

**24x7 Group**

Customer Care Policy

This policy sets the customer care standards that apply across 24x7 Group and supports consistent, safe and professional service delivery.

Document control	Details
Document owner	Group Senior Leadership Team / Board
Operational owner	Local Senior Management
Applies to	All 24x7 Group operating companies, employees, drivers, escorts/passenger assistants, subcontractors and office teams
Effective date	May 2026
Review frequency	Annual, or sooner following legislative, contractual, safeguarding, NHS, Local Authority or operational change
Status	Current

Version history

Version	Date	Status	Summary of change	Approved by
1.0	May 2025	Initial policy issue	Original issue covering mission, customer groups, contact standards, taxi/NHS standards, accessibility, behaviour expectations and contact times.	24x7 Ltd
2.0	May 2026	Full review and update	Added document control, clearer scope, defined responsibilities, complaint handling principles, safeguarding and data protection expectations, lost property controls, escalation route, monitoring and review arrangements, and annual version history.	Group Senior Leadership Team / Board

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the customer care standards expected across 24x7 Group. It explains how we communicate with customers, passengers, parents, carers, Local Authorities, NHS partners, schools, healthcare providers and private taxi customers; how enquiries and complaints are handled; and how we maintain dignity, respect, safety and professionalism across every journey.

The policy supports consistent service delivery across Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport, NHS transport, taxi services and any other contracted or private passenger transport activity delivered by the Group.

2. Our mission

At 24x7 Group, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and caring transport for every passenger, every time. Whether we are transporting children with special educational needs, patients to NHS appointments, or customers using our taxi services, we put dignity, respect and safety at the heart of everything we do.

We aim not only to meet expectations but to exceed them by ensuring that every journey is comfortable, professional and supportive of individual needs.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All 24x7 Group operating companies and business units.
- Office staff, administrators, call handlers, managers, drivers, escorts/passenger assistants and subcontractors.
- All customer contact by telephone, email, text message, written correspondence, booking systems, in- person contact and contact during transport.
- All customer groups, including Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, education settings, healthcare settings, social care partners, passengers, parents, carers, guardians, relatives and private taxi customers.

4. Customer care principles

24x7 Group is committed to delivering excellent customer service. Our approach is straightforward: we treat customers as we would expect to be treated ourselves.

- Safety first - customer care must never compromise passenger safety, safeguarding or legal compliance.
- Respect and dignity - every passenger and customer must be treated with patience, courtesy and fairness.
- Reliability - we aim to provide dependable services and communicate promptly where disruption occurs.
- Clarity - we provide clear, accurate and timely information wherever possible.
- Confidentiality - personal, medical, safeguarding, contractual and operational information must be handled appropriately.
- Accountability - enquiries, complaints and service issues must be recorded, owned and followed through to resolution.

5. Who we regard as customers

As a service provider acting for Council authorities, NHS Trusts and private individuals, we regard the following as customers:

- County Councils, District Councils, Unitary Authorities, NHS Trusts and other commissioning bodies with whom we hold contracts or may seek to hold contracts.
- Educational, healthcare and social care establishments involved in the operation of those contracts.
- Staff of the above authorities, trusts and establishments.
- Passengers we carry, including students, patients, members of the public and NHS service users.
- Parents, carers, relatives or guardians of passengers, where appropriate.
- Private customers using taxi services for personal, leisure or business travel.

6. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Group Senior Leadership Team / Board	Approve this policy, ensure sufficient governance is in place and review significant customer care trends, complaints, safeguarding themes and service risks.
Regional Directors	Monitor customer care performance across their region, support escalation, ensure lessons learned are embedded and hold local management to account.
Local Senior Management	Own local implementation, ensure staff understand standards, manage complaints and escalations, maintain records and report trends.
Administrators / Call Handlers / Admin Teams	Handle customer contact professionally, record enquiries and complaints accurately, escalate concerns promptly and maintain confidentiality.
Drivers and Escorts / Passenger Assistants	Provide safe, respectful and caring service, follow route and passenger instructions, protect confidentiality and report issues immediately.
Subcontractors	Meet the same customer care, safeguarding, confidentiality, conduct and reporting standards as directly employed staff.

7. Enquiries, complaints and lost property

Whether the contact relates to a general enquiry, lost property or a complaint, the same professional standards apply. Customers will be treated fairly, courteously and helpfully.

7.1 Enquiries

- Staff will aim to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact wherever possible.
- Where this is not possible, the matter will be passed to an appropriate person and the customer will be told who is dealing with it, where appropriate.
- Information given to customers must be accurate, proportionate and consistent with contractual, safeguarding and confidentiality requirements.

7.2 Complaints

- Complaints must be acknowledged, recorded and managed in line with local contract requirements and the Group complaints process.
- Where a contract specifies timescales, reporting routes or investigation requirements, those requirements take priority.
- Complaints involving safeguarding, conduct, discrimination, health and safety, driving standards, confidentiality or service failure must be escalated to Local Senior Management without delay.
- Serious or repeated issues must be escalated through the hierarchy: Administrator/Call Handler, Admin, Local Senior Management, Regional Director, Group Senior Leadership Team/Board.
- Where appropriate, outcomes should include corrective action, learning, staff briefing, retraining, route review or management action.

7.3 Lost property

- Passengers on regular SEN or NHS transport should, where appropriate, first check with the driver or escort on the next journey.
- For one-off taxi services, customers should contact the office or booking route directly.
- Staff must record lost property enquiries and ensure property is stored securely while ownership is confirmed.
- Items containing personal data, medication, money, keys or potentially hazardous materials must be escalated to Local Senior Management promptly.

8. Responses to customer contact

We will ensure that customers are dealt with quickly, fairly and in a courteous, helpful manner. Responses will be provided using the most appropriate format, including telephone, email, text message or written communication.

We ask customers to provide the information needed to help us and to treat our staff fairly and respectfully.

9. Customer care standards

Customer care service levels and KPIs apply to many contracts and form part of the required service provision. Where a contract or commissioning body specifies a higher or different standard, the contract requirement must be followed. Where there are no specific contractual requirements, the Group standards below apply.

Contact type	Standard
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Telephone	Aim to answer within 20 seconds, equivalent to approximately six rings, during normal working hours. Attempt first-contact resolution wherever possible.
Written enquiries	Aim to respond within two working days of receipt and resolve the issue if possible. Where the matter is complex, provide a realistic timeframe.
Email and text message	Aim to respond within 24 hours, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Provide at least an acknowledgement within one working day if a full reply is not immediately possible.
Urgent messages	Prioritise urgent matters, especially those involving passenger safety, safeguarding, medical needs, missed transport, significant delay or service disruption.
Out of hours	Out-of-hours enquiries between 06:00 and 22:00 will be monitored and dealt with appropriately. Office telephones will normally provide an alternative number or divert to duty staff.

10. Standards specific to taxi services

- Drivers will be courteous, polite and professional at all times.
- Vehicles will be clean, safe and well maintained.
- Passengers will be collected promptly and transported safely to their destination.
- Assistance will be given to passengers with luggage, mobility issues or additional needs where appropriate and safe to do so.
- All drivers must be licensed and trained to the appropriate standards for the work undertaken.
- All bookings, enquiries and service issues should normally be directed through the office or approved booking system.

11. Standards specific to NHS transport services

- Drivers and staff must be trained, where appropriate, in safeguarding, confidentiality, manual handling and patient dignity.
- Assistance will be provided to patients who require help boarding and alighting from vehicles, where this is safe and within the agreed service scope.
- Where journeys involve vulnerable or unwell passengers, staff must demonstrate comfort, patience and sensitivity throughout.
- Punctuality is a priority, recognising the importance of hospital and clinic appointment times.
- Confidentiality of patient information must be respected at all times.

12. Accessibility and equality commitments

24x7 Group is committed to ensuring that all passengers, regardless of age, disability, health condition or background, have equal access to safe and reliable transport. We will:

- Provide wheelchair-accessible vehicles where required and ensure drivers are trained in safe handling and securing of mobility aids where this forms part of their role.
- Support passengers with hidden disabilities, including autism, dementia and mental health conditions, through staff awareness, patience and sensitivity.
- Offer assistance to those with limited mobility, including help with boarding, alighting and luggage where appropriate and safe.
- Offer reasonable adjustments where possible, such as practical communication support or adjusted pick-up arrangements for vulnerable customers, subject to contractual and operational constraints.
- Treat every passenger with dignity, respect and patience, recognising individual needs.
- Use clear and simple communication where language may be a barrier, including communication aids such as iPads or picture cards where available. Translation support will be provided where reasonably practicable.
- Comply with equality, safeguarding and transport legislation relevant to our operations.

13. Safeguarding, dignity and confidentiality

Customer care is closely linked to safeguarding. Staff must remain alert to concerns involving children, adults at risk, patients, vulnerable passengers, conduct, neglect, abuse, exploitation or unsafe practice.

- Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately using the relevant local safeguarding and escalation procedure.
- Staff must not promise confidentiality where a safeguarding concern needs to be shared with appropriate people or authorities.
- Information about passengers, routes, medical needs, behaviour plans, addresses, contact details, contract arrangements or complaints must only be shared with those who need it for legitimate operational, contractual or safeguarding reasons.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times and must not use customer contact details for personal purposes.

14. Communication with passengers, parents, carers and partners

- Communication should be clear, calm, respectful and proportionate.
- Staff should avoid jargon and confirm understanding where information is important to safety or service delivery.
- For SEN and NHS transport, drivers and escorts may provide direct mobile numbers to passengers, parents, carers or healthcare staff to support day-to-day transport requirements, where this is locally approved and appropriate.
- Direct contact must be used only for legitimate operational purposes and must remain professional.
- For taxi services, all enquiries and bookings should normally be directed through the office or booking system.

15. What we ask of customers

Our staff should not be expected to deal with rude, abusive, discriminatory, aggressive or threatening behaviour. If such behaviour occurs and cannot be calmed down:

- Staff will politely explain that the contact may need to be terminated, for example by ending a telephone call.
- If the issue occurs in a vehicle, it will be reported to the office for investigation.
- The company will take appropriate action, which may include recommending withdrawal of transport entitlement for Council or NHS passengers, or refusing future service for taxi customers.
- Any immediate risk to safety must be escalated without delay and emergency services contacted where necessary.

16. Contact times

Contact route	Arrangement
Office	Normally staffed from 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday. Telephone calls and emails within these hours will be dealt with in line with the standards in this policy.
Out of hours	The office telephone will normally either provide an alternative number or divert to duty staff. Out-of-hours enquiries between 06:00 and 22:00 will be monitored and dealt with appropriately.
Drivers / escorts	For SEN and NHS transport, drivers and/or escorts may provide direct mobile numbers to support day-to-day transport requirements where locally approved. For taxi services, contact should normally be through the office or booking system.

17. Training and awareness

- Relevant staff will be made aware of this policy during induction and through local briefings, toolbox talks or refresher training.
- Customer care expectations must be included in driver, escort/passenger assistant and office team communications where relevant.
- Training and awareness should cover customer care, safeguarding, confidentiality, equality, accessibility, complaints handling and conduct expectations appropriate to the role.
- Where complaints or incidents identify a training need, Local Senior Management must ensure that corrective action is completed and recorded.

18. Records, monitoring and reporting

- Customer enquiries, complaints, compliments, lost property matters and significant service issues must be recorded using the appropriate local system or process.
- Records must be factual, timely, professional and retained in line with contractual and data protection requirements.
- Local Senior Management should monitor themes, repeat issues and trends to identify service improvements.
- Regional Directors and the Group Senior Leadership Team/Board should review significant trends, high-risk matters, recurring complaints and learning from serious incidents.

19. Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside relevant Group, operating company, contract and Local Authority / NHS requirements, including where applicable:

- Complaints procedure.
- Safeguarding policy and local safeguarding procedures.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Data protection, confidentiality and information security procedures.
- Driver, escort/passenger assistant and subcontractor conduct requirements.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion requirements.
- Incident reporting and escalation procedures.

- Local contract-specific service specifications and KPIs.

20. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes to legislation, regulation, contract requirements, safeguarding guidance, operational arrangements, complaints trends or customer care risks. The version history must be updated at each review, even where no substantive changes are made.