

Customer Services Information

The Contact Centre for Cambridgeshire County Council is delivered by the Customer Services department. The Contact Centre is open between the hours of 8am-6pm during the week and 9am-1pm on Saturdays. The role of the Contact Centre is to respond to and resolve customer enquiries across many council services, listed below:

- Adult social care
- Children's social care
- Libraries
- Highways
- General council enquiries
- Trading Standards
- Household waste recycling centres
- Concessionary bus passes
- Blue Badges
- School Admissions
- Education Transport
- The Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages
- Park and Ride

Contact Centre work is all about communication and talking to a diverse range of people which can be satisfying. This work offers the opportunity to join an effective team and make new friends. The nature of the work enables us to have meaningful conversations with customers every day, which can be rewarding. Not everyone can say that they have helped to improve someone's life in their working day.

The nature of the work is fast paced and subject to constant change. Our workload is subject to seasonal peaks. For example, in August and September we receive high call volumes regarding school admission applications and education transport enquiries. In January we have a peak across our social care services after the Christmas break. Our staff need to be comfortable with managing change, adaptable and able to show initiative in meeting customer needs. The work can be challenging, but varied and interesting.

Staff can showcase their skills and progress their careers. This environment enables individuals to develop their communication, problem solving and negotiation skills. Many of our staff have progressed within the Customer Services structure, whilst others have built upon the experience they have gained in this role to join other council services.

To be successful in this environment, applicants need to work hard and able to manage sometimes difficult and stressful situations. They also need to be able to show empathy and remain calm and collected in the face of challenging customer interactions. Every contact presents a different challenge. Full training and support is provided.

The Contact Centre is located at Amundsen House in St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

Customer Services is also responsible for the management of reception functions at two other council sites, in Wisbech and Alconbury Weald.

The Role of a Customer Service Advisor

This is a contact centre role. Customer Service Advisors are scheduled to work in relation to our business needs and across our opening hours. Shifts are scheduled at least two weeks in advance, considering an individual's number of working hours. It is unlikely that an Advisor will be on the same shift each day and there is an expectation that early, late and Saturday shifts are allocated fairly. Typical weekday shifts are 8-4.30pm, 8:30am-5pm, 9-5.30pm and 9.30-6pm with weekend cover scheduled approximately once every six weeks but can differ dependant on current staffing levels. Shifts can be swapped amongst team members. A Full timer will receive a fifteen-minute break in the morning and the afternoon, with an hour for lunch. Breaks for part timers are determined by the number of hours worked. An example shift pattern for a 6-week period is below.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	8am-4:30pm	9am-5:30pm	8:30am-5pm	8am-4:30pm	9:30am-6pm	
Week 2	9am-5:30pm	8am-4:30pm	9am-5:30pm	9:30am-6pm	9am-5:30pm	
Week 3	9:30am-6pm	8:30am-5pm	8am-4:30pm	9am-5:30pm	8:30am-5pm	9am-1pm
Week 4	8am-4:30pm	9am-5:30pm	9:30am-6pm	9am-5:30pm	9am-5:30pm	
Week 5	8:30am-5pm	9am-5:30pm	8am-4:30pm	9:30am-6pm	8am-4:30pm	
Week 6	9am-5:30pm	8am-4:30pm	9am-5:30pm	8am-4:30pm	9:30am-6pm	

Advisors are dedicated to the processing of customer enquiries received by phone and by e-mail. The role is desk based and involves lengthy periods at a computer workstation. Advisors need to use multiple IT systems to manage and record customer interactions. Each workstation includes a laptop linked up to an additional screen, so that Advisors can access information to resolve enquiries whilst also recording the details of the contact. Telephone Headsets are also provided. The suitability of all workstations is assessed against an individual's requirements and reasonable adjustments implemented where appropriate.

Advisors need to be proficient at typing and be comfortable with IT in general. Applicants should practice these skills before the assessment stage of the recruitment process. If you can only type with 2 fingers, then you may find this environment difficult. There are free typing skills courses online if you would like to improve your typing skills before we assess you. Advisors need to have excellent communication skills and be able to build rapport with a wide variety of people. Other essential attributes include the ability to retain knowledge, an

attention to detail and the ability to multi- task. This role requires an individual to be able to work accurately and with pace.

Each of the council services that Customer Services delivers has its own public facing telephone number. The telephony system can prioritise the calls answered first or may hold a customer in a queue until an Advisor is available. IVR or Interactive Voice Response (Press 1 for this etc.) is also used to route customers to the Advisors trained to respond.

The telephony system is also used by Advisors to record any activities that they are undertaking. This can include a specific duty such as managing e-mails or to notify others of a break. The telephone system is one of several reporting tools used in the measurement of performance within our Contact Centre. We have whole service performance targets that we are required to meet, as well as service specific and individual ones. The Advisor role is subject to elevated levels of performance monitoring.

Other technology used within the contact centre includes Q-max, which schedules the shifts and activities of all staff. This system is used to plan resources against anticipated demand, so that we can cope during peak periods. We are also using Office 365 applications including SharePoint and Teams to communicate across the department and council.

Call recording is in place to develop the skills of call handlers and to ensure that responses to customers are appropriate and accurately recorded.

There are lots of IT systems and service knowledge to get to grips within this role. It is common for inexperienced staff to take some weeks to feel settled in the role and become more confident and competent in their own performance. Team Managers are available to ensure that new starters succeed in meeting their goals. We are a high performing service and proud of the fact that we are in our 4th consecutive year of exceeding our service targets.

Terms and Conditions

The full-time starting salary is £25,979 per year for advisors with the possibility to progress to £31,364 per year (dependent on performance and annual rating). The role is included within a Customer Services Job Family, which contains four levels of role progression within it. Each level contains some operational, behavioural, and academic requirements that need to be met. Pay awards are linked to the annual performance rating process, and reliant upon an individual exceeding their performance objectives.

The role comes with 25 day's annual leave as standard. The Council also offers an option to purchase up to a further 4 weeks leave per year following completion of a successful probation period.

We offer a generous reward and benefits package:

- Salary increases are performance based. We look for people excelling in their role
- Excellent index-linked, defined benefit pension scheme including life assurance benefits

- Occupational maternity/paternity and shared parental leave – well above the statutory minimum
- Occupational sick pay with access to occupational health and a free employee support and counselling service
- Extensive training and personal development opportunities including apprenticeships currently up to degree level
- Great range of retail benefits

Occasional travel is required outside of work time to attend training or to provide reception cover. Staff using their own vehicles for travel will need to have business insurance. Mileage and public transport fares will be reimbursed.

The Induction Programme

The Council's probation period is 24 weeks long. During this time, individuals will join a training team and receive training to introduce them to the organisation and the job that they will be doing. Representatives from other council services will deliver sessions to impart service knowledge, alongside IT and procedural training. The induction also includes the chance to listen to calls and to work alongside experienced members of staff. We may also organise visits to other service areas to increase knowledge and understanding of how a department works. We recruit staff in groups and there will be others going through the same experience as yourselves.

In relation to the support available to new starters, weekly contact is scheduled with a manager to discuss progress and other team members will be there to support you. We understand and anticipate that new team members will make mistakes, and we are here to help you. During induction, you will be given access to materials which you can reference once you are live for calls and a Duty Manager is available throughout each shift for help.

After the successful completion of induction, individuals are moved into one of our permanent teams.

Working locations

Our service will operate as a hybrid model offering both office and home-based working for a proportion of the working week. Employment contracts will specify Amundsen House in St Ives as the primary base for this role. Hybrid workers will regularly work across locations and decisions on where to work will be made based on the outcomes that need to be delivered and tasks assigned during that given day.

Hybrid workers will largely be able to determine for themselves as to when they want to work from an office base although a minimum number of days will be required to ensure everyone receives appropriate levels of support, and to ensure that the collective requirements of our service can be met. Where possible, we intend to provide 2 weeks' notice of the requirement to be onsite and 1 weeks' notice (as is currently the case) for business needs.

We have put together a list outlining the periods or situations where employees are required to come into the work base, in addition to the times an individual chooses to be on site:

- Induction
- Training (receiving and delivering)
- Support (receiving and delivering) following training until such time as competency can be demonstrated
- Performance issues
- Whole team meetings
- Other meetings as requested (e.g. project meetings, HR meetings)
- Individual health and wellbeing reasons
- IT issues e.g. Laptop not working
- An individual's home working location not being suitable

What this means for new starters is that your induction plan will be a blend of on site and remote training. Support post training is on site until such time as you feel comfortable to work from home and we have been able to sign off your competence and confidence to deliver a new skill/ service.

All IT and special equipment required for the role will be provided to enable a home set up and a Display Screen Equipment Assessment will be required to ascertain needs. Support will be available to successful candidates to identify an appropriate place to operate within their home which meets health and safety and privacy requirements. A stable broadband service is essential.

We are looking to build a workforce of mature individuals who can work alone, deliver excellent levels of customer service and who can make effective decisions. IT skills are paramount, and it is vital that new starters are mature and organised, able to take a conscientious and responsible approach to their work.

For more information on any aspect of this role, please use the contact details provided within the main advert. Thank you.