

Overview

This Standard is about giving information or advice to customers, including internal or external stakeholders, and responding to their queries or complaints in a positive way. It includes communicating effectively, dealing with both co-operative and uncooperative customers, agreeing action to resolve any issues and referring matters outside of your area of responsibility to appropriate people.

This Standard is for anyone in the utilities sector who comes into contact with customers including internal or external stakeholders.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. treat customers in line with organisational procedures at all times
2. provide information or advice to customers that is accurate, within your area of responsibility and in line with organisational procedures
3. respond to customer enquiries or complaints in line with organisational requirements for customer contact
4. determine the details of customer enquiries or complaints in line with organisational procedures
5. ensure dealings with customers are timed to take account of the needs of other customers, work pressures and organisational requirements
6. make sure any actions agreed with customers are in line with both legal and organisational responsibilities and requirements
7. explain organisational constraints in a clear manner to customers at appropriate times in line with organisational procedures
8. confirm that customers understand any actions that you or they are required to carry out
9. use appropriate approaches to deal with co-operative and uncooperative customers in line with organisational procedures
10. pass the details to relevant people without delay where limits of responsibility are exceeded
11. carry out agreed activities according to organisational customer service guidelines
12. record interaction with customers in an appropriate level of detail in organisational systems

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. organisational customer service standards and customer contact procedures
2. communication techniques including how to maintain a courteous, helpful and tactful manner in situations of conflict or non cooperation
3. the legal obligations and requirements of the utilities you are working with within the remit of your role
4. types of advice you may be able to provide and the enquiries you would normally be expected to deal with
5. organisational processes for media contact
6. how to manage customer expectations and balance customer and organisational needs
7. personal and organisational limits of authority for dealing with customers, internal and external stakeholders
8. how to communicate with customers including speaking, listening and questioning
9. techniques to confirm other's understanding of information
10. the importance of understanding customers' points of view
11. how customers are involved with, or affected by, your work
12. how to handle disagreement and conflict
13. how to access essential information and how to summarise it for customers
14. the boundaries of your own authority and who to refer to when enquiries and complaints are outside of it
15. organisational requirements for recording interactions with customers

Communicate with customers in the utilities sector

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