

What you can expect from the Licensing Service

This document explains what you can be expected from the Licensing Team at Waltham Forest. Whether you run a business, are an employee or a member of the public, we are committed to providing you with an efficient, courteous, and helpful service and this document tells you how we aim to do that and what standards we will meet.

What does our Licensing Service do?

We regulate business offering the following goods or services;

- Alcohol, Regulated Entertainment and Late-Night Refreshment (Pubs, Clubs, Off Licences, Supermarkets, Restaurants and Take-aways etc.)
- Gambling (betting shops, adult gaming centres and gaming permits etc.)
- Special Treatments (Massage, Tattooing, Sunbeds etc.)
- Scrap Metal Dealers & Motor Salvage Operators
- Sex Establishments
- Explosives

We make a fundamental contribution to the Council's priorities. In particular;

- To make our community a safer place
- To bring you better shopping, streets, and leisure experiences

We determine our activities by assessing the needs of local people and our local business community, and considering the risks that require addressing. We do this by customer surveys, consultation on our policies/procedures and through using data and other information available to us and our partners to ensure our resources are targeted appropriately, in the light of these local needs and of national priorities.

How we work

The Council delivers a wide range of enforcement services aimed at safeguarding the environment and the community, and at providing a 'level playing field' on which businesses can fairly trade. The administration and enforcement of the licensing regime is one of these services.

We carry out all our activities in a way that supports those we regulate to comply and grow. We are committed to the principles of good enforcement practice by carrying out our regulatory functions in a fair, open and consistent manner.

We ensure that information and guidance is available to help those we regulate to meet their statutory obligations. Where you need advice that is tailored to your particular needs and circumstances, we will provide this.

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We use a risk-based approach to target our resources. A light touch inspection regime will be employed for well managed and maintained premises with a targeted and graduated inspection and enforcement regime for problem and high-risk premises. Proportionate, programmed and intelligence led inspections will be undertaken and where necessary, inspections will be undertaken in response to complaints from third parties.

The decision to use enforcement action will be taken on a case-by-case basis and, to ensure consistency of approach, in accordance with this and any other more specific policies which may be applicable. The action taken, which may be immediate, will be proportionate to the gravity and nature of the non-compliance.

We deal proportionately with breaches of the law as set out in our Enforcement Protocol, including taking firm enforcement action when necessary.



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

Working with businesses and others we regulate

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

- Be courteous and polite,
- Always identify themselves by name in dealings with you, and provide you with contact details,
- Seek to gain an understanding of how your business operates and the pressures you face,
- Provide details of how to discuss any concerns you may have,
- Agree timescales, expectations and preferred methods of communication with you,
- Ensure that you are kept informed of progress on any outstanding issues.

We recognise that your business will receive advice and inspections from other organisations, and we will do our best to work with them to ensure that you receive the best service.

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Helping you to get it right

We want to work with you to help your business to be a success, and it is important to us that you feel able to come to us for advice when you need it. We won't take enforcement action just because you tell us that you have a problem.

Where you need advice to help you to meet your legal obligations we will:

- Provide advice that supports compliance and that can be relied on,
- Provide advice that is appropriate for your circumstances and is not overly burdensome,
- Provide 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 if requested,
- Acknowledge good practice and compliance.

Inspections and other compliance visits

We monitor and support compliance in a number of different ways including through inspections, test purchases, advisory visits and complaint investigations. These visits will always be based on an assessment of risk. When we visit you, our officers will:

- Explain the reason and purpose of the visit,
- Carry their identification card at all times, and present it on request when visiting your premises,
- Exercise discretion in front of your customers and staff,
- Have regard to how you approach compliance within your business, and use this information to inform future interactions with you,
- Provide advice to support you in meeting your statutory obligations, if required
- Provide a written record of the visit upon request.

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 Protocol.

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 that are acceptable to both you and us, in relation to any actions required,
- Provide in writing details of how to appeal against any advice provided, actions required, or decisions taken, including any statutory rights to appeal,
- Explain what will happen next, including any timescales,
- Keep in touch with you, where required, until the matter is resolved.

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Requests for our service

We respond to requests for assistance that we receive, including requests for advice and complaints about breaches of the law. We will:

- 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 throughout our involvement,
- Provide clear advice where appropriate,
- Inform you of the outcome as appropriate.

Please be aware that a risk-based judgment will be made by officers to determine whether a more prompt response is required.

How to contact us

You can contact us by:

Telephone: 020 8496 3000

Email: licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Web: www.walthamforest.gov.uk

By post: Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

Or in person (by appointment only) Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

We will seek to work with you in the most appropriate way to meet your individual needs.

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. 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 respond to anonymous complaints and enquiries where we judge it appropriate to do so.

Personal data will be managed in accordance with Waltham Forest's Data Protection Policy. Click on [Data Protection Information](#)

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Our Team

We have a dedicated team of officers who have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to deliver the services provided. We have arrangements in place to ensure the on-going professional competency of all officers.

Where specialist knowledge is required in an area outside of our expertise we have arrangements in place, with both neighbouring authorities and other regulatory organisations, to call on additional resources as necessary.

Working with others

Our Licensing Service works closely with other council services such as Environmental Health, Noise, Trading Standards, Planning and Enforcement and our aim is to provide a streamlined service to you.

We are part of a much wider regulatory system in Waltham Forest. We have good working relationships with other regulators such as other Licensing services, the Police, Fire Brigade, Immigration and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, and this enables us to deliver a more joined up and consistent service. This includes sharing information and data on compliance and risk, where the law allows, helping target regulatory resources.

Having your say

Complaints and appeals

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 Darren Reilly, Licensing Manager on darren.reilly@walthamforest.gov.uk.

We manage complaints about our service through Waltham Forest's Corporate Complaints Policy. Click on [complaining about council services](#) or telephone 020 8496 3000.



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Feedback

We value input from you to help us ensure our service is meeting your needs. We would like to hear from you whether your experience with 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. We use customer satisfaction surveys from time to time, but we would welcome your feedback at any time. You can provide feedback in the following ways:

Telephone: 020 8496 3000

Email: licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Web: [Compliments, suggestions or complaints](#)

By post: Licensing Team, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

Or in person (by appointment only) Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

Any feedback that we receive will be acknowledged, considered, and responded to.

Dated: *June 2024*

Name: **Darren Reilly**

Job title: **Licensing Manager**

Review Due: *May 2027*