



West Lothian Council  
Education Services  
Community Facility Service

## GOOD PRACTICE MANUAL

The concept of having a positive working environment will act as a guide to enhance our service. Our service is changing therefore it is important that you help to contribute to the overall development. To this end we provide you with the opportunity to ask you of your views and opinions on how office procedures within our new Service can be standardised.

We supply a draft *Good Practice Manual* for your attention. We would be grateful if you could add your own opinions and views on the topics highlighted below (boxes provided). We would welcome any examples of good practice that you think could be added to this pack. Please read through this document and forward any comments/suggestions using page 13

*Please Submit by:*  
31 March 2010

By Post - Jane Carr-Pollock

If you are returning this by email send to;  
[dennis.cairney@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:dennis.cairney@westlothian.gov.uk)  
[jane.carrpollock@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:jane.carrpollock@westlothian.gov.uk)  
[june.close@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:june.close@westlothian.gov.uk)



### **1. Fresh Outlook:**

- First impressions are lasting ones therefore it is important to set the scene. The following should be considered in terms of the outside and the inside.
- Clean/free of litter entrance
- The reception area should be bright
- Welcome sign
- Chairs, small table
- Someone to greet you where possible
- What's on board

### **2. Welcome board:**

- Logo's of West Lothian Council/Community Facility Service (incorporating titles of staff)
- Management committee members (titles)
- "Feel good factor" (This could be a title of a board kept updated by Coordinator depicting positive comments about our service).
- Ensure all posters on notice boards are pinned down on all corners and are not out of date

### **3. Reception:**

- Small sign depicting 'reception'
- Opening times displayed
- Neat and tidy all times.
- No obstructions
- Sign in book where appropriate
- Install an induction loop where appropriate
- Multi linguistic translations(information in other languages available)

#### **4. Staff in uniform:**

It is important to portray a professional image where possible, as this is reflective on the organisation.

- All Coordinating/Caretaking staff to wear uniform
- All employees must wear identification badges at all times on duty.

#### **5. Signage depicting areas:**

- Toilets clearly signposted
- Disabled toilet is signposted
- All rooms within buildings identified
- All emergency exits sign posted
- Fire action instructions are up to date.
- All assembly points are clearly identified.
- All signs are laminated and coloured (branded identity)

#### **6. Waiting Area where available:**

- Comfortable seating
- Table to suit seating
- This area needs to be of reasonable size
- Literature for browsing
- Bright and inspiring surroundings

#### **7. Décor:**

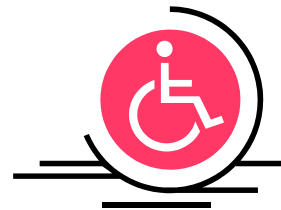
- Bright and tasteful
- Maintenance not to be ignored
- Lighting to enhance

## **8. Notice boards:**

- Print size 14 and in cosmic sans type face
- Branded ( must have council logo)
- Not cluttered, not obstructed
- Clear and precise
- Split into sections (to encourage community involvement)
- Designed for maximum impact
- Designed and displayed with disabled customers in mind
- Multi linguistic translations or at least where to access a copy.
- Advertising
- Ensure all posters on notice board are pinned down on all corners
- Ensure out of date posters are removed on a regular basis

## **9. Access for disabled customers**

- Door entry system where appropriate
- Information and leaflets at an accessible height



## **10. Equal Opportunities**

- Leaflets and posters (adapted to give more information for users)
- Recording procedure for reporting any acts of discrimination.
- Staff undertake a training course in equal opportunities awareness raising

## **11. Who's who?**

- Service managers (names and contact details)
- In-service Community Facilities Management staffing
- Local councillors
- Local committees
- Get to know the groups and who heads them up and leads them; this is good practice and essential for communicating information to the right person.
- Contact points and details readily available for customers
- Bearing in mind to comply with data protection

## 12. Health and Safety

- Proximity door entry system(recommendation)
- Alarm system
- Be neat and tidy
- Domestic arrangements standardised guidelines produced for each establishment. (This will include a plan including emergency exit, toilets, fire drill procedures and fire evacuation procedures).
- The above has to be given to user groups or people who are making bookings.

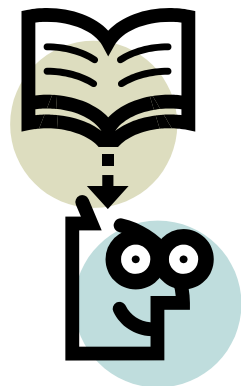
## 13. Programme

- Daily timetable of events on in the Centre (on an NOBO board or similar).
- Information available to all (Facility programme leaflet to take away).

## 14. Customer Care

*What do customers want?*

- To be responded to quickly and efficiently.
- To be dealt with by someone who is friendly and willing to help.
- To be given clear and accurate information.
- Want to be listened to and their comments taken on board.
- If enquiry is not answered clear direction to obtain the information required.
- To be treated fairly
- To be kept informed of action taken and progress of enquiry.



*What does our service need to do to addresses the above?*

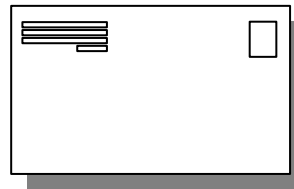
- Be polite and friendly
- Be constructive
- Check you understand what the customers needs are (i.e. Para phrase).
- Use open questions.
- Feedback to customer if necessary.

- If customer is not satisfied with the answer to the request, put them in touch with someone who has more information.
- Always give your name.
- Wear an id badge.
- Listen and take notes.
- Use positive body language.
- Staff to undertake customer care training.

## **15. Messages**

- Verbal messages must be recorded with the following detail on it (Name, address, telephone, organisation, date, time, heading, the message).
- Internal messages must always be written.

## **16. Incoming and Outgoing Mail**



- All mail must be date stamped.
- Delivered to the addressee.
- Outgoing mail should be answered in a standard format (i.e. with West Lothian Council logo).
- Convey message clearly and precisely to the customer.
- In replying to a letter there is a 5 point rule - To cover this ask yourself the following:
  1. Is the letter properly addressed?
  2. Does it set out the subject matter clearly?
  3. Is it written in plain English?
  4. Does it answer the customers enquiry?
  5. Is it clear who the customer should contact for further information?
- Letters received from the public should be responded to within two working days. If you are unable to put together a reply within this timescale a holding letter should be sent saying when the response will be posted.
- Re directing mail - this should be carried out on the same day.

## **17. Email**

- Avoid using jargon or abbreviations, if this can't be practiced explain what it stands for. Make information clear and simple to understand.
- Anticipate the customers needs
- Emails should be clear and precise.
- Harassing or unpleasant emails go to line manager for action.
- Don't use email when face to face is more appropriate.
- Adhere to West Lothian Councils policy and procedures on usage of the email system.
- At the foot of your email display the following;
  1. Name
  2. Title
  3. Department
  4. Address
  5. Tel
  6. Fax



## **18. Telephone**

- Answer the phone within 3 rings or answer phone message
- Answer using the following; Good morning/ afternoon /evening .....community centre ..... speaking. How can I help you?
- Responsibility for call.
- Be polite and use a pleasant and helpful tone.
- Use callers name please
- Be courteous say please and thank you.
- Give the customer alternative sources of help if appropriate.
- Always let the customer finish the call.
- When transferring calls keep the customer informed.
- Make sure you have the right service area that you are transferring the call to.
- Brief the person you are transferring the call to.
- Never transfer a call by saying this is for you.
- When we are making calls we have to gather information before we dial and be clear about what we want to achieve
- Make a list of questions you wish to ask.

- Introduce yourself fully giving name and position and state reason for your call at the beginning.
- Recap on what has been decided before you hang up.
- Dealing with a misdirected call is your responsibility. What you should do? Log the callers contact details.
- Dealing with difficult customers; threatening abusive behaviour is not acceptable and every situation is different. How to cope with the bad language is to try and ignore it however you can say things like "I am trying to sort thing out Mr ..... Shouting at me isn't going to help. I'd like to help you Mr .....but you have to tone it down. I am sorry Mr ..... I am not prepared to be spoken to like that if it continues I must terminate this call. If I terminate the call you may put your points in written format". Make them aware they have to put things in writing.
- Advise and give customers free phone numbers to access some services (i.e. local and national calls)
- Use the A - Z of council services/ council phone book.

### **19. Key contacts (kept in a folder can be accessed by public on request)**

- Standardised book of all council telephone and contact personnel.
- Local contacts relating to your area i.e. (local groups/ organisations and councillor, local businesses etc).
- The above lists need to be readily accessible.

### **20. Information**

- Information at front desk on all groups using and providing a service in the centre (e.g. local karate group starts and finishes, costs and forms to fill in).
- Regarding usage of adult learning bases there are codes for computers and staff hold these.
- Information about machinery in the office (i.e. how to use the photocopier). If the photocopier breaks or any other office machinery this then has to be reported to the centre coordinator or caretaking staff.

## **21. Booking Procedure**

- Booking enquiries can be made by telephone, letter or in person as to the availability of the accommodation.
- A standard form should be completed to activate booking with a deposit being taken.
- If the booking is for 6 months or a year or a long period of time then the local management committee would decide upon the request.
- Items to book must have a book to record the hire in. (i.e. Mini bus/ equipment/ rooms etc).
- Domestic arrangements standardised guidelines produced for each establishment. (This will include a plan including emergency exit, toilets and fire drill procedures).

## **22. Complaints and Suggestions**

- Customer expects a service of a standard and quality therefore it is important to recognise complaints as constructive criticism.
- Employees to regard complaints or suggestions as information to better the service (treat information as feedback). However if it is a personal attack you then take this further to your line manager.

## **23. Dealing with difficult customers -**

- Try to maintain an air of calmness even if you feel flustered or frustrated with the situation.
- Present good body language.
- Listen patiently - allowing people to let off steam often goes a long way to resolving the complaint.
- Try to see the problem from the customer's point of view.
- Try not to become defensive

- Para phrase to the customer what he wants rather than the customer repeating the complaint over and over again. Try to enable the customer to focus and make the point and the conversation moves on.
- Ensure you explain what steps will be taken next.
- Don't promise anything you can't deliver.
- Apologise to the customer if something has gone wrong but never grovel.
- Don't take the complaint personally
- Don't join in the customer complaining and add your own list of complaints - not good practice.
- Do not blame colleagues or the system - this is not professional. Try to use "The rules are there to make it fair to everyone" or "I am sorry but I have to go through this process to get the information you require please bear with me".

#### **24. Fire drill procedures**

- Fire drills must be carried out a minimum of twice annually at different times and days.
- All drills must be logged by Coordinators or caretaking staff.
- Sign in register must be taken out of building during each fire drill for head count purposes.
- Coordinator or Caretaker to give 'all clear' if it is safe to return into the building.

#### **Fire Evacuation Procedure**

- A fire evacuation procedure should be issued to all club/group leaders on confirmation of their let and on an annual basis thereafter.

The procedure should

- Explain what to do in the event of anyone discovering a fire
- Describe the sound of the alarm in order that users will recognise it
- Advise people on how to leave the building and where they should report to ie assembly point
- Outline group/club leaders responsibilities

## **25. Evaluation of usage of centre**

- Sign in book will be carried out on a daily basis.
- These records should be kept for a period of 2 years. Please archive safely.
- In the event of a fire/ fire drill the sign in book needs to be taken out of building.
- This system will also indicate numbers using building.

## **26. Evaluation of let**

- A standardised evaluation form for one off letting groups to ask the customer their views.
- For core user groups the standard evaluation form to be completed every 6 months.
- Establishments keep this form for a period of 2 years recording system.
- Any suggestions through this evaluation process will be acted upon depending on budget, staffing etc.
- Mini bus - any establishment that manages mini bus bookings separate evaluation forms to be filled in and logged re above.

## **27. Equal opportunities**

- treat all customers as individual
- Learn about the needs some customers have which may affect their access to your services i.e. wheelchair bound.
- Go on a Council training course in equal ops awareness
- Make your manager aware of any suspected acts of discrimination so that he/she can take action.
- Cooperate with any measures introduced by West Lothian Council to make sure there is equality of opportunity and no discrimination.

## **28. Staffing (training)**

- Front line staff are given the opportunity to undertake training relating to their job of work.



### **29. Environmental issues/ Recycling**

- West Lothian Council has a policy of office waste management this will be circulated to all core staff in Community Facilities.
- Awareness raising to all Coordinators and caretakers
- Waste paper bins once a week paper/ plastics uplifted?
- Recommendation collection of paper/ plastic cups once per week.
- The person collecting the recycled waste will dispose of it at the local community recycling plants (employment opportunity).
- All Community Facilities to have blue bins in but also a blue recycling smaller office based carrier bag.
- Aluminium cans recycling bin needs to be provided in all Community Facilities

### **30. Vending machines/ Pool tables**

- Good practice - receipts to be given at every cash or cheque transaction made.
- Where possible 2 people should be present when emptying vending machines and pool tables
- Cheque procedures - two signatures are required to process a cheque (e.g. as per community centres constitution)
- Avoid counting cash in an open (non secure) environment

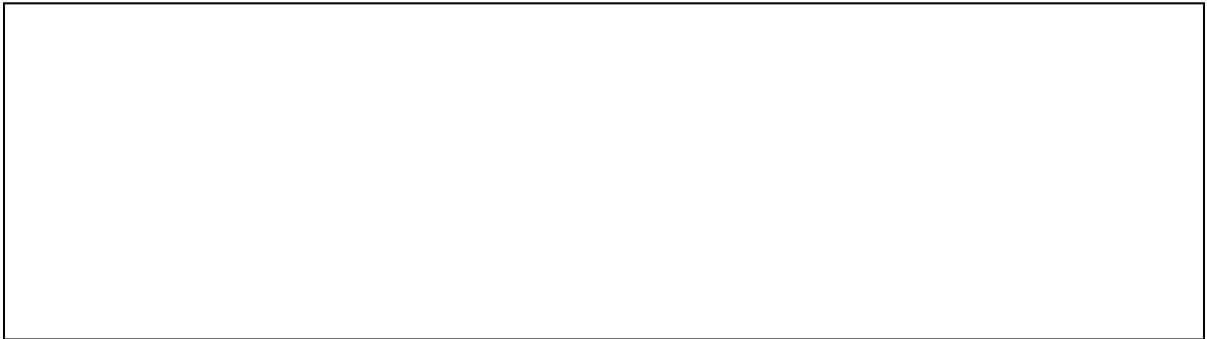
#### **Customer care:**

**To ensure all customers are given a friendly, professional service, a warm welcome and their questions/queries are answered.**

**Work place:**

Having made your positive or negative (✓ and ✗) points on the text above here is your opportunity to add your own views or ideas on the headings below.

1. Fresh outlook - Presentation of buildings



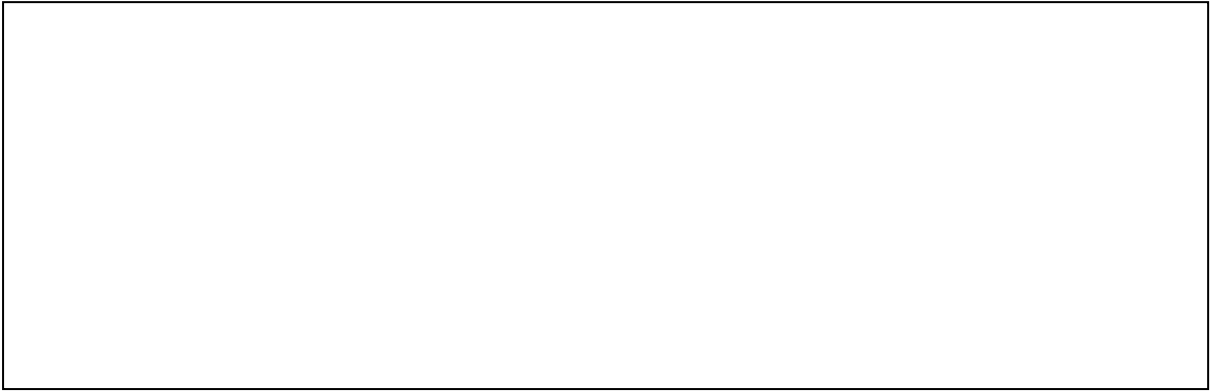
2. Welcome board



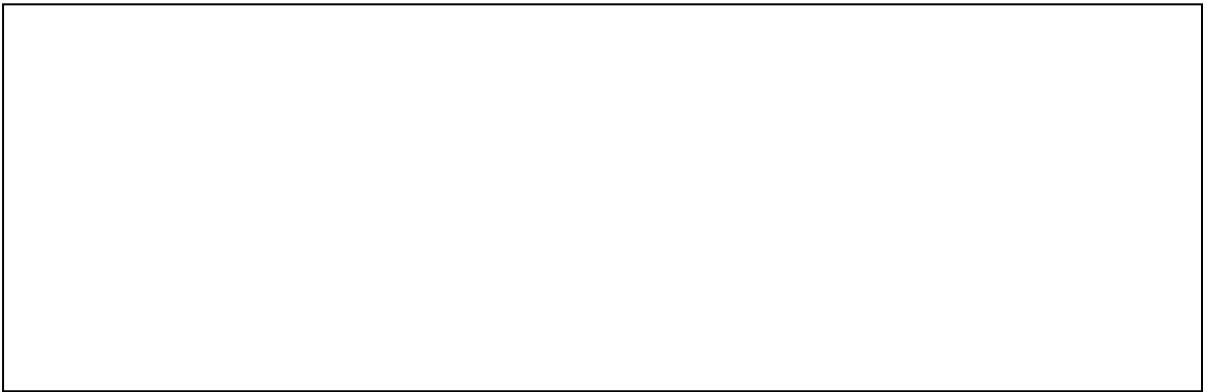
3. Signage for reception



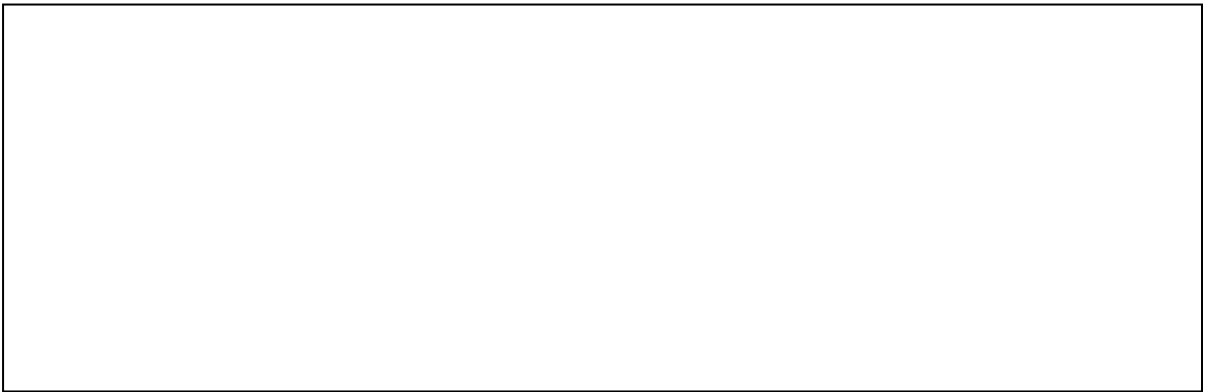
4. Neat tidy reception



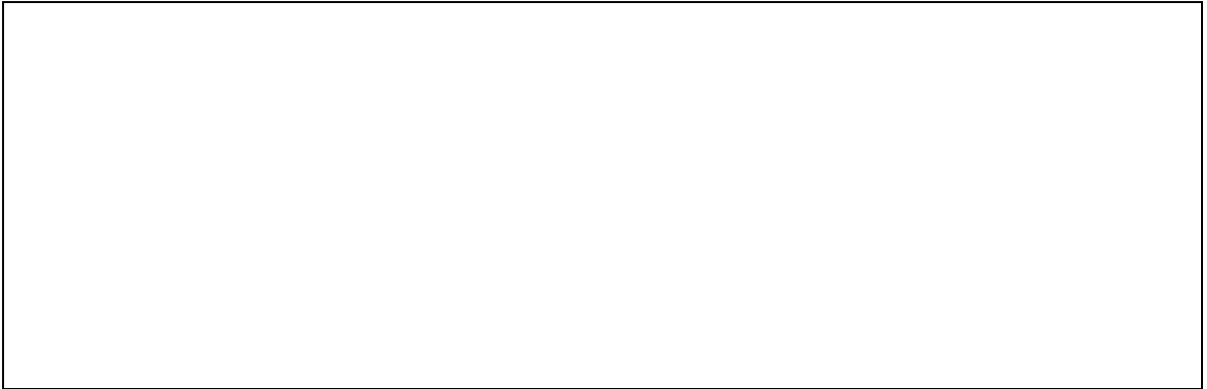
5. Dressed in uniform



7. Waiting area



8. Décor



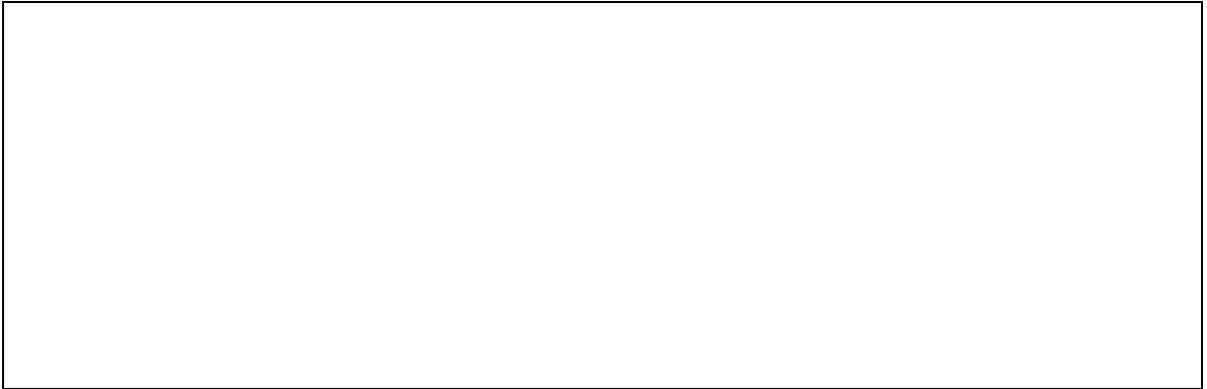
9. Notice boards



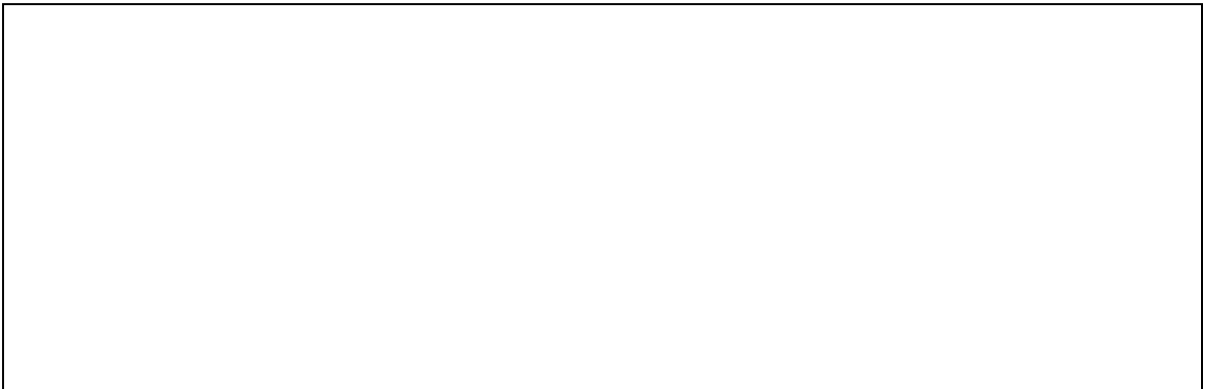
10. Access for disabled



11. Who is who

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for handwritten notes or a diagram related to the 'Who is who' section.

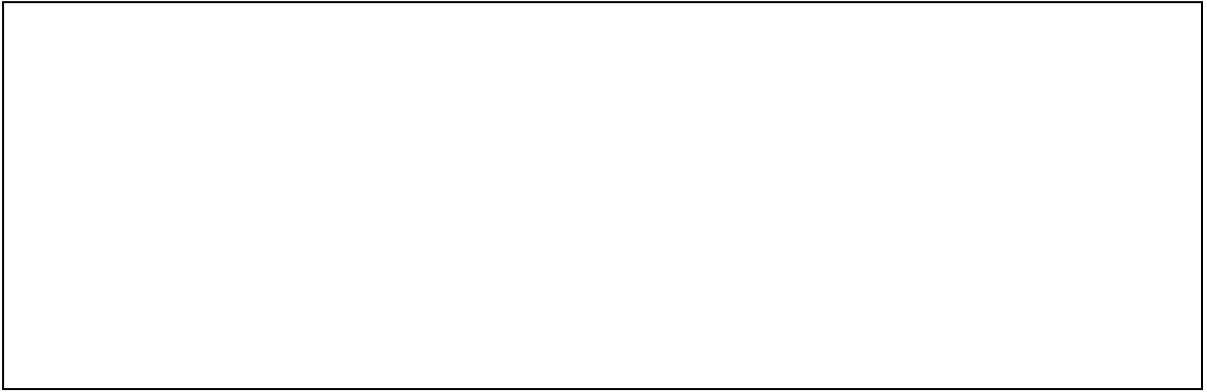
12. Health and safety

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for handwritten notes or a diagram related to the 'Health and safety' section.

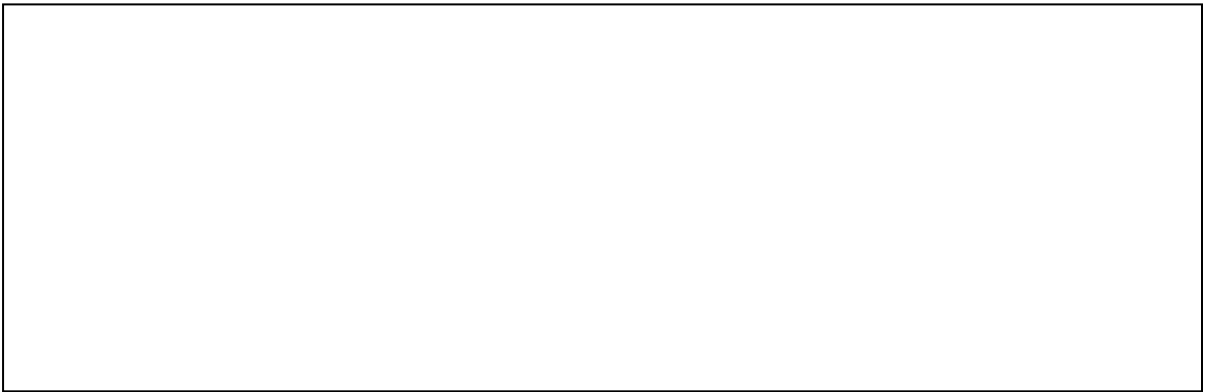
13. Programme

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for handwritten notes or a diagram related to the 'Programme' section.

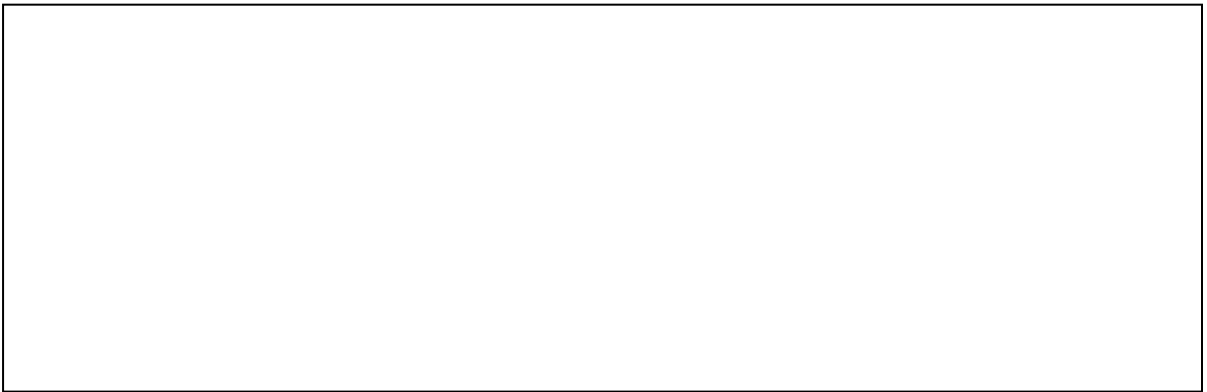
14. Customer care



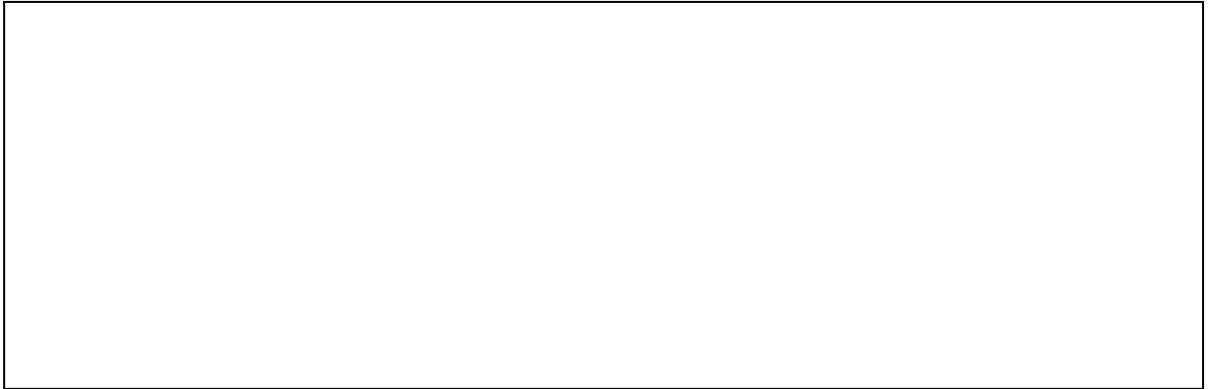
12. Messages



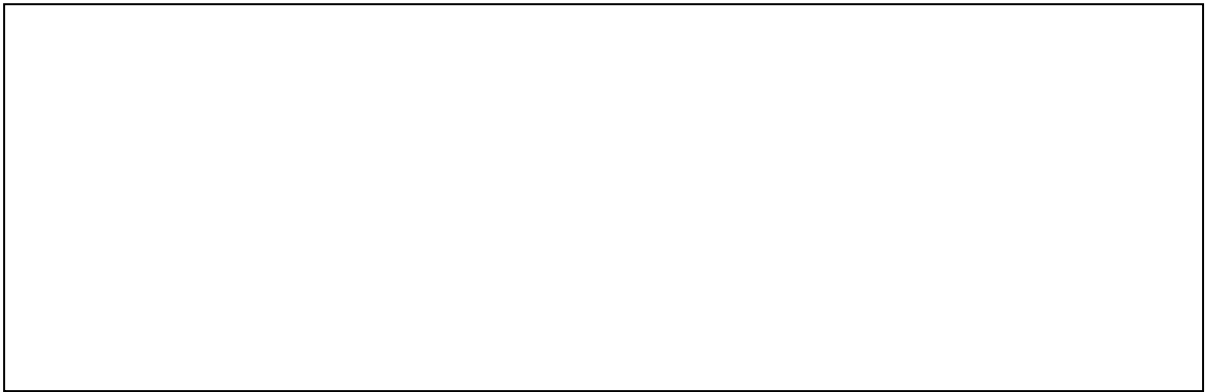
15. Mail (incoming) (outgoing)



16.Telephone

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for entering telephone information.

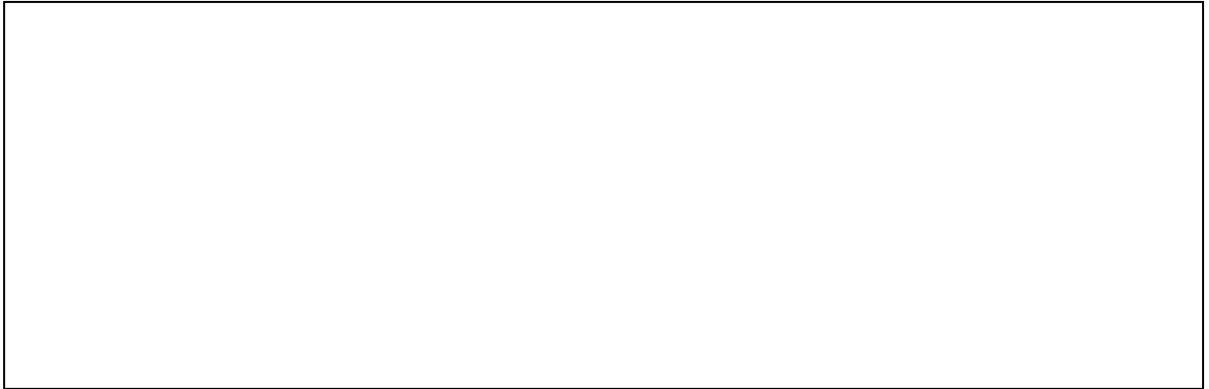
17.Key contacts

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for entering key contacts information.

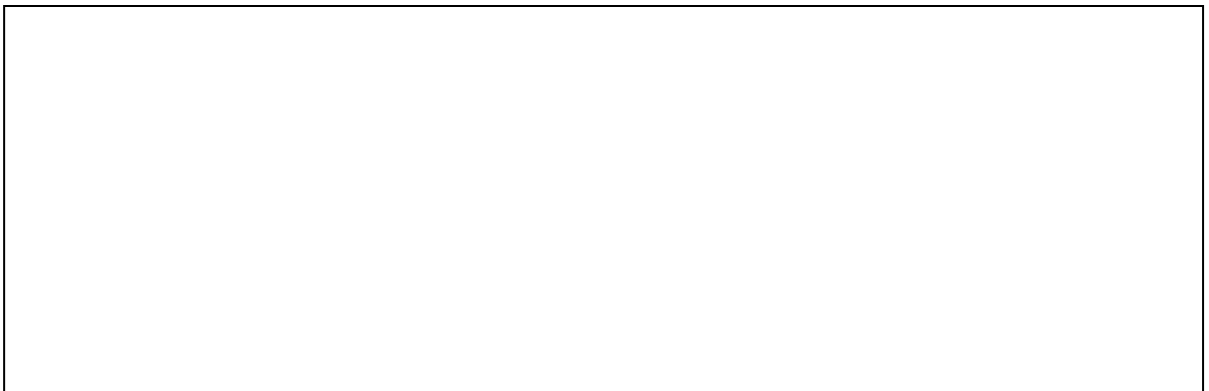
13. Information

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for entering general information.

### 18.Booking procedure



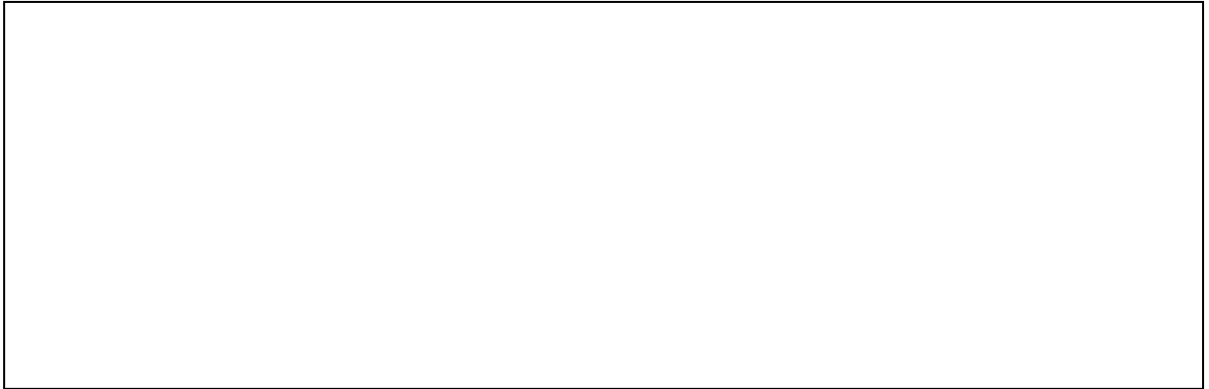
### 19.Complaints and suggestions



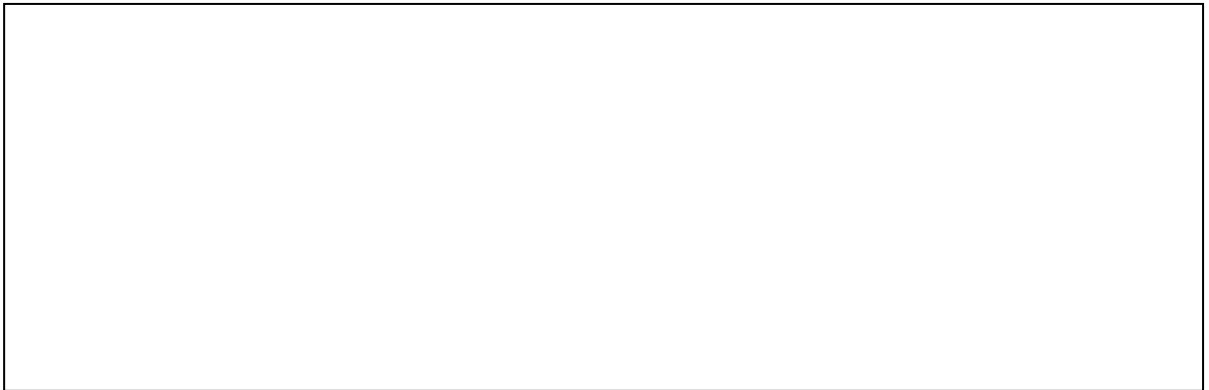
### 14. Dealing with difficult customers




20. Fire drill procedures



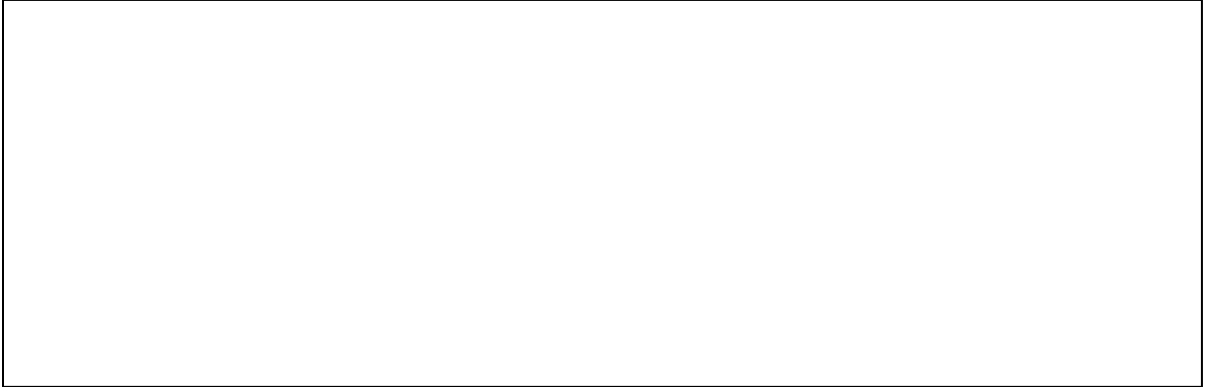
21. Evaluation of usage numbers



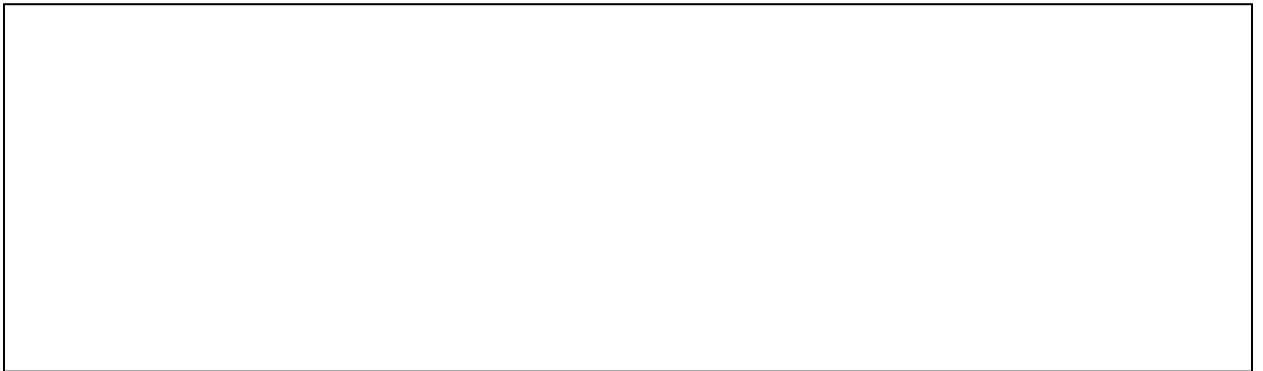
22. Evaluation of let



23.Equal opportunities



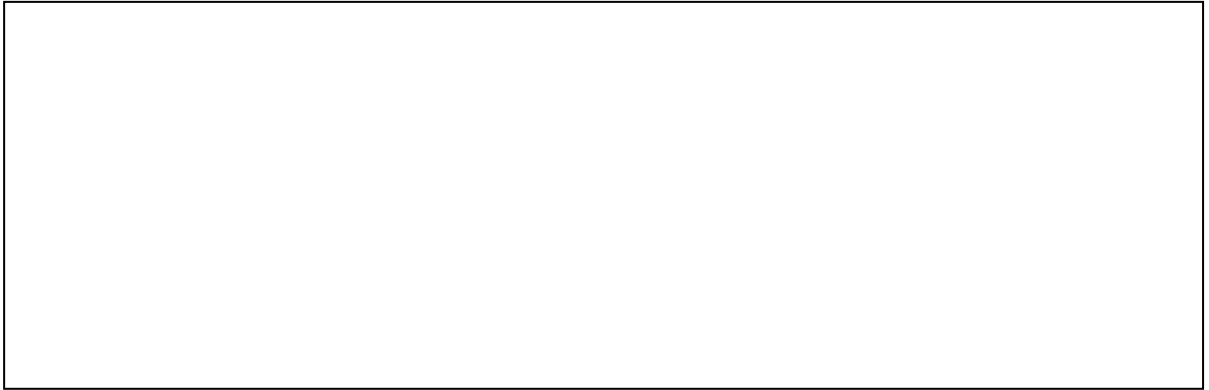
24.Staff (training)



25.Environmental/ recycling



## 26.Cash registers



Please add additional information below;

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---