

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

Our key service aims are to:

- ✓ Process housing benefit and council tax support claims in an average of 19 days, where all evidence supplied.
- ✓ Process housing benefit or council tax support changes you tell us about in an average of 10 days, where all evidence supplied.
- ✓ Return documents you send to us within 4 working days of receipt.
- ✓ Help you understand how your benefit has been worked out.
- ✓ Advise you of your right to appeal if you do not agree with our decisions.
- ✓ Process your council tax or business rates account within an average of 10 days.
- ✓ Take firm action to discourage benefit fraud and prosecute where necessary.
- ✓ Where it is not possible for us to meet the standards we have set, keep you updated on the progress with your enquiry and let you know when a full response can be provided.
- ✓ Ensure we publish our complaint policy with access to all four local authority policies.

CUSTOMER ACCESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Access our online services:

The easiest and most convenient way to apply for, report, pay for and get information is through our online service.

Change your address, pay your council tax, set up a direct debit, apply for housing benefit and council tax support and report a change of circumstances to us at: **www.poole.gov.uk** for all Borough of Poole customers, or **www.dorsetforyou.com** for Christchurch, East Dorset and North Dorset customers.

Telephone us: **0345 034 4569**

Email us: **svpp@poole.gov.uk**

Local offices:

Christchurch Civic Offices
East Dorset District Council Offices
Gillingham Town Council (Tuesdays only)
North Dorset District Council Office
Borough of Poole Civic Centre

Telephone and local office opening times:

Monday - Thursday: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Friday: 9.00am - 4.30pm.

STOUR VALLEY AND POOLE PARTNERSHIP

Welcome to our Customer Charter

Stour Valley and Poole Partnership represents four local authorities working together to provide Revenues and Benefits Services for Christchurch Borough, East Dorset District, North Dorset District and Borough of Poole Councils.

Every day our employees work with thousands of customers. We aim to provide a high quality service to every customer and every employee has a personal responsibility to ensure that our customer standards are met or exceeded.

We are one organisation and we work together as one team. By getting it right at the first point of contact we aim to improve your customer experience.

This charter tells you about the level of service you can expect from us. It also tells you what we expect from you and what to do if things go wrong.

We welcome and value your views on how we can improve



WHEN YOU CONTACT US

Our digital, online and email service

- ✔ Provide user friendly digital service with local access and support to use computers.
- ✔ Ensure our online information is up to date and easy to understand.
- ✔ Provide an automated response to our emails with information on our current wait times.

Our telephone service

- ✔ Provide a dedicated and professional telephone experience.
- ✔ Aim to respond to your enquiry within one minute.
- ✔ Signpost you to the most convenient way to apply, report and pay.
- ✔ Respond to 90% of enquiries at the first point of contact.
- ✔ Ensure our telephone recorded messages provide timely information.

Our local offices

- ✔ Provide a welcoming and efficient service through appointments or general enquiry points.
- ✔ Aim to see you within 5 minutes of a booked appointment and 20 minutes without an appointment.
- ✔ Provide easy access to buildings, rooms, computer facilities and interpretation services.

OUR COMMITMENT

We will:

- ✔ Treat our customers with respect, being fair and helpful.
- ✔ Help you claim the benefits you are entitled to.
- ✔ Have fully trained and knowledgeable staff
- ✔ Take responsibility when dealing with you, making sure we do whatever is needed.
- ✔ Follow our equal opportunity policy. Listen to feedback and improve our service.
- ✔ Ensure that information provided to us is gathered, held, processed and disposed of in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

YOUR COMMITMENT

We respectfully ask that you:

- ✔ Help our employees to help you effectively by being patient when asked for information.
- ✔ Providing answers to questions and supply all evidence required with your application.
- ✔ Report changes to your circumstances immediately through our online service.
- ✔ Treat us with respect. We will not tolerate harassment, threats or assaults.
- ✔ Let us know if you have any specific access needs.
- ✔ Ask us to explain anything you are not sure of.
- ✔ Arrive on time for appointments and tell us in advance if you are going to be late.

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We aim to get it right first time, every time. But if we do something that does not meet your expectations please contact us straight away. A quick conversation is usually all it takes to put things right.

Please also let us know when you receive great service. The more we know about what we get right better our service will be.

Please give us feedback and access our complaint policy by:

- ✔ Calling our customer access team: **0345 034 4569**
- ✔ Completing an online form: **www.poole.gov.uk** or **www.dorsetforyou.com**
- ✔ By email: **svpp@poole.gov.uk**
- ✔ In writing: **Stour Valley and Poole Partnership PO Box 722, Poole BH15 2YE**

What happens next?

- ✔ We try and deal with all straightforward complaints at the first point of contact and resolve by speaking to you.
- ✔ If the complaint is more complex we may need to investigate and will respond to you in accordance with our policy within 10 working days.
- ✔ If we are unable to respond within this time we will tell you and provide an estimated time.