



# Complaints

## Introduction

1. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for our residents. We take pride in being a people business. Residents have the right to complain about a service failure. There will also be occasions when customers will express dissatisfaction about something we have done or have failed to do or about a decision we have taken.

We will use the information gained from complaints to help improve the quality of our services.

## Purpose

2. We aim to operate an open and accountable complaints system, based on clear service standards. We will implement this policy by a stage-by-stage process to investigate all service shortcomings. This will now cover informal and formal stages encompassing the designated person's role. We will genuinely use feedback to learn and improve our services continuously.

## Scope

3. This policy encompasses to all aspects of service delivery to residents and includes services provided by our contractors. However incidents of anti-social behaviour are not complaints and are subject to a separate policy.

## Policy

4. We will:
  - aim to get things right first time and resolve service failures at the first point of contact where possible.
  - respond to all recorded complaints within set timescales and ask residents to tell us about their complaint as soon as possible.
  - publicise the complaints service as widely as possible and also provide copies of the policy upon request to customers or advocates.

- promote a positive culture about complaints to ensure that staff understand the policy and procedure, and are appropriately trained and supported.
- accept complaints in person, by telephone, letter, fax, email or via our website. We will also accept complaints submitted by advocates on behalf of complainants who have their consent.
- allow complainants to have representation from a third party such as a friend at any stage. However complaints from third parties will not be treated as complaints.
- consider mediation and arbitration as a means of resolving complaints.
- not investigate anonymous complaints or those made after one year following the identification of the issue.
- deal with malicious and vexatious complainants in line with the policy aims stated above, but subject to the Chief Executive's decision. Criteria to deal with such conduct will include unreasonable, disproportionate and persistent complaints behaviour.
- implement service improvements as a result of customer feedback.

## **Responsibility**

1. There will be designated staff to cover each stage of the process. Managers will ensure action is taken to comply with timescales. Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the board and senior managers.

## **Monitoring, Review & Evaluation**

2. There will be a key performance indicator to report action and progress on complaints to the board. This will be done on a quarterly basis.

We will do an annual review of all complaints to learn and to implement service improvements. We will publish statistics in our annual report each year.

**This policy will be reviewed after three years.**