

<b>Applicable to:</b>	MDC staff	<b>Policy Number:</b>	MDC001
<b>Issued by:</b>	Chief Executive	<b>Date of Approval:</b>	4 March 2019
<b>Contact person:</b>	Manager Strategic Planning	<b>Review Date:</b>	4 March 2024

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to state how Masterton District Council (MDC) will ensure that:

- compliments are recorded and monitored; and
- complaints are managed and resolved in a fair and timely manner.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all compliments and complaints received by MDC. The following will not be treated as a complaint under this policy:

- service requests;
- requests for information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 or the Privacy Act 1993;
- feedback received as part of a formal consultation process;
- internal complaints from one staff member against another;
- allegations against a contractor or staff member of fraud or any other form of serious misconduct; or
- complaints where specific legislation (or other legal obligations e.g. contracts) exist that require the matter to be managed in a different manner.

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

MDC is committed to building and maintaining a reputation for providing superb service and excellent community support. We acknowledge that effective management of compliments and complaints provides an opportunity to continuously improve our services.

MDC will provide a simple, open, and effective compliments and complaints process. To achieve this, MDC will:

- publicise the Compliments and Complaints Policy to support community awareness and understanding of the process;
- ensure compliments are recorded promptly and regularly monitored and reported;
- ensure complaints are investigated objectively and promptly;
- take all appropriate action to remedy a complaint;
- communicate the outcome of any complaint investigation to all parties, in a way that is easy to understand; and
- monitor the nature and outcome of complaints received in order to identify improvements to the services we provide.

**MANAGING COMPLIMENTS**

All compliments will be recorded in MDC’s monitoring system and shared with the relevant staff member/s and their manager. Refer to Appendix 1: Recording Compliments.

Compliments can be submitted verbally or in writing (excluding via social media) but will only be recorded in MDC’s monitoring system if they contain enough information to clearly identify what was valued and liked by the person. Anonymous compliments will not be recorded.

MDC will generally not formally respond to compliments.

**MAKING A COMPLAINT**

Complainants are encouraged to make any formal complaint in writing, however, complaints received in person or over the telephone will be accepted.

All complaints must include contact details and a description of the complaint.

**COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

MDC will manage and escalate complaints in accordance with the framework illustrated below.



\* Covered by this policy.

**Level 1: Frontline Resolution**

Simple complaints that can be easily remedied and where a formal response is not requested, will be managed informally, by the employee who receives the complaint.

Issues resolved at the first point of contact will not be registered as a complaint in MDC’s monitoring system.

## **Level 2: Escalated Complaint**

Any complaint that cannot be resolved immediately, or where the customer requests a formal response, will be escalated and recorded as a complaint in MDC's monitoring system.

Level 2 complaints will be escalated to the relevant team manager for resolution.

If the complaint is particularly complex or high risk, the relevant senior manager must be advised.

Complaints will be resolved in accordance with the Complaint Handling Procedure (refer Appendix 2) and within the timeframes stated in this policy.

## **Level 3: Internal Review**

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response they receive from MDC, they may appeal.

Appeals to responses will be managed by the relevant senior manager.

The reviewer will consider the response and determine if the matter requires further investigation. The complainant will be formally advised of this decision and any further outcomes. The timeframes below apply.

## **Level 4: Ombudsman**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their appeal, the complainant will be advised of their right to escalate the complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.

## **Complaint Timeframes**

Level 2 and 3 complaints will be:

- acknowledged within two working days of receipt; and
- issued a response within 14 working days of receipt.

If additional time is required to provide a response, the complainant will be advised before the expiry of the 14 day deadline.

## **Complaints about the Chief Executive or Elected Members**

Any complaint concerning the Chief Executive will be referred to the Mayor, who, will determine the appropriate approach to investigate and resolve the matter.

A complaint concerning the Mayor or Elected Members will be managed in accordance with the complaints resolution process detailed in Appendix D of the Governance Code of Conduct.

Complaints relating to the Chief Executive or elected members may follow a different approach and timeframe to that stated in this policy. If this is the case, the complainant will be formally advised.

## **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be dealt with sensitively, informing only those that need to know.

## **Anonymous complaints**

Anonymous complaints may be investigated at the discretion of the Chief Executive, depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

## **REPORTING**

Compliments and complaints will be reported to Council at least every six-months.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**All employees** are responsible for being familiar with this policy and the processes for recording compliments and responding to complaints.

**Administration Manager** is responsible for managing MDC's compliments and complaints management system.

**Customer Services Specialists** are responsible for logging compliments and complaints in NCS and ensuring all documentation is filed within the Electronic Records Document Management System.

**All managers** are responsible for:

- ensuring compliments and complaints are forwarded to a Customer Service Specialist for logging in NCS;
- sharing compliments with their team;
- leading the investigation and response to complaints received in relation to their area of responsibility; and
- notifying the relevant Senior Manager of any complaints that are particularly complex or high risk.

**Senior Managers** are responsible for:

- approving responses to all Level 2 complaints within their area of responsibility;
- notifying the Chief Executive of any complaints that are particularly complex or high risk;
- leading the investigation and response to Level 3 appeals.

**Chief Executive** is responsible for reviewing responses to complex or high-risk complaints, where escalated by the relevant senior manager.

## REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every five years.

## DEFINITIONS

**Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction with a MDC decision, process followed, outcome, employee or contractor action, or quality of service.

**Compliment:** An unsolicited expression of satisfaction, thanks or appreciation, given verbally or in writing, for something MDC or a specific staff member has done.

**Service Request:** Any notification received from a customer, client, contractor or member of the public regarding a fault, a breakdown in service or investigation of issues or concerns.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

None.

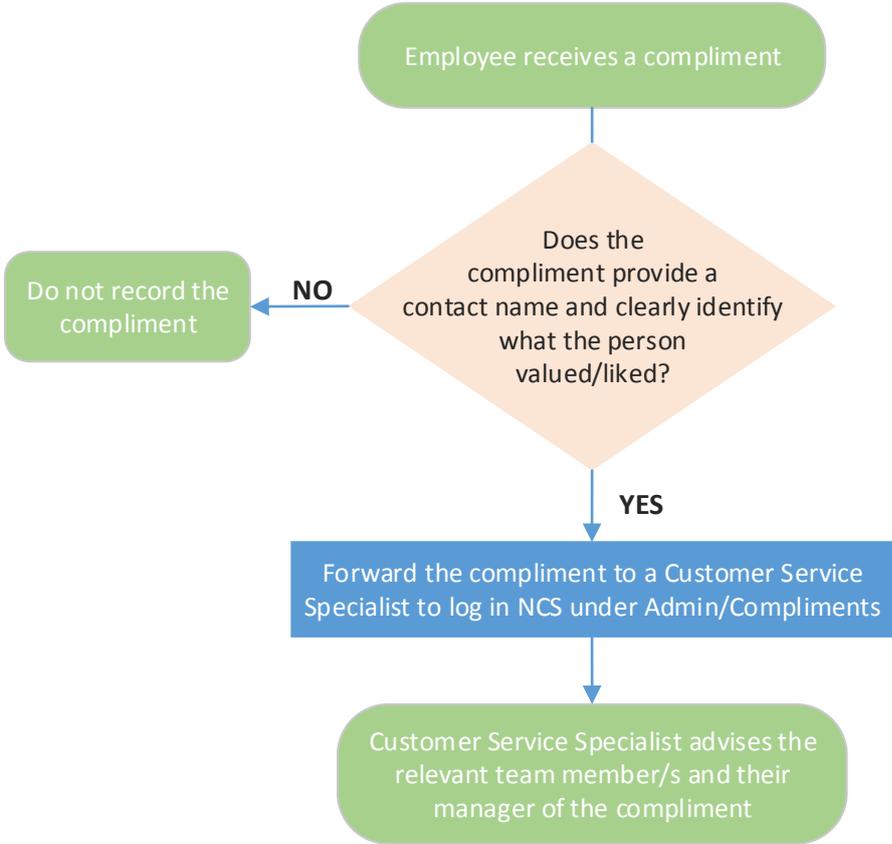
## REFERENCES

None.

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Summary of Amendments	Approved By
2014	New policy.	Senior Management Team
4/3/2019	Amended to clarify policy scope, distinction between minor and formal complaints, and the complaints process.	Senior Leadership Team

Appendix 1: Recording Compliments



Appendix 2: Complaint Handling Procedure

