

CLA Service Standards 2020/21

AIM

We want to ensure a consistent approach to any contact with members and ensure they receive the high level and quality of service they are entitled to expect. This Service Level Agreement sets out what is expected of all members of staff when dealing with members.

It includes the standards that should apply to all types of contact with members, not just those contacts relating to the provision of advice, whether by email, telephone, in person or on receipt of a letter.

Service Statement

The CLA is the Country Land & Business Association. Since inception in 1907 it has served the interests of its members and has sought to protect and enhance the rural economy and way of life.

There are two ways we achieve our aims: we act in partnership with others to develop and deliver our services, and we are driven by the needs of our members in all that we do.

We have a clear responsibility to our members to carry out our duties efficiently and effectively, and to apologise if we get things wrong.

We are committed to continually improving the quality and responsiveness of our service, and we constantly work to tailor our service as closely as we can to the needs of our members.

Core Principles

- We treat members as individuals, protect their personal information and treat them with dignity and respect.
- We listen to them, respond to their needs, keep them informed and communicate clearly
- Wherever possible, we answer their enquiries at first point of contact. Where appropriate, we will suggest other individuals or organisations for assistance.

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- We are committed to responding to enquiries promptly. We will respond to all written and telephone communication in a timely manner and all enquiries will receive a prompt and courteous acknowledgement.
- We provide easy to understand, useful and up to date advice and information in a clear format
- We are committed to being accessible to our members. We provide options to access services by the member's method of choice and accommodate any specific disability-related requirements
- We ensure our staff are appropriately trained and competent to deliver our services
- We are committed to consultation with members. To offer services that are as relevant as they can be, we have to keep in touch with those who use them. That is why we are committed to a dialogue with our members.

We encourage our members to join our committees to shape policy and to attend events to meet CLA staff and other members. We carry out regular satisfaction surveys of our members to assess their needs and measure the quality of our performance. We also use other methods - such as feedback from our regional teams - to build the fullest possible picture of how members see us and our performance.

The CLA is unable to provide advice to individuals or organisations who are not fully paid members of the CLA. We are also prohibited under the terms of our liability insurance from giving advice to CLA members acting on behalf of an individual or organisation who is not a member of the CLA (where they are a CLA member, the requestor must provide evidence of consent). The CLA will not provide advice to a member where it involves a conflict with another member.

THE STANDARDS

Point of contact

Our regional offices and London HQ are open between 9.00am and 5.00pm on weekdays, with the exception of public holidays. All our staff have individual e-mail

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addresses and direct-dial telephone numbers that members can use to access them directly.

Queries can also be submitted to our regional offices or London office via email or telephone or through our social media channels – LinkedIn and Twitter.

If a member wishes to attend an office in person, please book an appointment in advance. This will enable staff to advise on any necessary papers to bring along. We will deal with personal callers promptly and courteously.

Although members are advised to contact their regional office in the first instance, they can contact the CLA HQ directly. Depending on the nature of their enquiry they should be directed to an individual in the relevant department.

When communications are referred between offices by email, the relevant secretaries should be copied in.

Recording

Every contact should be logged on the CRM system within one working day. Whenever possible the accuracy of the personal information should be checked – telephone number, email address etc. and updated by the membership team if inaccurate.

Who responds?

Member communications should always be dealt with by the most appropriate member of staff.

As regards advice, the request must always be dealt with by the most appropriately skilled staff member. This may require regional advisers to forward requests to staff in Belgrave Square. In this instance we should aim to do so on the same day that the member enquiry has been made.

Individual responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the staff member who receives the initial communication to open a CRM case to ensure that it is passed on to the staff member who will provide the substantive response. This should be done on the same day that the initial member communication has taken place.

The staff member providing the substantive response has overall responsibility for all communications with the member while a case is live, including when they delegate some aspects of case management to admin colleagues. If however they will be absent for a period of time they should ensure a colleague is briefed to respond. They must ensure that conversations and outcomes are logged on the CRM system within 2 working days.



Timeliness

We will acknowledge all communications from members, and particularly requests for advice, on the day of receipt (or the next working day if received on a non-working day). We will endeavour to respond within three working days.

Sometimes, it will not be possible to provide a comprehensive response within three days because of complexity, holidays or workloads. In such cases a substantive response must be given within 15 working days.

If, when the member contact is received, or within the standard three-day response period, it becomes clear that we will not be able to respond within three days, the member concerned must be contacted immediately and informed that we cannot respond with our usual timeframes of 3 days and that we are aiming to deliver a full response within 15 days.

We aim to answer incoming calls within 15 seconds.

Our staff identify themselves by name when answering calls. If the staff member a member has called is unavailable, the member will be invited to leave a message. Telephone messages and voicemail messages will be responded to when the staff member returns to work.

Complaint

We will treat any expression of dissatisfaction with our service as a complaint. All complaints must be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the procedures and timescales set out in the CLA Complaints Procedure [\[link\]](#). Staff should request that members ideally put their complaint in writing (letter or email), so members describe the issue in their own words. If that is not practical or appropriate, the staff member will record the complaint as faithfully as possible from their own notes on the CLA CRM.

Complaints will be dealt with by the relevant Director, and the complainant will be informed who that is. They will investigate the nature of the issue and try to resolve as quickly as possible.

If the complainant is not content with the response, the issue will be passed on to the Director General to consider how to proceed. They should aim to respond within 5 working days.

