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# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM REGULATORY TEAMS AT THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT



Brent



## **What you can expect from Regulatory Teams at the London Borough of Brent**

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This document explains what service you can expect from a regulatory team at the London Borough of Brent. Whether you run your own business, are an employee of a business or a member of the public, wherever possible, we are committed to providing you with an efficient, courteous and helpful service. This document sets out how we aim to do that and what standards we will meet.

### **Areas we regulate**

We deliver services in a number of areas:

<b>Environmental Improvement</b>	<b>Environmental Enforcement</b>	<b>Food Safety</b>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>Licensing</b>	<b>Noise and Nuisance Control</b>
<b>Planning Enforcement</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>Trading Standards</b>

### **How we deliver our services**

The Council's regulatory functions which include the teams listed above, work hard to support local residents and businesses by explaining complex legislation, helping traders implement procedures and controls to achieve compliance, providing advice and guidance, encouraging best practice and where necessary, taking enforcement action to ensure laws are being complied with.

This work plays a fundamental role in creating a level playing field for business to trade so responsible businesses grow and do well and our local community and environment, are protected from the harms caused by those who try to flout the law.

The regulatory teams take a risk-based approach to prioritising their work so the focus is on areas where they expect the greatest non-compliance or where risks pose significant harms.

The regulatory teams seek to:

- Supporting local business prosper and trade confidently, generating a consumer friendly marketplace, protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of local people through high levels of legal compliance and best practice.
- Protecting our environment and neighbourhoods from harm that undermines the quality of life, public health and our environment.

We determine our activities by providing statutory services, assessing the needs of local people and our business community and considering the risks that require addressing. In addition, we have regard to priorities sent in the Council's Borough Plan or equivalent and seek to deliver outcomes that will feed into these objectives and any given priorities.

Whenever possible, we use local, regional or national intelligence to determine current or emerging threats and we share information with other regulators to support this process. Local hotspots and common areas of concern, are identified to the Enforcement Practitioners Group who task actions and coordinate a response to problem areas. These methods of working, ensure our resources are targeted appropriately, in the light of these local needs and of national priorities.

Council departments prepare annual Service Plans which set out a number of key performance areas and objectives. A copy these plans can be made available upon request. Performance against key areas is monitored by the Council's Performance and Improvement Team.

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 (see [Helping you to get it right](#)).
- 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 (see [Inspections and other compliance visits](#)).
- We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our Enforcement Policy, including taking firm enforcement action when necessary (see [Responding to non-compliance](#)).
- We provide a range of services to businesses, including assured Primary Authority advice, weights and measures testing, energy performance assessments, staff training, pest control, licences, registrations and issue statutory certificates (see [Requests for our service](#)).

Our services will be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the [Regulators' Code](#).

## **Working with you**

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

- Answer all telephone calls and/or respond to voicemails and messages within 1 working day

- Acknowledge written enquires within five working days and respond to them within 10 working days or any other agreed or statutory timescale
- Acknowledge emails within 2 working days and respond to them within 10 working days or any other agreed or statutory timescale
- Respond to all stage 1 complaints within 20 working day and stage 2 complaints within 30 working days
- Ensure you do not have to wait for more than 30 minutes to be seen by an officer when visiting the Civic Centre during working hours before your enquiry can be handled
- Be appropriately trained, courteous and polite
- Always identify themselves by name in dealings with you and provide you with their contact details
- Within their area of regulation, seek to gain an understanding of how your business operates and help with your enquiry, complaint or suggestion and keep you informed of progress on any outstanding issues whenever you ask us.

We acknowledge that you may also receive advice and inspections from other organisations or regulators. Where possible, 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 achieve compliance, growth and be successful. It is important that you feel able to come to us for help and advice when you need it before problems might escalate. Where we believe you have genuinely made a mistake and seek our advice and act promptly on that advice, we will not take enforcement action unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We make information and guidance on meeting legal requirements available from various sources including leaflets, via subscription to Brent Business Newsletter, on our website under the 'My Business' tab, on the Brent for Business website or via links to other external websites and of course, you can always speak to our officers.

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
- Give 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 when requested

- Acknowledge good practice and compliance.

Primary Authority enables businesses to form a legal partnership with one local authority, which then provides assured and tailored advice on complying with the law that other local regulators must respect. We are able to offer assured advice under the Primary Authority Scheme spanning the disciplines of Trading Standards, Food Safety, Health & Safety and Licensing (not including alcohol or gambling).

The Primary Authority Scheme is made under the [Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008](#) supporting the Government's drive to reduce burdens on business. There is a fee to pay for this advice, charged as per the Council's annual fees and charges policy. We will always advise you of the fee for a Primary Authority partnership before entering any contract with you.

### **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.

We will give you prior notice that we intend to visit unless we have specific reason to believe that an unannounced visit is more appropriate.

When we visit you our officers will:

- Explain the reason and purpose of the visit
- Carry their identification at all times and present it on request
- Exercise discretion in front of any member of the public, 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 upon request

In some circumstances, a fee may be payable for a visit. We will always advise you when any charges are to be made in relation to visits and if required, provide an explanation of these fees.

### **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, a copy of which can be found on the Council's website or upon request.

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 when possible, that are acceptable to both you and us, in relation to any actions required
- When requested, advise you of how to appeal against any advice provided, actions required or decisions taken. Any statutory rights to appeal will be given in writing
- Explain what will happen next
- Keep in touch with you if applicable, until the matter is resolved
- Follow any statutory guidance or procedures.

### **Requests for our services**

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

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

- Acknowledge your request within the timescale set out in the 'working with you' section above (although subject to the type of request you have made and its complexity, we may have to exercise our judgment based on any risk posed, to determine the most appropriate response time).
- 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 at appropriate stages during our involvement
- Inform you of the outcome as appropriate
- If applicable, direct you to other organisations or sources of information who may be able to assist.

## How to contact us

You can contact us by:

Telephone: 020 8937 1234  
Email: trading.standards@brent.gov.uk  
Ens.foodsafety@brent.gov.uk  
business.licence@brent.gov.uk  
waste.enforcement@brent.gov.uk  
planningenforcement@brent.gov.uk  
Web: www.brent.gov.uk  
Post: Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ  
In person: At the above address Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (Excluding public holidays). Meetings outside of these hours are often available upon request or in appropriate circumstances, we are happy to come to you.

We will seek to work with you in the most appropriate way to meet your individual needs. Translation and/or interpretation services can be made available in appropriate circumstances.

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. You may contact the relevant team or case officer for an update on the progress of your enquiry. 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 not usually respond to anonymous complaints unless we judge it appropriate to do so.

It is not possible for the Council to respond or investigate every request that it receives. Individual teams will manage their resources to ensure the highest priority issues will be addressed which may mean that lower priority matters do not receive the same level of response.

Personal data will be managed in accordance with the London Borough of Brent's Data Protection Policy. For more information or to obtain copy of the policy, please contact the Council's Data Protection Officer at dpo@brent.gov.uk

## Our Team

We have dedicated teams of officers lead by a Service Manager and/or Team Leader, with the skills and experience to deliver our services. Where necessary, officers hold appropriate professional qualifications and we have arrangements in place to ensure the ongoing professional competency of our staff.

We hold membership and/or attend regional coordinating group meetings such as those hosted by Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM), Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO), Local Authority Noise Action Forum, London Food Group, London Trading Standards (LTS) and the West London Air Quality Cluster Group where we can access specialist knowledge, share best practice and benchmark with other neighbouring authorities.

## **Working with others**

The Council's regulatory teams are linked closely to an area based working model to improve the services we provide to local businesses and residents. Regulatory teams are empowered to work together, sharing best practice, aligning work programmes and operate to achieve better compliance across a range of statutory areas.

Intelligence on particular problems and/or hot-spots is gathered and shared with our Enforcement Practitioners Group who are responsible for coordinating action and solving a range of issues.

We have good working relationships with other regulators such as the Police, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Food Standards Agency, the Regional and National Trading Standards and the Office of Product and Safety Standards enabling 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 help target regulatory resources.

## **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 can contact either the officer who dealt with the matter or their line manager if you prefer, using the addresses provided in the 'How to contact us' section above.

We manage complaints about our service, or about the conduct of our officers, through The London Borough of Brent's Corporate Complaints Policy. Details can be found at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/complaints/making-a-general-complaint/>

Alternatively, you can email the Complaints Service Team at [complaints.service@brent.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.service@brent.gov.uk)

### **Feedback**

We value input from you to help us ensure our service is meeting your needs as best as it can. 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. You can provide feedback using any of the addresses in the 'How to contact us' section above.

### **Developing our services with you**

We communicate with the public in a number of different formats which includes via our website, using social media, our written magazine or via electronic business newsletters. We will seek to gather feedback with the local public and/or business communities to ensure that we are delivering our services to meet your needs.

If you have a specific idea you wish to discuss with us to improve our services or if you are interested in finding out more about our work, you are welcome to contact us at any of the addresses in the 'How to contact us' section above.



**Dated:** November 2018