



Customer Services Strategy

1. Policy Statement

Stanford & Green understands the importance of Customer Service in the delivery of services to individuals and groups.

We are committed to creating and developing a positive approach to Customer Service in which we strive to consistently exceed the expectations of our customers. We aim to create an environment within which 'Customer Service' is seen as essential to the management and delivery of services.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all users of Stanford & Green services including our staff are treated as valued customers.

2. The Strategy

The strategy concentrates on creating the overall conditions under which excellent service delivery can be achieved.

The different elements of the strategy that need to be considered are:

- Defining our customers
- Defining good Customer Service
- Allocating responsibilities
- Planning implementation in terms of:
 - Mainstreaming into service delivery
 - Staff awareness and training
 - Information and publicity
 - Comments and Complaints procedures
 - Consultation
 - Performance Standards and Monitoring
 - Employment Partnerships and Contractors
 - Complaints Strategy Review

3. Who are our customers?

In the context of this strategy our customers include the following:

- Third party customers who receive a service as a consequence of our Service Level Agreements with Local Authorities and the General Public.
- Stanford & Green staff (we are all customers of each other) and hosted bodies.
- Our partner organisations including public and voluntary sector organisations with whom we work.

If we're not delivering on these commitments to you, please bring it to our attention to help us identify how we can improve.

All Stanford & Green employees must understand and support 10 Customer Service points:

- Everyone is a customer.
- Every customer is important.
- If you can't help, find someone who can.
- We welcome comments and complaints as they can be positive.
- The customer may not always be right, but we must always be polite and courteous.
- When we get it wrong, apologise.
- Treat your customer as you would like to be treated yourself.
- Don't make promises you can't keep but make sure that you keep the ones you make.
- Always try to do your best for your customer.
- To a customer YOU are Stanford & Green.

5. Responsibilities

All Stanford & Green employees are expected to carry out their responsibilities to provide good service under this strategy. They have a significant role to play in ensuring that all customers, clients and partners receive good Customer Service.

The Management Team will ensure that Stanford & Green is implementing the strategy and will monitor this via regular reports and updates.

The Management Team has overall responsibility for making sure that Stanford & Green as a whole carries forward a coordinated approach to Customer Service.

Directors and Managers have a duty to actively promote Customer Service and to ensure that this strategy is implemented. They should update staff on Customer Service issues through meetings, agreed plans and training.

The implementation and monitoring of the process will be overseen by the Stanford & Green Management Team.

5.1. Functional Teams

Directors will regularly review customer satisfaction and performance levels.

- Monitoring Customer Service quality
- Identifying Customer Service training needs
- Overseeing information and advice produced by staff
- Undertaking and reviewing, monitoring and evaluating of Customer Satisfaction
- Informing the Management Team on progress and issues to be addressed

6. Implementation

6.1 Service Delivery

The best way of ensuring that Customer Service is placed at the centre of all of Stanford & Green's relationships with its customers, clients and partners is by:

- Building Customer Service into all our policies, practices and reviews
- Making sure that all employees see Customer Service as central to Stanford & Green work and are trained to deliver their element of service well
- Ensuring that policies are interlinked with Customer Service and are not seen as separate or isolated policies
- Working hard to overcome apathy
- Making sure that it is easy for everyone to find out about Stanford & Green's services, the service levels that they can expect and how to comment and complain
- Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of our strategy and practices and changing them where necessary.

We will implement this strategy via action plans at Management and Staff meetings. Such action plans will contain the specific objectives in a form that can be monitored.

6.2 Awareness and Training

Training at a variety of levels is essential to achieve excellent Customer Service and we will make sure that they are tailored to meet and exceed our objectives.

Stanford & Green will ensure that:

- All employees undertake appropriate training or guidance in Customer Service and that they understand and accept the importance and centrality of Customer Service to the delivery of services.
- Customer Service will be included in the induction training given to all new employees
- All staff will have Customer Service training suitable to their level of operation.
- All frontline staff will have specialised training in Customer Service and regular refresher training.
- Managers will consider the implications of this strategy when developing and implementing individual training plans.

Core Customer Service training should include:

- Management responsibilities for customer service.
- Devolving responsibilities to employees.
- Identifying who our customers are.
- Good customer service practice.
- Attitudes and behaviour.
- Handling complaints.
- Equal opportunities.

Additional and follow-up training should include:

- Reception skills.
- Telephone skills.
- Written skills.
- Handling difficult situations/people.
- Diffusing and managing anger.
- Equal opportunities.

Training will be made available either through internal resources or where deemed appropriate through outside bodies.

6.3 Information and Publicity

The existence of this strategy will be publicised to staff through Induction courses, Staff meetings and through any Development Programme. The feedback from these meetings will be used to populate progress reports.

6.4 Monitoring of Comments and Complaints

Electronic systems for recording enquiries, complements, comments and complaints will be developed to ensure that we can monitor and evaluate the level and areas of concern. Monitoring and evaluation will ensure that enquiries, comments and complaints systems will be used to inform developments in service delivery, customer service, consultation, satisfaction and performance indicators.

6.5 Consultation

Stanford & Green needs to take into account the results and feedback from all types of consultation. When appropriate, specific issues relating to customer service delivery should be consulted on. No significant changes in service will be implemented without full consultation with our clients.

The feedback of the results and 'outcomes' of consultation are vital to ensure good practice in Customer Service.

6.6 Performance Standards and Monitoring

Monitoring will mean systematic collection and analysis of data relating to performance indicators, complaints and comments.

The introduction of new integrated performance reports based on "Account Managers" reports will ensure that the "Management Team" and Directors are able to monitor and measure performance, and customer satisfaction.

An annual report including a comprehensive analysis of all customer service issues will also be produced by the Management Team and shared with staff and clients.

6.7 Employment

In all employment matters we will ensure that:

- All employees undertake, where appropriate, training and guidance in Customer Service and that they understand and accept the importance and centrality of Customer Service to the delivery of services
- We monitor, review and revise recruitment, selection and promotion practices to reflect the importance of Customer Service in the workforce at all levels
- Employees making selection and promotion decisions receive appropriate training

7. Partnerships and Contractors

We are committed to working in partnership with other organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will encourage our partners to follow the principles of this strategy.

We will encourage any contractors we employ to apply Customer Service principles in the delivery of services.

8. Complaints

Any customer, client or partner organisation that feels we have failed to implement this strategy in the service they receive will be encouraged to bring this to our attention. If having given the NWSSP a reasonable time to address the issue they still feel the matter has not been resolved to their satisfaction they should address any complaint to NWSSP under its “Complaints Procedure”.

9. Strategy Review

This strategy statement will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant to NWSSP's aims and objectives. It will also be updated when changes in local circumstances and legislation occur.

10. Customer Care Policy

The attached Customer Care Policy expresses in a concise manner the principles underpinning this Customer Services Strategy.

Customer Care Policy

Our commitment is to always:

- 1. Provide a personalised dedicated friendly and reliable service to the customer.**
- 2. Be considerate and respectful of each other's opinions.**
- 3. Give our staff the knowledge, training and encouragement they need to provide a high-quality service.**
- 4. Maintain high levels of conduct, professionalism and confidentiality always.**
- 5. Provide clear, accurate and comprehensive information to agreed timescales.**
- 6. Be responsive and prompt when dealing with enquiries, in a polite and courteous manner.**
- 7. Seek continual improvement in Customer Service standards through effective consultation, monitoring and evaluation;**
- 8. Seek customers views on the services we are providing.**

Martin Stanford (Director)
Stanford & Green
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