

The Customer Journey



Introduction



Outstanding customer service is at the heart of what we do; we expect employees to display our values at all times and to be ambassadors for East Ayrshire Leisure Trust. In order to do that we must ensure that all staff are trained to the highest standards and have access to a wide range of learning and development opportunities.

“The Customer Journey” course is based on Visit Scotland’s assessment criteria used in their Accreditation and Mystery Shopping programmes and is also outlined as part of our Customer Services Protocol. The course explores the complete experience that we want to provide for every one of our customers and visitors.

The Customer Journey begins as soon as our customers start choosing their experience and undertaking research into which venue to visit or activity to take part in, either via online information or by making a phone enquiry.

First impressions last! Consideration should be given to customers’ arrival at our facilities - how we can ensure that the décor, presentation and cleanliness of our facilities is always at its best? The welcome and interaction that our customers experience leaves a lasting impression and throughout this

journey we should continually consider how we can make those interactions engaging and memorable so that they will not only want to return but will also recommend our facilities and services to families and friends.

At East Ayrshire Leisure Trust we have a set of overall Customer Standards which identify ‘Key Areas’ of focus, and the ‘Quality Indicators’ which we expect to meet as demonstration of good practice. During the Customer Journey course you will be introduced to more in-depth customer standards that will be explored as the programme develops. As you progress through this journey you will be able to use these standards to audit your own area of work to ensure that you are meeting our standards, acting as an ambassador for East Ayrshire Leisure Trust and therefore always ready for a Mystery Shopping visit.



The welcome and interaction that our customers experience leaves a lasting impression.

There are a wide range of learning and development opportunities, policies and processes available on our Intranet to support The Customer Journey including;

- East Ayrshire Leisure Trust Induction
- Code of Conduct
- Values and Behaviours
- Customer Service Protocol
- Customer Service Standards
- Information Governance
- Conflict Management
- Social Media Policy & Guidance Documents

<https://leisurenet.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/working-for-us/training-development/>



Part 1 - Understanding the Customer Experience



We truly value each and every customer and visitor; in order to ensure that they continue to visit our venues and bring their families and friends, we must strive to provide the very best customer experience that we can.

Part 1 of The Customer Journey explores;

- Why is excellent customer service so important?
- What is the role for our employees in delivering excellent customer service?
- What are East Ayrshire Leisure Trust's Customer Standards and how will we know if we are meeting them?
- How does our approach to delivering excellent customer service reflect the organisation's Vision, Mission and Values?

Activity 1: Customer Experience

Outline a positive experience you have had as a customer...

Outline a negative experience you have had as a customer...

Can you outline what you think demonstrates good customer experience?

Part 2 - Creating the Complete Experience

The overall customer experience is so much more than how we interact with our customers. In fact our customers expect, and deserve, the very best overall experience in order for them to believe that our venues and attractions are the ones that they should continue to visit. Each customer also expects value for money and will therefore choose the experience that best meets their needs.

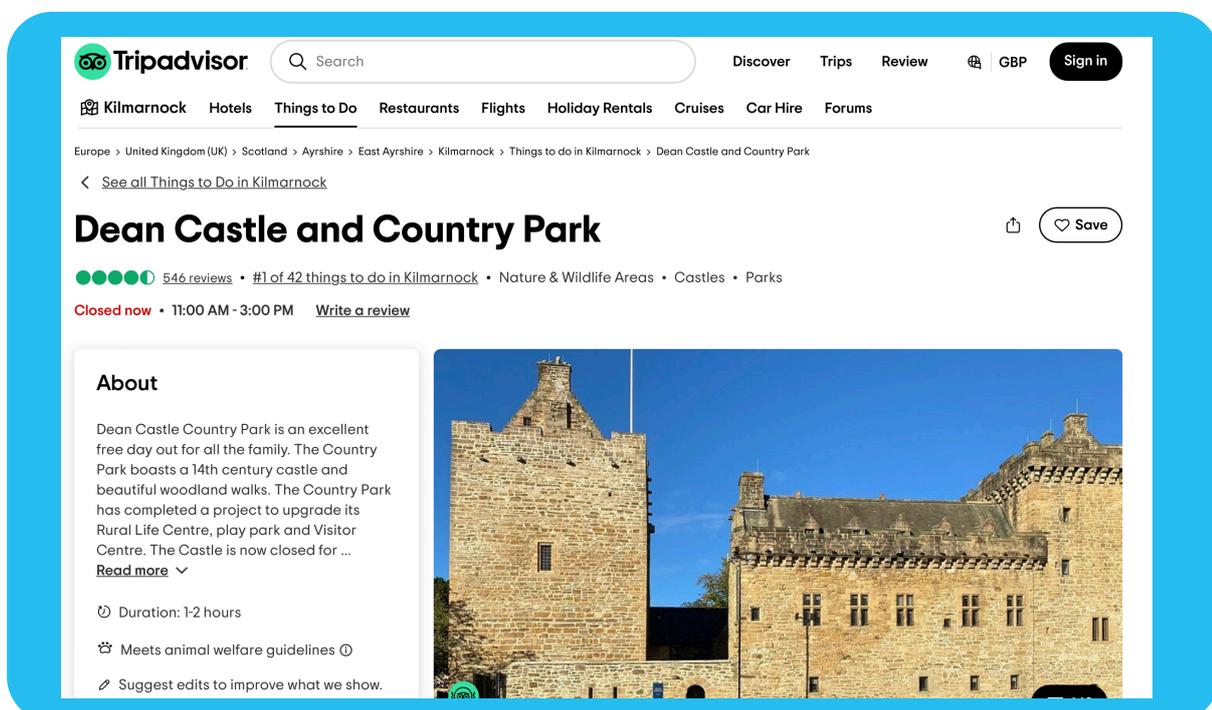
Customers often rely on social media such as Facebook, X, Instagram as well as the internet in order to find the experience that meets their needs, and this is often the first place that they will go to when it comes to making decisions on where to visit or what to do. Therefore, we must make sure that we present the very best version of ourselves online.

However, when boasting of the attractions and services we offer we must also be mindful that we must 'live up' to those expectations that we have created, as it is also often online through social media or google reviews that our customers will provide feedback and this can have a major impact on our reputation.

It is important to remember that pre-arrival research, directional signage, arrival at the carpark and first impressions of the décor and cleanliness of the venue itself are all key aspects in creating that complete customer experience.

In Part 2 we will explore:

- How we can influence customer choices
- How we can influence the customer environment
- Our Customer Standards and expectations for Creating the Complete Experience



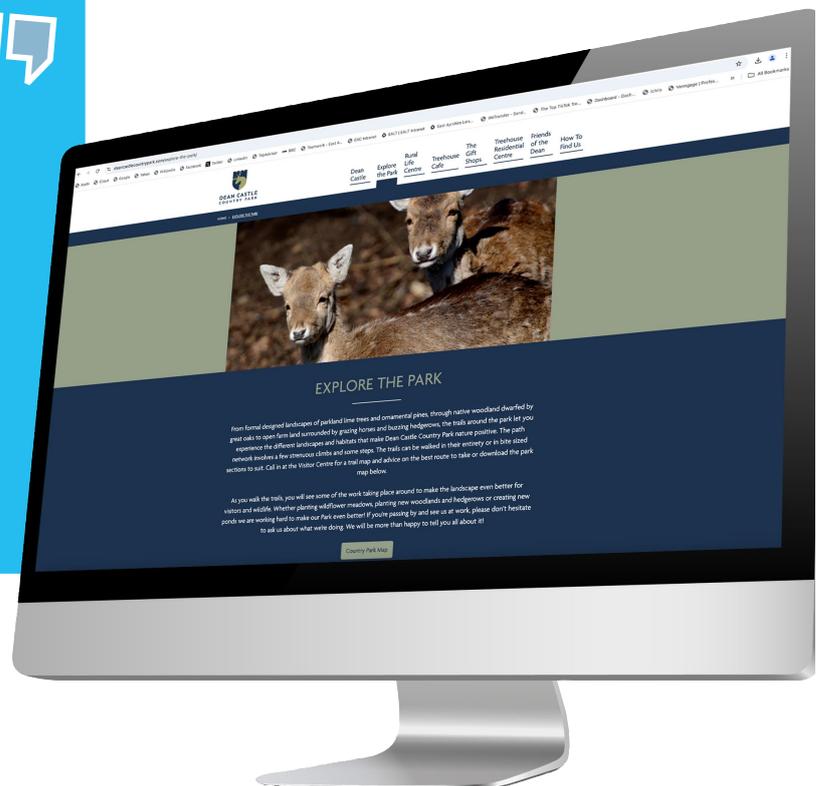
The screenshot shows the TripAdvisor page for Dean Castle and Country Park. The page features a search bar at the top, navigation links for Discover, Trips, Review, and Sign in. Below the search bar, there are category links for Kilmarnock, Hotels, Things to Do, Restaurants, Flights, Holiday Rentals, Cruises, Car Hire, and Forums. The main heading is "Dean Castle and Country Park" with a "Save" button. Below the heading, there are 546 reviews, a rating of 4.5 stars, and a list of categories: Nature & Wildlife Areas, Castles, and Parks. The page is currently closed, with hours from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. A "Write a review" link is also present. The "About" section describes the park as an excellent free day out for all the family, featuring a 14th-century castle, woodland walks, and a Rural Life Centre. A "Read more" link is provided. The "Duration" is 1-2 hours, and it meets animal welfare guidelines. A "Suggest edits to improve what we show" link is also visible. A large image of the castle is shown on the right side of the page.

Activity 2: Creating the Complete Experience

What do you believe would make a venue or attraction stand out?

What would make a visit memorable?

“Just to say a big thanks for the latest improvement to the country park. It’s a small change, but significant to some. The lowering of the notices and boards makes an enormous difference to wheelchair and mobility scooter users and shows the thoughtfulness of the park officials, making the park and facilities available to all users.”



Customer Service Standards: Creating the Complete Experience

The Environment	Standards
Website/online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors can find and use the website easily • There is clear information on the home page for booking, making contact, directions, pricing, opening times and inclusivity information • The website supports foreign languages and it is fully mobile enabled • Pro-active use of social media
Digital Print Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear information on how a visitor can plan their day with accurate opening times, directions, contact details and pricing both on the website and any printed brochures • Additional information is available for a variety of visitors • Direct queries are responded to promptly with an answer which enhances the visitor experience by exceeding expectations
Directional Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website directional information is immediately obvious and postcode is clearly visible • Public transport information is comprehensive and easily found
Bookings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear and obvious instructions on the website/brochure on how to book, with 'book now' button • The online booking procedure is simple and provides prompt receipt/ reminders • Terms and conditions are clear, easy to understand and include the cancellation policy • Staff available online and/or by phone to undertake bookings, answer any queries and offer additional reassurance to visitors
External Grounds and Car Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is adequate parking provision • Condition and maintenance of parking area has been considered • Good appearance of grounds and additional features e.g. planting, seating, lighting
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, quality and maintenance have all been considered • Detail, accuracy and ease of understanding have all been considered
Price Display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price displays and detail of information are easy to find / read
Visitor Flow Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of access to admission/ticket desk • Queuing and provision to avoid bottlenecks/congestion is in place
Décor and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows, doors, walls, flooring fixtures and fittings are all considered • Heating, lighting and ventilation have all been considered

Levels of cleanliness and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of cleanliness across all areas is good • How is cleanliness monitored?
Visitor flow Management and Decor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cubicle space and congestion around facilities should be considered • Quality and condition of hand dryers, soap dispensers waste bins and all other fittings and accessories has been taken into consideration • The quality and availability of baby changing facilities • Provision of facilities to cope with peak demand

Activity 3a:

Our Customer Standards outline the criteria expected to create an excellent customer environment for pre-arrival and on arrival, therefore 'Creating the Complete Experience.' Please list below anything you think that is missing from the criteria or anything you think should not be included...

Activity 3b:

You may not be in direct control of the criteria outlined within the standards/assessment, but thinking about your own working environment can you complete an audit and highlight anything which you consider is currently done well, or anything that you think needs to change.

Part 3 - Delivering Excellent Customer Service

This part of The Customer Journey is the main event; our customers and visitors have negotiated social media, the internet or recommendations from others and have now arrived at our venue or attraction.

Research tells us that a customer's first interaction with a member of staff will undoubtedly provide a long lasting impression not only of the member of staff but also of the entire organisation. As an ambassador of the Trust, and of our values and behaviours, that first interaction is most likely to be with you and so before our customer begins that journey it is important for you to check that you know and understand the expectations that East Ayrshire Leisure Trust has in terms of delivering the ultimate customer experience.

- Have you read the Customer Services Protocol?
- Have you undertaken all relevant training (see Appendix 1)
- Are you aware of your responsibilities identified in the Health and Safety policy?
- Are you familiar with all Risk Assessments relevant to your role?

Our customers and visitors anticipate that we will exceed their expectations in delivering an enjoyable experience and a warm welcome. So what is the standard that customers can expect and that we should deliver?

Our customers and visitors anticipate that we will exceed their expectations in delivering an enjoyable experience and a warm welcome. So what is the standard that customers can expect and that we should deliver?

In Part 3 we will explore:

- **Our Customer Standards for Delivering Excellent Customer Service**
- **What you need to do to deliver that excellent customer services**



The lady at the desk couldn't have been more helpful. She looked up all the books my mother was interested in. She got a chair for my mother while she was waiting and smiled and laughed throughout. Top marks for your caring and courteous service.

Activity 4:

What action can you, as a customer services representative, take to ensure that visitors have an excellent experience?



Customer Service Standards: Delivering Excellent Customer Service

Core experience	Standards
Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer can easily find their way around the venue • The directional information is logical and accessible • Staff are well presented and easily identifiable • Uniforms are of good quality, consistently worn across the venue and staff wear name badges
Visitor Flow Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ease of access within the venue and any likely congested areas are managed • There is space to allow customers to view areas of interest without queues building up
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The venue has arrangements in place to welcome of all visitors; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » different age groups » those who do not speak English » visitors with specific needs
Programmes Activities/Themes/ Exhibits/Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is available on a variety of programmes, activities, exhibitions and events • The information is easy to understand • There are a variety of methods used to maximise customer engagement
Staff Service & Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all times staff are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » efficient and effective in their role and they ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » pick up litter » report broken or damaged items as soon as possible » tidy and restock leaflet racks regularly » keep counter areas clear and uncluttered » make sure notices are up to date • responsive to customer needs and provide timely information • are always available to assist customers and are not using a personal mobile device while on duty • working together as an effective team and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » commit to achieving goals » communicate effectively with each other » connect with other staff and customers » co-ordinate activities and collaborate with other teams » coach new staff

“The staff’s knowledge of the park and wildlife was exceptional, but what stood out most was her ability to engage with the young people on their level. Her warm, approachable manner encouraged them to get involved and made the experience truly memorable. Thank you for taking such good care of us and our young people when we visited. We just wanted to let you know how much we appreciated our trip!”



Staff hospitality & friendliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff demonstrate hospitality and friendliness at all times by engaging in the following behaviours. They :<ul style="list-style-type: none">» are proactive and engage customers at the earliest stage of their visit rather than just react to a customer request» smile and welcome customers and offer assistance» create a warm engagement by being courteous and helpful» personalise the experience by finding out exactly what the customer needs» exceed any expectation that the customer has by paying attention to small details» listen carefully and patiently when a customer is speaking» show enthusiasm for the service offered ie, a culture, retail, catering or leisure activity» are open, positive and passionate about their role. If they don't know the answer to a question they offer to find out» make sure they do all they can to make the experience fun, exciting and engaging» think creatively to find solutions to challenges and always go the extra mile to help customers.
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Activity 5a:

Our Customer Standards outline the criteria expected from an excellent core experience for the customer, in order to 'Deliver Excellent Customer Service'. Can you include below anything that you think is missing from the criteria or anything you think should not be included?

Activity 5b:

You may not be in direct control of the criteria outlined within the standards/assessment, but thinking about your own working environment can you complete an audit and highlight anything which you consider is currently done well, or anything that you think needs to change.

Part 4 - Building Our Reputation

A good reputation is something that any organisation has to work hard to achieve. Building and maintaining a good reputation requires constant and consistent investment.

Having an awareness of the excellent standards of customer care simply isn't enough; it is absolutely essential to know how to deliver the standards in a way that will have a lasting impact on our reputation.

The key to delivering the highest standards of customer care is understanding the impact of our communication with customers and how we can use that communication to impact upon our service delivery. Good communication in all that we do enables our customers to feel valued, important and that they are taken seriously. This also allows the customer to build trust and respect with the organisation and to be able to share these positive experiences with others.

Positive, lasting impressions are at the core of a strong reputation so we must ensure that we strive, at all times, to get that right with our customers. A good reputation takes considerable time and effort to achieve but can be dashed very quickly if we fail to achieve high levels of customer care.

In Part 4 of The Customer Journey we will explore:

- **East Ayrshire Leisure Customer Standards for Building our Reputation**
- **What is good communication?**
- **How we can use communication effectively in a positive way**
- **How we can successfully communicate through difficult situations**



Activity 6a:

When I	What is the impact or impression...
Stand too close or keep my distance	
Stand with my arms folded	
Slouch in a chair or against the wall	
Wave my hands around while talking	
Touch people when talking to them	
Avoid eye contact with visitors	
Hesitate a lot and keep saying 'emm'	
Sound sarcastic, patronising or angry	
Cover my mouth when speaking	

Activity 6b:

Give examples of **positive** body language and vocal communication that can help you establish rapport with visitors....



When holding a conversation with customers do you ever;	Always	Sometimes	Never
assume that you know what someone is going to say at the start of the conversation			
find that your mind is wandering to some unrelated issue			
interrupt before the customer/colleague has finished speaking			
have to ask the customer/colleague to repeat what they have said			
find it hard to concentrate on the conversation			
try to listen to another conversation at the same time			
jump to conclusions about what the customer/colleague wants			
make it difficult for the other person to get a word in			
become bored and try to speed up the conversation			

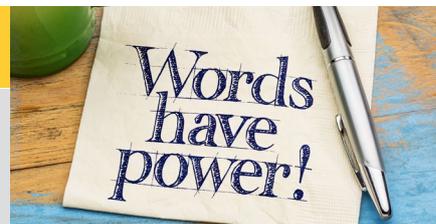
“I have to say that the staff could not be more helpful, friendly and welcoming at our weekly training sessions and go out of their way to make sure our team has an enjoyable evening.”



Customer Service Standards: Building Our Reputation

Words

- Be clear and concise in your communication
- Use plain English and speak in short sentences
- Use language that brings sentences alive for example,
“Our walking trails have fabulous scenery”
“The café sells delicious food”
“Our children’s activities are great fun”
- Show courtesy with phrases like
Please, thank you, excuse me
“Can I help you with that”, “would you mind if...” or “Can I suggest....?”
- Avoid Jargon and abbreviations such as EAL
- Use positivity, for example
“It’s been a pleasure”, “I hope that you enjoyed your visit”, “which part of your visit did you enjoy most?”
- Be professional and not over-familiar for example, do not use physical contact, or overly-familiar language such as “pal”, “mate”, “guys” or use slang terms like ‘loos’.



Tone

If visitors struggle to hear you or your tone appears hostile, that can create negativity so consider the tone of your interactions;

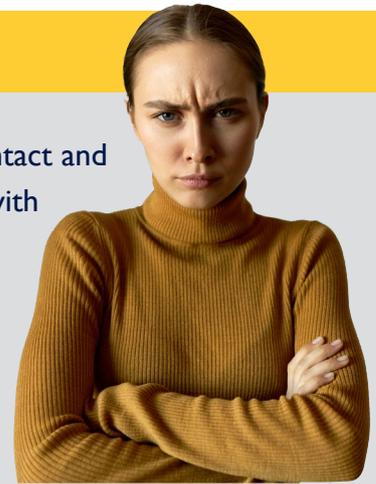
- » is your voice high pitched or a low soft even tone?
- » speak at a nice even speed, not too fast
- » smiling when you speak can alter how you sound
- » avoid emphasis on particular words in a sentence as that can convey sarcasm
e.g. how can I help you, how can I help YOU,
how can I HELP you



Body Language

Your body language includes facial expressions, gestures, eye contact and your body posture so consider the following when interacting with customers;

- » don't get too close ... or be too far away
- » keep an open posture rather than standing with your arms folded or hands on your hips
- » stand up when speaking to customers if that is possible rather than slouch in a chair or prop yourself up against the wall
- » keep your distance and don't make any physical contact with customers
- » hesitating in your communication may indicate you don't know what to say
- » make sure that you keep eye contact with the customer at all times when speaking to them
- » face the customer at all times and don't cover your mouth or turn your head away when speaking
- » include positive gestures rather than negative gestures
- » facial expressions can demonstrate tone or mood



Building A Rapport

Listening to what the customer is saying conveys a real personal interest and leaves the customer feeling important:

- It is important to give the customer your full attention rather than carrying on with another task at the same time or carrying on another conversation
- If you assume you know what the customer wants to say you may be wrong
- Don't let your mind wander to something else, stay focussed
- Interrupting before someone is finished speaking can be really annoying
- It can be embarrassing to ask someone to repeat part of their conversation and this can also convey a lack of interest
- If you really want to know what a customer wants then it is best to just listen;
- maintain eye contact and stay focused
- keep an open mind, ask questions to check your understanding

Answering customer questions is a real opportunity to demonstrate excellent customer service and your enthusiasm and knowledge of your venue and what it has to offer:

- check what visitors already know and answer questions accurately
- if you don't know the answer to a questions say so and then try to find out
- demonstrate enthusiasm as you answer the question and be positive about the venue
- don't use any specialist or technical terms unless you explain them and always give specific instructions, for example instead of saying "the cafe is close to the entrance to the park" you should say "the café is in the Visitors Centre at the bottom of the driveway."

Speaking to customers on the telephone:

- smile as you are speaking - it does have an impact on the sound!
- keep a notepad and pen at the ready and take accurate messages
- information given must be clear
- don't be distracted by other tasks, stay focused at all times
- always adopt a professional manner on the phone and demonstrate a warm and friendly approach
- remember at all times that you are an ambassador for our B.E.S.T. values and behaviours

Thanks to the crew for putting on an amazing race yet again yesterday. It was my 6th time doing RAW and it never disappoints. Such a friendly, well organised race, great marshals, amazing check points and signage is spot on. Loved the new finish too. Thanks again and see you next year.



Demonstrating a wider knowledge - customers should be made to feel comfortable in any of our venues as our staff;

- are knowledgeable and can speak about the venue and services offered
- are knowledgeable about what is being offered at other venues
- are knowledgeable about key activities which are coming up within the organisation
- invite questions from customers and tell them where they can get additional information

Being pro-active - don't wait for the customer to approach you;

- Acknowledge visitors with a smile and greeting such as "hello how are you today?", "can I help you with anything?"
- Move towards customers to engage them especially if they look lost or confused
- Look for opportunities to start a conversation, offering information or asking a question
- Stop work to engage or talk to a customer even if it is only to offer a greeting
- When addressing a group of customers remember to speak to all of the group. An effective way to do that is to make eye contact
- Be aware of what is happening around you and if you can predict that a situation may arise then intervene before that happens

Challenging Interactions

- Take responsibility for dealing with challenging situations, don't just pass to a manager or say that you will let someone know
- Make sure that you are aware of our policies on complaints, Zero Tolerance, risk assessments and Health & Safety
- Try to remain calm and professional even if the customer is behaving badly
- Be assertive with your behaviour and not aggressive or negative and avoid;
 - » blaming others e.g the organisation, colleagues or managers
 - » blaming the customer
 - » saying that it is not your fault
 - » denying the problem
 - » taking the complaint personally
 - » being defensive
 - » avoid making remarks like *"I absolutely agree, I am always saying that / we are always complaining about that"*
 - » dealing with the issue in full view of others
- Try to be proactive and if you can see a problem may arise deal with it as soon as you can to avoid matters escalating, try to turn a negative into a positive.

Activity 8a: Building our reputation

Our Customer Service Standards outline the criteria expected for “Building our Reputation”. Can you include below anything that you think that is missing from the criteria or anything you think should not be included...

Activity 8b:

You may not be in direct control of the criteria outlined within the standards/assessment, but thinking about your own working environment can you complete an audit and highlight anything which you consider is currently done well, or anything that you think needs to change.

Dealing with Violence and Aggression – Dos and Don'ts

Violence and aggression will not be tolerated within East Ayrshire Leisure Trust and every effort will be taken to minimise any risk of harm to you. To do this, we require you to follow some key guidelines which will help safeguard you while you are at work.

DO...

Prepare yourself

- Complete the following e-learning modules: Conflict Handling: On The Phone and Conflict Handling: Direct Conflict, and attend the Managing Conflict Training provided by EAC
- Familiarise yourself with the Violence & Aggression Standard and Risk Assessments
- Familiarise yourself with security systems and measures

When a situation arises

- Remain calm – this is key to de-escalating a situation
- Politely disengage from a group or individual where the situation escalates to a point that you feel that you may be at risk
- Go to a place of safety and call for assistance; this may be a work colleague or the police

Following an incident

- Report any incidents on the SHE reporting system – this allows for incidents to be monitored and identify areas where additional support is required

Keep yourself safe at all times

- Make sure you don't put yourself in harm's way to protect the property of the Trust. Your safety is important to us - equipment and property can be replaced!

DON'T...

- Challenge or threaten anyone, either verbally or physically, and be aware of your body language and tone of voice
- Say things that will escalate the aggression
- Argue with an individual
- Attempt to physically prevent an individual or group of people from accessing our services or buildings. By doing so you put yourself at risk of harm and potentially criminal conviction.
- Put yourself at risk; if you feel uncomfortable or believe that a situation may escalate, you must remove yourself and any others to an area of safety
- Enter an area of risk on your own:
 - » Where lone working you must take extra care not to put yourself in a potential area of harm. By raising issues with your line manager a decision can be made whether lone working in a location is safe or not.
 - » Areas must be well lit - if areas that you require to access do not have suitable lighting raise this with your line manager

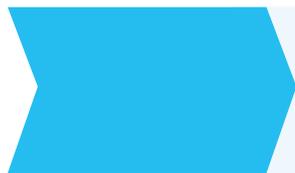
Part 5: The Gold Standard



In this part of our journey, will take time to reflect on parts one to four



Part 1 - Understanding the Customer Experience



Part 2 - Creating the Complete Experience



Part 3 - Delivering Excellent Customer Service



Part 4 - Building Our Reputation



Across our journey we have discovered why good customer service is important to our organisation, we have identified exactly what customer service means in East Ayrshire Leisure Trust and considered how we can deliver that inclusive experience.

We have been introduced to the Customer Standards which clearly lay out what the organisation expects of us when dealing with customers and visitors and also provides advice on how we can implement those standards.

In fact The Customer Journey has empowered all of us to identify how to deliver a Gold Standard Service, underpinned by our Values and Behaviours and enabling each and every employee to demonstrate that they are an Ambassador for East Ayrshire Leisure Trust.

Activity 9a:

Can you give an example of what irritates you as a customer when you are making a complaint either in person or on the phone?



“The guide, was exceptional and his enthusiasm was so infectious that he made a good trip fantastic. Every one of us thoroughly enjoyed it. Also thank you for the catering and the Question and Answer session. Everyone has been extremely helpful and we wish to thank you profusely.”



Amazing staff! Place is always 10/10. Lovely spending time here.

Activity 9b:

Working with your colleague, decide on a complaint that you wish to make and take notes on the response that you receive. How do you think that this could be improved?

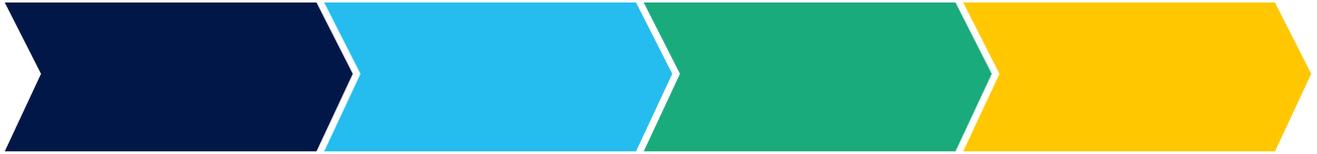


Activity 10: The Gold Standard

If you were recruiting for a member of staff who would be dealing with customers, what would you be looking for in terms of experience, knowledge and skills?

Experience

Knowledge & Skills



Thank you for completing The Customer Journey course.

To ensure we maintain a consistent standard across each of our service areas, and to continue the work carried out during the course, you are encouraged to complete the audit process outlined within this workbook annually, with submissions due in September.

Please complete Activities 3B, 5B and 8B

If this timescale does not suit, please discuss with your line manager.

Feedback / audit paperwork should be discussed with Line Managers prior to forwarding on to: marketing@eastayrshireleisure.com

Results will be collated and shared with the senior management team to acknowledge good practice and to make sure improvements can be made where necessary.



eastayrshireleisure.com