

The Birmingham Promise

Introduction

We take customer service very seriously here at Birmingham City Council.

It's not just about how quickly we answer the phone or how polite we are when we speak to you – it's also about resolving your enquiries and requests in a timely way.

It's why we have introduced The Birmingham Promise.

The Birmingham Promise is central to our values as a local authority: putting you first; achieving excellence; being true to our word; and acting courageously.

It also reflects our core purpose: to make a difference every day to people's lives.

The Birmingham Promise consists of specific standards that you should expect from us, whether you need to register a general complaint or raise a concern about any of the seven most frequently requested services in the authority.

We will monitor and measure how well we do in each of them and will publish the results every three months so that you can see how we are doing.

The impact of the financial situation

As you are no doubt aware, we have suffered unprecedented financial cuts over the past few years and these look set to continue for the foreseeable future.

This inevitably means there will be changes in the way that we serve you.

We will have to target our scarce resources at the most vulnerable people in our communities and support those who most need our help. This will be a key challenge for us.

Less money in our coffers also means we will have to increase our use of online services when it is appropriate to do so but we will ensure that these are easier to access and to use.

Contacting us

Whether you're a visitor to the city or you live or work here, you can expect to receive the highest levels of service from us. We are committed to providing open, responsive and effective services throughout the city.

As part of The Birmingham Promise, when you use any of our services you can expect us to:

- Be courteous and polite towards you
- Treat you fairly
- Take your problem seriously and to listen carefully to you
- Tell you what we will do to help you
- Give you open and honest explanations about our decisions
- Treat you as an individual – we will always respond to people's diverse needs
- Send you correspondence and information that is easy to understand
- Listen to your feedback
- Apologise if we get things wrong and do our best to put things right
- Send you updates about what we are doing to deal with your query
- Keep our promises.

Making a complaint

We hope you won't need to complain about our services but if you think we have fallen short, it is important that we know about it.

The easiest way to contact us is by using our Your Views service.

You can either ask for a form by telephoning 0121 464 9995 or you can find one online at www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews.

If you make a complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge it and provide you with a reference number
- Investigate your complaint thoroughly
- Send you a full response or an update within 20 days. You can choose how we send this information to you.

Delivering services – our commitment to you...

Benefits

Birmingham Benefits Service pays your housing benefit and council tax support.

We endeavour to do this accurately and quickly, and strive to provide an all-round excellent service by ensuring ensures that you receive all the help you are entitled to, according to legislation and local policy.

To make a claim for benefits, visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/benefits.

We promise to:

- Work with you to ensure that you receive all of the help you are entitled to
- Make a decision about your housing benefit our council tax support claim within 10 days of receiving your claim, if you have provided all the necessary information.

Waste and Recycling

Our Fleet and Waste Management service collects your household rubbish every week, except on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. It also collects your paper, card and mixed materials every fortnight, provided you have separated the items correctly.

To report a missed collection, visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/waste

If we miss a collection, we promise to:

- Collect your household rubbish/recycling within 3 days of you registering your complaint.

Housing Repairs

If you are one of our tenants, you can be assured that your home will be maintained to a good and improving standard.

To report a non-urgent repair, visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/housingrepairs

Or you can call us on 0800 073 3333 (free from a landline) or 0300 555 0404 (from a mobile) to report urgent and non-urgent repairs.

As part of our commitment, you can expect your home to be:

- Watertight and waterproof
- Safe and secure
- Repaired to a good standard.

If you report any problems with your home, we promise to:

- Respond to emergency repairs in 2 hours
- Resolve routine repairs within 30 days.

Parks

Our Parks Service is responsible for almost 600 parks and public open spaces, as well as more than 200 play areas and 115 allotment sites across the city. We are committed to providing high quality spaces that everyone can enjoy.

To report a dangerous tree, visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/parks.

If you report a tree in a dangerous state, we promise:

- To send a qualified tree officer to carry out an inspection within 2 hours.

Highways

Millions of people use the city's highways and road networks every day, whether they are motorists or pedestrians. Our Highways Service is committed to providing a consistently high level of service and routinely undertakes inspections to make sure the roads, footways, bridges and street lights across the city are safe for all.

To report a highways issue, visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/highways.

Sometimes, problems occur and we will do our utmost to fix them.

If you report a dangerous pothole or other defect, we promise to:

- Make it safe within one hour
- Carry out a temporary repair within 24 hours
- Fully repair it within 28 days.

If other potholes are reported, we will:

- Inspect them within 14 days
- Arrange its repair in our programme of works.

If you report a faulty traffic light, we will:

- Repair it within two hours.

If you report a faulty or broken street light, we will:

- Repair it within one month.

School Admissions

Our Services for Schools department aims to make sure that every child in the city reaches his or her potential.

We do this by supporting pupils, enabling them to access as many opportunities as possible, and developing their talents.

All our schools endeavour to provide activities for children and young people that make learning interesting and exciting.

You can apply online for a school place at
www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions

As a parent applying for a reception or year 7 school place for your child, we promise to:

- Hold an appeal following an offer for either a reception or year 7 place in front of an independent panel within 40 school days of the appeal deadline
- Offer within 10 school days a place at a child's nearest school with availability if you have not received an offer
- Have an independent appeal panel consider in-year appeals within 30 school days of receiving your appeal application

Blue Badge Service

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who find it difficult to use public transport. Blue badge holders can park in disabled spaces and other designated spaces throughout the city.

We promise to:

- Process your application form for a blue badge within 8 weeks
- Post to your address a renewal notice 10 weeks before your blue badge is due to expire.

Our expectations of you ...

The Birmingham Promise sets out what you can expect from us. For this to work, however, we need your help and co-operation. So, we ask you to:

- Treat all Council staff with respect and courtesy

- Provide full information when reporting an issue or submitting an application
- Use the correct channels when reporting an issue, ie. via the website or the contact centre
- Leave household waste/recycling out to be collected on the right day and at the right time.

ENDS