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P O L I C I E S

# AIMING HIGH

## OUR STANDARDS OF SERVICE

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## About the Commission for Racial Equality

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) is a publicly funded, non-departmental public body set up under the Race Relations Act 1976. We are charged with two of the most important public service missions in the UK: to promote good relations between and within all communities, and to combat racial discrimination in all its forms.

We work in both the public and private sectors to encourage fair treatment and to promote equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin.

We work for a just and integrated society, where equality and diversity are valued. We use both persuasion and our powers under the law to give everyone a fair and equitable chance to live free from fear, discrimination, prejudice and racism.

## Our values

The CRE holds six key values:

1. **Respect** - Respecting individuals and the collective identities to which they have a sense of belonging
2. **Equality** - Being committed to equal treatment for all staff and customers in all that the CRE does.
3. **Valuing difference** - Recognising and valuing the differences between people, and providing appropriate services to meet people's diverse requirements.
4. **Rights** - Recognising that both members of the public and members of staff have the right to expect equal treatment and consistent high standards in the CRE's dealings with them, or in their employment by the CRE.
5. **Responsibility** - Recognising that all staff have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity in practical ways that their jobs make possible.
6. **Leadership** - Taking the leading role in working for racial equality, and expecting a commitment to that role from managers and staff.

## Our Core Competencies

We have developed a set of core competencies for our staff. These focus on how we do things (our attitudes and behaviours).

- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Effective Communication
- Focusing on excellence
- Planning and organising
- Staff management and leadership
- Finance and resource management

## Our Standards of service

### When you write to us or send us an email or fax

- We will reply to, or acknowledge, your correspondence within three working days of receiving it. A full reply, or a letter explaining why there may be a delay and when you can expect a full reply, will be sent within a further eight working days.
- Our replies will be clear, and written in plain English.

### When you phone us

- We will answer your call as quickly as possible; we aim to answer all calls within four rings. If there is no one available to answer the number you have dialled you will be put through to another extension, or diverted to voicemail where you will be able to leave a message.
- We will answer your questions clearly, fully and helpfully as possible.
- If the officer who answers your call is unable to help, you may be transferred to someone else in the CRE, or directed to another organisation.
- Messages left will be answered by the end of the next working day.

### **When you visit us by appointment**

- When you arrive at our offices, you will be asked to sign in and wear a visitor's badge for safety and security reasons.
- Reception staff will immediately contact the person you have come to meet, or an officer who can help you.
- Someone from the department or team you are visiting will escort you from the reception area. You will also be escorted back to the reception area at the end of your visit.
- The officers you meet will wear name badges.

### **When we visit you**

- CRE officers will arrive on time for meetings or appointments. If for any reason we are delayed for an appointment, we will make every effort to contact you to explain this.

### **When you apply for legal advice or assistance**

- We are committed to providing a fair and efficient service to everyone who applies for legal advice or assistance.
- Please see our website for further information on legal advice and assistance link [www.cre.gov.uk/legal/index.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/legal/index.html).

### **When your organisation is being investigated by the CRE**

- The CRE will follow the procedures laid down by the Race Relations Act for formal investigations.
- CRE commissioners will consider all representations, and make all final decisions in a formal investigation.

## Freedom of Information

- Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), any person can request information from a public authority about its business. The request must be in writing, for example, in an email, fax or letter.
- The FOIA requires every public authority to publish a publication scheme – a guide to the information that the organisation routinely publishes or intends to publish. The CRE Publication Scheme can be downloaded in PDF format from the CRE website at [www.cre.gov.uk/foicre.pdf](http://www.cre.gov.uk/foicre.pdf)
- Unless one of the exemptions under the FOIA applies, all recorded information held by the Commission must be made available if it fits the description of the applicant's request.
- The Commission's duty is to confirm or deny promptly whether we hold the requested information – and in any event not later than the 20th working day following receipt of the request.
- We will log and acknowledge all requests as soon as they are received and provide a full response within 20 working days (unless we require further information from the applicant).
- If a fee is payable, applicants will be notified and payment will be required before a response is provided.
- In our full response, we will give as much advice and assistance as we can and our replies will be in clear and plain English.
- If an applicant receives a letter from us refusing the information requested (because it falls under one of the exemptions), or if they are unhappy with our response, they have the right to use our complaints procedure and then to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether we have complied with the FOIA.

## CRE Publications and Information Services

- The CRE has published a wide range of literature: guides to the law, codes of practice, reports of investigations, research studies, and posters. Information about our publications is available on our website at [www.cre.gov.uk/publs/index.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/publs/index.html)

- The CRE has an Information Services team that deals with requests for information. E-mail address [info@cre.gov.uk](mailto:info@cre.gov.uk)

## **Customer Feedback**

- We welcome feedback on the services we provide and will use constructive comments to improve our procedure and practice wherever possible.
- We will conduct regular surveys to see whether people are satisfied with our services, and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

## **Courtesy and helpfulness**

- We will be courteous and helpful at all times providing you with a contact name, section and, where appropriate, a telephone number or e-mail address.

## **If things go wrong**

- If you are unhappy about any service you have received from the CRE, you may complain. A complaints form is available on our website [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk) and at all CRE reception desks. We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days of receiving it. A full reply, or a letter explaining why there may be a delay and when you can expect a full reply, will be sent within a further eight working days.
- If your complaint is justified we will try to put matters right for you, and we will provide clarification and/or an explanation.
- Further information on our complaints procedure can be found on our website at [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

## **Our expectations of customers**

- Visitors to the Commission offices should always report to reception on arrival
- Visitors should wear a CRE visitors badge issued throughout their visit and this should be returned to reception when leaving.

- We expect members of the public to be courteous in their dealings with the CRE.
- Staff are instructed not to engage with members of the public who are behaving in an abusive or threatening way.
- We welcome customer feedback on our service. Please see customer feedback above.

## Questions of format and language

- If, in order to understand rights under the law, or the advice that CRE is giving, an inquirer needs information in a special format, or in a language other than English (or Welsh), we will take reasonable steps to accommodate that need through the provision of interpreters, or texts in translation or special formats.
- In conformity with the Welsh Language Act 1993, we have adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales we will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. The way we will give effect to this principle is set out in the *CRE Welsh Language Scheme*, which can be downloaded from the CRE website at:  
(in English) [www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/welsh\\_scheme\\_e.pdf](http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/welsh_scheme_e.pdf) or,  
(in Welsh) [www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/welsh\\_scheme\\_w.pdf](http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/welsh_scheme_w.pdf)

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