
Customer Panel Terms of Reference

What is the Customer Panel?

The Customer Panel is a group consisting of members of the public, businesses, local interest groups and service providers who volunteer to provide feedback about Somerset Council and its services.

Customer Panel members will be asked to take part in research that will help us:

- Understand the needs and preferences of our customers.
- Ensure our services are easy to access and use.
- Identify how and where we as a Council can improve.

Membership

Anyone can become a Customer Panel member, providing they agree to participate in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

Our aim is to ensure that membership is representative of the people of Somerset. This means that when signing up to the Panel we will ask our members about their personal characteristics, such as their age, marital status or religion. This helps us understand our members, ensuring we create the true representation of Somerset. Members are however under no obligation to provide this information.

Panel members can opt out of membership at any point and any personal information held by Somerset Council relating to the Customer Panel will be removed.

What is expected of me?

As a Panel member we would like you to:

Contribute to at least 3 research topics each year.

- Provide honest and constructive feedback.
- Respect and value our other panel members' comments and opinion.
- Bring your knowledge and experience to the task.

The Customer Panel will be asked to contribute regularly on a wide variety of topics and across a range of contact methods such as:

- Focus groups.
- One to One interview.
- Surveys.
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT).

If you represent another local group or service, we would like you to:

- Promote and encourage Panel membership.
- Ask your service users or group members to contribute to research.

What can I expect from you?

- If you have a question or need support, we will respond to your enquiries within two working days.
- We will ensure that your personal information and feedback is treated confidentially and only used for the purposes for which it is intended. For more information about what we do with your personal data please see our [Privacy Notice](#).
- We understand how important it is for you to understand how your feedback has helped shape our services. We will publish the outcomes of our research, what has been learnt and what action is being taken.
- We will keep things simple – we will avoid using jargon and ensure that the Panel and its activities are easy to access and use.
- If you have specific needs to enable you to take part, we will support you to access our activities.

How will the Customer Panel be managed?

The staff responsible for the Customer Panel will report to and be guided by the Customer Panel Steering Group. This group will meet at least quarterly and will consist of:

- A Councillor.
- Equalities Officer.
- Representatives from local forums and community groups.
- Council staff.
- The purpose of this group will be to:
- Monitor panel membership and representation.
- Track the pipeline of engagement activity.
- Review outcomes of engagement.
- Learn from activity and explore new and innovative methods for engaging.