



CUSTOMER CHARTER

Electoral Services

The Services we provide

Electoral Services is responsible for:

- Administration of all European Parliamentary, Parliamentary, County, District and Parish elections, including by-elections and local and national referendum and parish polls.
- Compiling, publishing and maintaining a full and edited version of the register of electors, including a list of overseas electors and other special category electors such as service voters.
- Processing and maintaining a list of absent voters (i.e. postal and proxy voters).

What you can expect from us

The Services we provide

We will

- ensure a copy of the edited register for the local area is freely available at libraries and at the Council Offices. Any person, company or organisation can view and purchase a copy and can use it for commercial activities such as marketing.
- the full register of electors is available on request for inspection (under supervision) at our Customer Services reception at the Council Offices, Codsall. Only certain people and organisations can have copies of the full register, and they can only use it for specified lawful purposes.
- publish the new register of electors by 1st December each year.
- each month process 100% of rolling registration application forms that are received before the monthly deadline and write to all new and amendment electors as soon as possible after the start of the month that they are added.
- acknowledge all postal and proxy vote applications in writing as soon as possible after receipt and within statutory deadlines.

- annual canvass 100% of all households within the District every autumn in accordance with statutory guidelines and best practice to maximise registration.
- prior to every election give all electors the opportunity to request a postal vote by advertising the facility and including the deadlines on poll cards, our website and other media, and the cancellation facility on postal poll cards.
- provide a large-scale version of the ballot paper and a ballot paper template for visually impaired voters at all polling stations.
- train all polling staff on equalities, diversity and customer care awareness prior to all elections.
- visit all polling stations on election day morning to ensure they meet legal requirements and respond to comments on their future suitability as part of the on-going review of all polling stations.

We aim to

- answer at least 90% of all phone calls within 4 rings.
- see personal callers requiring assistance within:
 - a) 10 minutes – answer of initial enquiry,
 - b) 20 minutes – see appropriate officer when available,
 - c) 5 minutes – those with a pre-arranged appointment.
- respond to, or acknowledge written communication requiring a response within 7 days and answer fully within 14 days.
- acknowledge receipt of all e-mail enquiries requiring a response within 1 working day and the recipient will reply fully within 14 days.
- be courteous, polite and treat you fairly and with respect.
- ensure equality in all services provided by the Council irrespective of: gender, marital or family status, religious belief, age, disability, race, ethnicity or nationality and sexual orientation.
- ensure that all advice & information is presented clearly & honestly, without the use of jargon.
- give you undivided attention, be sympathetic to your needs and endeavour to be available to help you complete forms.

If you need help such as being housebound or other special need we will:

- arrange a home visit if you are housebound or disabled and we cannot deal with your enquiry by phone or written communication (e-mail or letter).
- arrange leaflets, letters or other information to be available in large print or on audiotape.
- make arrangements for any document to be translated into other languages on request.

What we expect from you

- to treat staff and other customers with courtesy and respect.
- not to verbally or physically abuse staff or other customers. If you use any abusive or offensive language or behaviour towards our staff or other customers, we will ask you to leave the building or end your telephone conversation.
- to respect our facilities and services provided by the council.

We aim to

As well as our stated standards of performance, our performance is also measured against our local indicator reported to senior officers and Councillors:

- Achieve a minimum 99% process rate based on return of electoral registration canvass forms in 2012 (target reviewed annually).

How we did last year

In 2011 we achieved:

- 98.8% process rate based on return of electoral registration canvass forms - same as in 2010.

In order to help us meet this aim and improve on our service:

- We shall continue to use the free phone, internet and SMS text registration service for the annual canvass to maximise registration and provide greater opportunities of choice.
- Maximise our publicity for elections and electoral registration to encourage registration and voting – working in partnership with other Staffordshire authorities to achieve value for money and a consistent message across the County.
- Issue an 18th birthday card to all young electors on their birthday to promote continuous registration and maximise postal voting.
- Liaise with Council Tax to target new householders to be registered and existing households updated.
- Undertake a random householder's survey during the annual canvass to hear your views on our performance and how we can improve.

Compliments and Complaints, Consultation and Suggestions

We regularly consult customers to find out how satisfied or otherwise they are against our stated standards of performance or level of service. We also ask other stakeholders such as Parish Councils, our suppliers, other Councils, etc., how we can improve our performance and share good practice.

If we do something well, please tell us. We welcome all comments and suggestions you have about our service. Likewise if we do something wrong please tell us so we can prevent it happening again and put things right.

What to do if something goes wrong

If you want to make a complaint about something we have done or failed to do, please raise the issue with us and let us know straight away.

Please speak to a member of staff about the problem. They may be able to sort it out straight away. If you are still not satisfied you can complain to the Electoral Services Manager (Phil Hardy) by writing to the address below or by initially phoning on 01902 696119 or by e-mailing p.hardy@sstaffs.gov.uk . If you are still not satisfied you can obtain a corporate complaints form from customer services or download one from our website or ring 01902 696529 or 696147 for further information.

How to contact us

BY POST

Write to the Electoral Services Manager, South Staffordshire Council, Council Offices, Codsall WV8 1PX.

BY PHONE

Call our **Helpline 01902 696121** – between 8.45 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

BY FAX

01902 696800

BY E-MAIL

elections@sstaffs.gov.uk

IN PERSON

At the above address from 8.45a.m. to 5.00p.m. Monday to Friday.

ON-LINE

Registration forms, postal and proxy application forms can be downloaded and there is general information on all matters about elections and electoral registration including links to other useful sources by viewing our website: www.sstaffs.gov.uk/elections

Follow us on Twitter [@south_staffs](https://twitter.com/south_staffs)

Working in partnership with the Electoral Commission to provide quality electoral services.

If you find it difficult to read this document we can send you a large print version. We can also provide the form in other languages on request.

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