



Serving Aucklanders - what you need to know

Principles that guide us

- We understand Aucklanders, their diverse needs and the services we provide to them.
- We own our customers' experiences, and take responsibility for making sure issues are resolved.
- We deliver outstanding service.
- We include Aucklanders in our decision-making.
- We look for better ways to give Aucklanders the service they want.
- We speak up about our customers' experiences.

Critical information about serving Aucklanders

How do I understand Aucklanders and their needs?

Aucklanders - our customers - are diverse in:

- ethnicity
- ability
- cultures
- age
- gender
- language
- values
- experiences
- needs.

Our customers may be external or internal - colleagues and elected members, citizens, communities. They are also our families, friends, and neighbours.



To serve Aucklanders best, put them at the heart of your thinking and decision-making.

To understand Aucklanders and their needs, first ask yourself:

- 'What do we already know in our team about what customers need?'
- 'How can we better inform ourselves about what our customers want?'
- 'How can we share this information, and use it to better serve our customers?'

Then ask individual customers about their needs and goals as they use your service, to understand them better.

How do I understand the services we provide to our customers?

You can look at the progress snapshot on the Auckland Council website for a view of the services we supply, from rubbish and recycling to culture, heritage and environment - it also shows how we are performing against a set of key metrics.

If you want to know more about a service we supply, contact the service owner directly.

How do I own the customer experience and take responsibility for making sure issues are resolved?

Make sure you understand your customer's whole journey with us – from start to finish – including all the teams or departments they deal with.

One good way to do this is to draw a diagram showing the service steps a customer goes through and the different teams, units or departments that support each step. This is called a 'service pathway' diagram. Our Service Design specialists can help you create one.

Collaborate with all the teams or departments in your customer's journey to create:

- the most efficient internal process
- the best possible customer experience
- the best possible outcome.

Be clear about what each person is going to do, and when they are going to do it.

Anticipate and remove any difficulties a customer might have in their journey, whether they are with your team or other teams.

If you need help, talk to your people leader or seek out other teams within the council who are tackling similar problems.



How do we define outstanding service?

Outstanding service meets the diverse needs of Aucklanders.

Outstanding service is when our customers:

- meet their goals
- find it easy to locate and use our services
- find our services simple to understand and use
- get what they need, fast
- are clear about our service standard (what to expect from us), and see that we deliver to this, or above it.

To deliver outstanding service, continually look for ways to improve the service you provide to each customer, and share this in your team plans and team meetings.

Check customer feedback for stories of outstanding service, and share them with your team.

How do I include customers and communities in decision-making?

At Auckland Council we often use the term ‘engagement’ to describe including Aucklanders in decision-making.

Follow the steps below to make sure we always do the basic things we have to do whenever engage, and do them well. Keep in mind that good engagement differs each time it occurs.

1. Plan

To plan for engagement we need to find out what Aucklanders have already told us, and what other engagement might also be happening:

- Use the Engagement Calendar to find out about other engagement.
- Identify your target communities, and check the Insights Library and Māori Knowledge Portal to understand what they have said before.

2. Prepare

When preparing for engagement we need to make it visible to the community. This can be done by posting it on one of our Have Your Say pages, providing translations where appropriate and partnering with relevant organisation to raise awareness.



3. Engage

Make it easy for customers and communities to engage with us. Enable them to contribute in ways that work for them – online, in person, or through organisations they trust.

Email the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit about community groups and organisations that can support engagement with our diverse communities.

4. Report

Make engagement transparent by outlining the results in advice to decision-makers (see the Quality Advice guidelines) and recording the reasons for decisions to publicise when ‘closing the loop’.

5. Close the loop

Tell people the results of their feedback and how it has contributed to decision-making. Always make the information available on our Have Your Say page by contacting the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit. This helps Aucklanders understand and trust our decision-making process.

6. Evaluate

At the council we should always strive to make engagement better. Remember to evaluate your engagement so you and others can learn and improve from your experience.

Legislative rules

There are legislative rules about engaging with communities in some processes and decisions made by the council – refer to our Significance and Engagement Policy for more information.

Engagement Hub

You can use the supporting resources on the Engagement Hub on Kotahi to guide you on each of the steps above.

For advice on your project contact the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit



Engaging with mana whenua and Māori communities

The engagement steps and tools outlined above apply to Māori engagement.

In addition, specific guidance is available to support us in meeting our te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi based commitments to engagement with Māori.

- Our meaningful engagement with mana whenua and mataawaka guide defines both groups and gives guidance on how to engage with them.
- You can talk to Māori specialist staff in your area to assess the significance of your kauapapa (project) to Māori and whether engagement with mana whenua is appropriate.
- Te Waka Anga Mua ki Uta can supply mana whenua contact details at the appropriate level for your project.
- Use the Maramataka for scheduling hui with mana whenua.
- The Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit can tell you about Māori communities groups and organisations that can support engagement with Māori communities.

Mana whenua, mataawaka and other community organisations have their own priorities and work to do. Plan well in advance, be patient and take their availability into account when scheduling engagements.

Engaging with internal customers

If you need to engage with people we serve within our organisation, the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit can help you.

Supporting elected members

Elected members are the elected representatives of Aucklanders and local communities.

When supporting elected members, understanding our governance structure - our Governing Body, committees and 21 local boards - and the needs of our 170 elected members is essential. We need to make sure they are presented with the best advice, at the right time - early and often - and in the right way, to help them fulfill their decision-making responsibilities. For help with this visit the Quality Advice Hub, or go to local board relationship managers or Democracy Services.

Our governance manual has specialist information related to supporting elected members.



How do I look for better ways to give Aucklanders the service and services they want?

Do this every time you do customer research, get customer feedback, or look for more efficient ways of doing things. Also look at better ways to collaborate with other services within the council.

Council processes and systems can sometimes be complicated and slow. We all need to be continuously looking for simpler, easier, faster, more efficient, more cost-effective ways to serve Aucklanders.

Anything we do to change our services needs to be done for and with our customers.

Digital and self-service solutions

We know that many of our customers prefer to use digital and self-service solutions so they can pursue their goals at a time that suits them, 24/7. Make sure you make customers aware that digital and self-service solutions are available to them. Always look at how you can improve that online experience for people.

How do I speak up about Aucklanders' experiences of us?

Your responsibility – and your right – is to speak up on behalf of your own customers or the customers that go through your service.

Speak up about anything you have learned from customers, whether through serving them, through research, or through other sources such as articles and books.

If you see something happening that is not right for customers, speak up:

- in team meetings
- in continuous improvement sessions
- in leadership meetings
- in meetings and collaborations with other services
- using our Speak up channels
- anywhere you can about improving our performance for customers and/ or their experience of us.

Log your ideas with The Big Brainstorm, where they can get council-wide support for implementation.



Our bottom lines

- We are professional and respectful and are never abusive towards the people we serve.
- We only tolerate services that serve Aucklanders efficiently and effectively.

Breaching our bottom line expectations would be considered and treated as misconduct.

Processes

- Managing customer interactions

For people leaders

You are responsible for your service and customer experience:

- The efficiency of your service.
- Its performance on behalf of the council and the council's goals.
- The quality of your customers' experiences, including their journeys through your own and other services.

Leading your team

Provide adequate support, supervision, training and guidance for your team members:

- regularly share good stories in your team
- workshop negative feedback - be open to learning from this
- make sure your team is collaborating with others
- have regular team discussions on performance results
- workshop how to improve or balance workloads to improve performance
- debrief with your team members to help manage stress, day to day
- coach team members on how to handle tricky customer situations
- support your team to act with honesty and courage (i.e. doing what they say they will do and accepting fault where appropriate).

Monitor your customer's experience

Put measures in place to monitor your customer's experience and allow for regular customer feedback to reach your team. Remind your team to keep complete records.



Research and assess your team's performance

Carry out research to assess your performance on a regular basis, with:

- potential customers
- new customers
- people who use your services the most.

Ask, "How often and how well we are meeting our customers' needs? Are there opportunities to improve our services to meet needs better?"

Email the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit who can help you do this.

Continuous improvement programme

Make sure you have a continuous improvement programme. Make sure this programme results in consistent, customer-focused improvements to the ways your service works and the results for customers.

Prompt resolution

Take responsibility to promptly resolve any individual errors or problems with your service. This could be the way the service is organised, the internal process, or problems with support tools.

Customer-centric service design

Remember that anything we introduce in the customer service realm must be designed around the customer. You can contact your department's business improvement team or the Business Improvement Team in the Digital and Transformation department for advice and help.



If you need help or more information

- Email the Customer Services Team
- Contact the Customer Friendly Services pillar c/- the Digital and Transformation Team
- Contact a local board relationship manager
- Contact a Councillor Support Advisor (see link to PDF at bottom right of the Democracy Services page)
- Contact a Service Design specialist (email addresses at the bottom of the page)
- Contact the Citizen Engagement and Insights Unit (email addresses at the bottom of the page)
- Email Te Waka Anga Mua ki Uta

You may also be interested in

- Engagement Network
- Governance manual
- Meaningful engagement with mana whenua and mataawaka guide
- Service culture: who do we serve?
- Speak up

Our Charter feedback