

**MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT – DRAFT CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
POLICY**

Customer feedback is important to us. We want to know what customers think about our services and how we deliver them in order to be able to learn and improve.

This policy covers complaints, compliments, and comments about the services of Redditch Borough Council.

Complaints can be defined as *‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by us or our staff’*

Compliments can be defined as *‘an expression of satisfaction about how well we deliver service or how helpful a member of staff has been’*

Comments can be defined as *‘an opinion on how we could improve the delivery of our services’*.

Complaints

It is for the customer to decide whether or not to make a complaint and we will not try to discourage them. However, reporting a fault or problem is not necessarily a complaint but may be a request for service. Examples of complaints may be:

- we have not achieved the standards we say we will provide;
- we have not provided the service to the standard which the customer thinks is reasonable;
- we have given bad advice;
- we have not followed our own rules;
- we are carrying out our duties in an unsatisfactory way;
- our staff are behaving in an unacceptable way;
- we fail to do something we have been asked to do, and it is reasonable to expect that we should have done so; or
- we fail to do something which the customer could reasonably have been expected to do, even if we were not actually asked to do it.

This Complaints procedure cannot be used to deal with an issue which is any part of any legal action by or against us. Additionally, some issues are covered by different procedures and are therefore not to be dealt with under this policy or procedure. These include:

- employee and internal complaints,
- complaints from councillors unless they are complaining as ordinary members of the public, or acting as an advocate for someone else,

- where legal limits are in place, for example cases covered by our insurance procedures, parking and traffic offences, refusing planning permission, unless it relates to an issue where the proper procedure has not been followed or staff have acted incorrectly or inappropriately.

We can only deal with feedback that relates to a service for which we have responsibility, but we should refer customers to the appropriate organisation if the issue is outside our control.

An official complaint cannot be made simply because someone does not agree with the decision we have made.

Members should direct official complaints (as opposed to requests for a service) to the Customer Service Centre manager who will ensure they are channelled into the system.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

WHO DEALS WITH COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS?

Any member of staff can take details and advise what will happen in the case of a complaint. An electronic form is on the intranet and can be used. This will be passed to the Complaints Champion who will ensure it is logged on to the Customer Feedback database.

Customer Champions record and monitor complaints to ensure they are dealt with in accordance with the agreed timescales.

Heads of Service will nominate someone to investigate the complaint and ensure responses are drafted for them to review. All responses to complaints will be sent by the Head of Service who is responsible for ensuring the response meets our standards.

The Head of Customer Service will deal with any cases where the customer believes the proper process in respect of handling complaints has not been carried out. The Head of Customer Services will ensure reports are compiled, provide CMT and Members with details of numbers of complaints, trends, lessons learned and will assess the process to ensure the timescales are being met. The Head of Customer Services will also ensure customers are surveyed about their satisfaction and will report complaints and compliments data to customers via the web and at Customer Services Centres.

Complaint received.

All details will be recorded on the i-case system on date of receipt.

Each Head of Service will ensure there are procedures in place within their service to investigate complaints immediately.

Customer Champions will pass the details on to the Head of Service and the appropriate officer to investigate the matter.

Acknowledgement can be made via e-mail or letter. Wherever possible complainant to be called to make initial contact and clarify complaint.

Acknowledgement of complaint (or full response if possible) will be made within 2 working days.

Head of Service to request investigation and draft response to be prepared.

Care will be taken to ensure that the matter has been fully investigated and clear details provided to the complainant in a language they understand. Response should fully answer complaint and be empathetic and admit if we have made a mistake, or could have done better. Clear details of our actions should be provided.

The response will be sent from the Head of Service, who is responsible for checking the quality and accuracy of the response.

Full response to be sent as soon as possible and within 15 working days.

It is accepted that some complaints are complex and will take longer to investigate. Where this is the case, the customer will be advised in writing that there will be a delay, given the reason why and told when the full response will be forthcoming. However we will avoid delaying a response at all times.