

Enforcement Officer's (Bailiff) Code of Conduct

This code of conduct explains what service you can expect from our Enforcement Officers if we deem it necessary to use them to recover an unpaid Council Tax or Business Rates debt.

Customer care

We will:

- perform our duties professionally and politely using a firm but fair approach,
- Normally visit between 7.30am and 9.00pm Monday to Friday (7.30am to 1.00pm Saturday) where possible,
- communicate with you in the most appropriate way, using plain language,
- leave any correspondence at your address in a sealed envelope addressed to you,
- respect other religions and take particular care when dealing with anyone we consider to be vulnerable,
- give you details of the comment, compliment or complaint procedure on request, or when it is appropriate to do so.

Professional standards

We will:

- act within the *law and respect your rights at all times. We will take care to ensure you are not discriminated against with regard to age, disability, gender, race or sexual orientation,
- carry official identification, a current 'Bailiff's General Certificate' and letter of authorisation as proof we are working on behalf of the council and can remove your goods,
- treat all information, files and correspondence in accordance with Data Protection,
- Inform our manager of any visit we receive where a conflict of interest may exist
- Record any hospitality appropriately and will not use our position or powers for personal gain. We will always refuse gifts or bribes, and report it to a manager.
- Involve the Police if we feel there is a threat to our safety.

When we are at your property, we will:

- take reasonable steps to ensure we are speaking to the right person before identifying ourselves as a bailiff.
- as far as it is practical, avoid telling other people the purpose of our visit. We may make discrete enquires with other adults at the property, or your neighbours if you are unavailable.

- leave the property if the only person there is, or appears to be under the age of 18. We may make basic enquiries to find out when you will be available if appropriate.
- give you an official receipt for any payment you make.
- Signpost you to free debt advice agencies that could help if, after discussions with you, we think you could have a serious debt problem.

When using your belongings to secure your debt, or removing them altogether, we will:

- enter your property and access your belongings within the *law, taking only those belongings and adding costs that the *law allows.
- clearly explain the consequences of us seizing your belongings and charges that will be added to your debt.
- take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that the value of your belongings we take is proportional to the value of the debt you owe.
- write clear and concise inventories when recording the items we are seizing. We will give you a copy of the inventory/receipts, or leave this at your property. Your belongings will be stored with approved agents or auctioneers.
- tell you, and any third party, of the legal rights to recover your belongings.
- personally supervise the removal to make sure your belongings are handled with reasonable care.
- send you a letter to tell you when and where your belongings will be sold.
- refund any extra money received from the sale of your belongings.

We will not remove your belongings if you make full payment, including costs, before the actual removal commences.

*Council Tax or Business Rates Administration and Enforcement Regulations