it conform to TWAM standards?
  - Permanent signage internally and externally – is it clean and in good repair? If not report it to the relevant department and or your line manager.
  - A frames – are they necessary? Are they clean, well presented, in good condition and in the correct location?
  - Site works – are they safe and is there an explanation of what is taking place and does any signage conform to TWAM standards?
5. Staff presentation:
  - How do you look? Are you in the correct uniform?
  - Are you wearing your name badge,
  - Are you presentable and ready to welcome visitors with a smile, eye contact and a greeting?