

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Customer Service Advisor (Specialist)		
Directorate	Regulatory & Operational		
Reporting to	Customer Service Manager		
Grade	13		
Evaluation ref:	AG0773	Job ref:	Family
Role purpose			
The Customer Service Advisor (Specialist) plays a key role as the first point of contact for all Somerset Council services, engaging with customers through telephone, webchat, email, written correspondence, and face-to-face interactions. The role involves supporting a wide range of enquiries from the public, service users, internal colleagues, and external professionals or organisations. By actively listening and applying sound judgement, the postholder identifies customer needs and provides accurate information, guidance, or solutions, aiming to resolve queries at the first point of contact wherever possible. They ensure that all interactions are handled in line with council policies, relevant legislation, and established customer contact practices. Alongside frontline delivery, the role contributes to continuous improvement by liaising with service areas, highlighting issues, and feeding back suggestions for development. The postholder supports colleagues by providing coaching on complex issues, helping ensure consistent and high-quality customer service across the team. As part of their specialist responsibilities, they may act as a subject matter expert or operational lead within reception points, maintaining effective processes, monitoring demand, and ensuring tasks are appropriately prioritised. Through building strong internal relationships and promoting digital access where suitable, the role helps enhance both customer experience and organisational efficiency.			
Accountabilities			
As part of the Customer Contact team deal with telephone, webchat, email and face to face: Respond to all contacts from any Somerset Council Service. May receive calls including safeguarding from Adults and Children's and will be required to take relevant details and pass onto a colleague within the Customer Contact team. Assess the needs of each contact through active listening, questioning and some scripts to provide the necessary information, guidance, support, or services. Interrogate and interpret online information, guidance documents and the use of other line of business systems, e.g. Confirm. Wherever possible all interactions will be resolved at the first point of contact. Use both formal procedures and their own judgement to identify if the enquiry requires further consultation or routing to a specialist within a Council Service.			

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Record in the appropriate system all customer data and service requirements and where required workflow to the appropriate individual or team. Record data to enable the Contact Centre managers to monitor and track service, team, and individual performance. Maintain an awareness of contact volumes and manage their own availability using the telephony system to maximise their performance and the performance of the Contact Centre.

Review information held on systems and/or website to identify inaccurate information or to highlight areas of improvement and efficiency for system use and processes. Follow the electronic feedback process to report this information and meet regularly with Managers to provide feedback on behalf of the team.

Keep up to date with any changes to Council Services including consultations which may result in contact from members of the public or other organisations.

Liaise with staff within Services where there are discrepancies in information available on the Council's websites. Collate data/feedback to provide to the service areas.

Deal with all contacts in line with the Council's policies and procedures, e.g. Equalities and Diversity, and relevant legislation, e.g. the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information. All data recorded must be relevant and accurate.

Adhere to the Internal Customer Contact Working Practices.

Will have the additional responsibility of either a subject matter expert for at least one key activity/service area (see 1- 5) or the day-to-day operational lead for the reception points (see 6-13).

Provide colleagues with coaching and support for complex issues or enquiries.

Review any changes to processes, new information or feedback from Services. Train and/or provide instructions to colleagues to ensure best practice and consistent advice and support to customers.

Take the lead in review of website content, collation of feedback and liaison with operations staff within services.

Promote the customer shift to less costly access channels and digital delivery. Identify opportunities or improvements to digital services.

Support colleagues and managers in working with the service area to identify and recognise opportunities for development and improvement.

Provide colleagues with coaching and support for complex issues or enquiries.

Review any changes to processes and train and/or provide instructions to colleagues to ensure consistent advice and support to customers.

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Ensure that daily tasks are allocated and managed to appropriately resource the customer service point desk. Communicate the daily priorities to the team.

Monitor workload for Blue Badge administration, ensure all the data is being recorded accurately and all tasks are completed to meet the required deadlines.

Maintain footfall volumes on the system, highlighting trends and peaks in the service to review and develop how the reception is resourced.

Be a point of contact for service areas within customer service point. Work with the Services to ensure day to day processes are working efficiently for both reception and staff, escalate any complex or recurring issues to the Line Manager.

Ensure that any incidents are correctly recorded and escalated appropriately by the team.

Build and maintain relationships with service areas to work together in improving the quality of information provided to customers. Liaise closely with the Line Manager to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

The role is entirely communication based, and you will be at ease with customers, quickly build relationships with them and demonstrate excellent customer service in all interactions with customers and professionals.

Although the majority of telephone interactions will be with members of the public, there will be regular contact with internal professionals and professionals in external businesses/agencies, e.g. other local authorities, Highways Agency, Police, Environment Agency, Schools, County Councillors.

On reception most visitors are business visitors for meetings, who must be welcomed to Somerset Council and swiftly signed in. There will also be service users particularly from other services, such as Social Care and Housing planned or unplanned requirements. These can be particularly challenging and require sensitivity and often individual responses to deal appropriately with their problems.

There is close contact with other team members to share knowledge, solutions, and support to ensure continuity of service and consistent standards.

Will interact with people who need to access services for a variety of reasons, many of which are potentially sensitive, e.g. because of social deprivation, recent bereavement or dissatisfaction with a received service. Consequently, they may be exposed to customers who are aggressive, rude or distressed. There is a need to deal with these customers in a tactful, courteous and professional manner, referring to relevant processes to support in an emergency.

Will report to a Team Manager but will also be able to refer particularly complex or contentious issues to a Customer Service Expert. Will exercise judgement and initiative before referring problems.

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Knowledge / Experience / Skills		
	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
They should be knowledgeable about the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information legislation.	X	
They must be familiar with the Council's policies and procedures, including Equalities and Diversity.		X
The role holder must have a thorough understanding of Council Services and their functions.		X
They should have a good understanding of digital service delivery and customer shift to less costly access channels.		X
They must be aware of the internal Customer Contact Working Practices.		X
They should have knowledge of various communication channels such as telephone, webchat, email, and face-to-face interactions.		X
Experience		
They must have experience in coaching and supporting colleagues for complex issues.		X
They should have experience in recording and managing customer data using appropriate systems.		X
They must have experience in dealing with challenging interactions with sensitivity and professionalism.		X
They should have experience in providing feedback to service areas for continuous improvement.		X
The role holder must have experience in providing customer service across multiple communication channels.		X
They should have experience in promoting digital service delivery.		X
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
The role holder must have a relevant qualification in customer service or a related field.		X
Skills		
The role holder must have excellent communication skills, both written and verbal.	X	
They should have strong active listening and questioning skills.	X	
They must have the ability to assess the needs of each contact and provide appropriate information, guidance, support, or services.	X	

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They should have strong organizational and time management skills.	X	
They must have the ability to build and maintain relationships with service areas and colleagues.	X	
They should have the ability to handle multiple tasks and manage contact volumes effectively.	X	

Dimensions of Role

- Provide advice, guidance, support and training, for own area of expertise, to other staff within the team.
- Deal with potential contact from any member of the public. Calls can be for any Council Service, which requires the need to keep up to date with a wide breadth of Services some of which will be statutory processes and be of an urgent nature.
- Will be required to learn and use a range of business systems whilst undertaking their duties, e.g. Confirm, National Blue Badge system, Stopford registration system, payment systems and keep up to date with any changes to these systems or processes.

Working Conditions

This role involves working within a dynamic and supportive local authority environment. Candidates should be prepared for the following conditions:

- **Work Hours:** Standard working hours are 37, with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events.
- **Location:** Your primary work base will be either Taunton, Shepton Mallet, Bridgwater or Yeovil.
- **Travel:** Some travel within the local area may be required for meetings, site visits, and community engagement activities.
- **Work Environment:** The role involves working both independently and as part of a team, with access to modern office facilities and resources.
- **Health and Safety:** Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

Understand, uphold, and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: April 2025