

Stafford Borough Council

What you can expect from Environmental and Health Services at Stafford BC

Contents:

This document explains what you can expect of Environmental and Health Services at Stafford BC. Whether you are run a business, are a member of the public, or are an employee, we are committed to providing you with an efficient, courteous and helpful service and this document tells you how we aim to do that and what standards we will meet.

Areas we regulate

We deliver services in a number of areas:

Environmental Protection	Licensing	Private Sector Housing	Food Safety
Health and Safety	Public Health	Enviro-crime	Waste

How we deliver our services

We make a fundamental contribution to the maintenance and improvement of public health, and the quality of life and wellbeing. Our aims are to:

- Protect the public, businesses and the environment from harm
- Support the local economy to grow and prosper

We determine our activities by assessing the needs of local people and our business community, and consider the risks that require addressing. We do this through the production of Strategies, Policies, and Service Plans on which we will consult all parties who have an interest. Additionally, we will keep our website up to date and respond to any comments that are made through "ratemy page". We have a programme of consultation and engagement on services that we provide, and will act on their findings. We will use data and other information available to us and our partners to shape our service delivery. Any changes will be widely consulted. In this way we ensure our resources are targeted appropriately, in the light of these local needs and of national priorities.

Details of our current work programme are currently being developed for the year 2014/2015, but will be available on our website as soon as they are agreed.

We are committed to being transparent in our activities. We measure what is important and we publish a range of information about our performance data so that you can see how we are doing. This is available through the Scrutiny Committee process, and their reports are available at www.staffordbc.gov.uk and following the link for Council and Democracy.

We carry out all our activities in a way that supports those we regulate to comply and grow:

- We ensure that information, guidance and advice is available to help you to meet legal requirements.
- We carry out inspections and other activities to check compliance with legal requirements, and we target these checks where we believe they are most needed.

- We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our Enforcement Policy, including taking firm enforcement action when necessary.
- We provide a range of services to businesses, including: *pest control, licences, registrations, issue of certificates.*

Our services will be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Regulators Code.

Working with you

In all your dealings with us you can expect, and will receive, an efficient and professional service. Our officers will:

- Be courteous and polite
- Always identify themselves by name in dealings with you, and provide you with contact details
- Seek to gain an understanding of how your business operates
- Provide details of how to discuss any concerns you may have
- Agree timescales, expectations and preferred methods of communication with you
- Ensure that you are kept informed of progress on any outstanding issues.

We recognise that your business will receive advice and inspections from other organisations, and we will do our best to work with them to ensure that you receive the best service.

Helping you to get it right

We want to work with you to help your business to be compliant and successful and it is important to us that you feel able to come to us for advice when you need it. We won't take enforcement action just because you tell us that you have a problem.

We make information and guidance available through our website, to help you meet legal requirements. Additionally, information is available through leaflets and by face to face contact at our offices and on-site.

Where you need advice that is tailored to your particular needs and circumstances we will:

- Discuss with you what is required to achieve compliance
- Provide advice that supports compliance and that can be relied on
- Provide clear advice that can be easily understood and implemented
- Distinguish legal requirements from suggested good practice
- Ensure that any verbal advice you receive is confirmed in writing if requested
- Acknowledge good practice and compliance.

Advice is free of charge.

Inspections and other compliance visits

We monitor and support compliance in a number of different ways including through inspections, sampling visits, test purchases, advisory visits and complaint investigations. These visits will always be based on an assessment of risk – we won't visit without a reason. The Service will use alternative interventions to full inspections, where appropriate.

We will give you notice that we intend to visit unless we have specific reason to believe that an unannounced visit is more appropriate. Most food safety visits will be unannounced.

When we visit you our officers will:

- Explain the reason and purpose of the visit
- Carry their identification card at all times, and present it on request when visiting your premises
- Exercise discretion in front of your customers and staff
- Have regard to your approach to compliance, and use this information to inform future interactions with you
- Provide information, guidance and advice to support you in meeting your statutory obligations, if required
- Provide a written record of the visit.

Our visits are carried out in accordance with Codes of Practice, and guidance provided by Central Government Departments and Agencies.

Responding to non-compliance

Where we identify any failure to meet legal obligations, we will respond proportionately, taking account of the circumstances, in line with our Enforcement Policy.

We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our Enforcement Policy, including taking firm enforcement action when necessary

Where we require you to take action to remedy any failings we will:

- Explain the nature of the non-compliance
- Discuss what is required to achieve compliance, taking into account your circumstances
- Clearly explain any advice, actions required or decisions that we have taken
- Agree timescales that are acceptable to both you and us, in relation to any actions required, taking into account the associated risk
- Provide in writing details of how to appeal against any advice provided, actions required or decisions taken, including any statutory rights to appeal
- Explain what will happen next
- Keep in touch with you, where required, until the matter is resolved

Requests for our services

We clearly explain the services that we offer, including details of any fees and charges that apply:

In responding to requests for our services, including requests for advice and complaints about breaches of the law, we will:

- Acknowledge your request within 3 working days
- Tell you when you can expect a substantive response
- Seek to fully understand the nature of your request
- Explain what we may or may not be able to do, so that you know what to expect
- Keep you informed of progress throughout our involvement
- Inform you of the outcome as appropriate

A detailed breakdown of our response times and expected resolution times is available as part of our Service Standards, however, please be aware that our officers will exercise their judgment to determine whether a more prompt response is required.

How to contact us

You can contact us by:

Telephone: 01785 619000

Email: ehtechsupport@staffordbc.gov.uk

Web: www.staffordbc.gov.uk

By post: *Environmental and Health Services, Stafford Borough Council, Civic Offices, Riverside, Stafford. ST16 3AQ*

Or in person: *at above address Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8.30am until 4.30pm*

We will seek to work with you in the most appropriate way to meet your individual needs. We can make information available in different formats, and have access to translation and interpretation services.

If you contact us we will ask you for your name and contact details to enable us to keep in touch with you as the matter progresses. We treat all contact with the service in confidence unless you have given us permission to share your details with others as part of the matter we are dealing with on your behalf or there is an operational reason why we need to do so. We will respond to anonymous complaints and enquiries where we judge it appropriate to do so.

Personal data will be managed in accordance with Stafford Borough Council's Data Protection Policy.

Our Team

We have dedicated teams of officers who have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to deliver the services provided. We have arrangements in place to ensure the on-going professional competency of all officers.

Where specialist knowledge is required in an area outside of our expertise we have arrangements in place, with both neighbouring authorities and other regulatory organisations, to call on additional resources as necessary.

Working with others

We work closely with other Council Services such as Planning and Economic Regeneration and our aim is to provide a streamlined service to you.

We are part of a much wider regulatory system in Stafford Borough. We have good working relationships with other regulators such as Staffordshire County Council Trading Standards, Staffordshire Police, and Health and Safety Executive, and this enables us to deliver a more joined up and consistent service. This includes sharing information and data on compliance and risk, where the law allows to target regulatory resources. The Service is part of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group which provides consistency in service delivery across the County for liquor licensing.

Our officers are familiar with the work of our partners and can signpost you to the advice and guidance you need. We are members of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent *Local Enterprise Partnership* and if you have any comments or concerns regarding the way in which the local regulatory system is operating you can contact the partnership through Staffordshire County Council.

Having your say

Complaints and appeals

Where we take enforcement action, there is often a statutory right to appeal. We will always tell you about this at the appropriate time.

We are always willing to discuss with you the reasons why we have acted in a particular way, or asked you to act in a particular way. You are recommended to contact the officer dealing with your issue in the first instance.

We manage complaints about our service, or about the conduct of our officers, through Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Complaints Policy. Details can be found on our website or by telephone on 01785 619000.

Feedback

We value input from you to help us ensure our Service is meeting your needs. We would like to hear from you whether your experience of us has been good or in need of improvement. This helps us to ensure we keep doing the right things and make changes where we need to. We use customer satisfaction surveys from time to time but we would welcome your feedback at any time. You can provide feedback in the following ways:

Telephone: 01785 619000

Email: ehtechsupport@staffordbc.gov.uk

Web: www.staffordbc.gov.uk

By post: *Environmental and Health Services, Stafford Borough Council, Civic Offices, Riverside, Stafford. ST16 3AQ*

Or in person: *at above address Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8.30am until 4.30pm*

Any feedback that we receive will be acknowledged, considered and responded to.

Developing our services with you

We have a number of groups that we consult with to ensure that we are delivering our services to meet your needs. We are always happy to welcome new members to these groups. We currently work with the following:

Landlords Forum

Stafford Town Centre Partnership

Licensed Taxi Trade

If you are interested in finding out more about the work of these groups, or participating in one, please contact us using the contact details above.

Dated: 01/03/2014

Name: Robert Simpson

Job title: Regulatory Services Group Manager

Review Due: 01/06/2014