

Job Description

Job title	CUSTOMER RELATIONS OFFICER
Directorate	BUSINESS : Business Support
Division	Finance and Business Improvement
Range	MPR 3
Reports to	Customer Relations Team Leader

Main purpose of the job:

Working as part of the Customer Relations Team (CRT) to support the delivery of a high quality, **professional, modern and evolving** service to internal and external customers, dealing with compliments, comments and ‘stage one’ and ‘stage two’ (escalated) complaints and Ombudsman referrals about services provided by Medway Council, its partners, and commissioned services.

To help enable fair and equal access to the compliments and complaints process, working within council policy and procedures, relevant legislation, and meeting Ombudsman expectations (including the new Complaint Handling Code, 2024).

Support the organisation to continuously learn from customer feedback (to prevent complaint recurrence and to improve services) by accurately recording data and support the Customer Relations Team Leader in producing regular, and occasionally bespoke, management information and performance reports.

To directly support and deputise for the Customer Relations Team Leader

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Take responsibility for the day-to-day administration of all compliments, comments and complaints and Ombudsman referrals by:

- effectively triaging, logging and assigning cases,
- monitoring for responses, keeping customers informed of any delays and reminding services when responses are due to ensure that they are ready in good time to meet corporate and statutory timescales,
- quality checking responses to ensure that we ‘get it right first time’ by addressing all the points raised, are written sensitively and in Plain English and are grammatically correct, and that mistakes are appropriately remedied at the earliest opportunity,

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- working from a shared mailbox, managing own workload, and prioritizing tasks according to importance and urgency, and ensuring that all enquiries are promptly and effectively dealt with,
- coordinating complex complaints, working with services to provide a single response to the customer, and providing specialist advice relating to complaint handling to the organisation.

Liaise with services where necessary to chase responses, and escalate performance concerns to the Customer Relations Team Leader, to ensure that the organisation meets its corporate and statutory performance targets.

Support, adopt and embrace new ways of working, including technology, and highlight inefficient work practices to be improved.

Enable continuous service improvement through customer feedback by accurately gathering and analysing compliment and complaints data.

Use excellent customer care skills to professionally deal with customers who may be dissatisfied, over the phone or face to face, including taking complaints and dealing with escalated customer enquiries, and support the Customer Relations Manager in managing persistent or unreasonable complainers by applying relevant policies.

Work with services to ensure that responses are of the highest quality, quality check all responses and challenge services where necessary, to ensure affective resolution to complaints as early as possible.

Use agreed internal procedures, relevant legislation and guidance relevant to public sector complaints to ensure that compliments, comments and complaints are appropriately handled, and know when to escalate to, or seek help from, the CRT Team Leader

At the discretion of the Head of Service, such other activities as may from time to time be agreed consistent with the nature of the job described above

Deputise for the Customer Relations Team Leader when required to ensure resilience across the team.

Act as a conduit between the organisation and the Ombudsman, professionally engaging with it to carefully manage cases in line with its expectations, and coordinate meetings between it and relevant services when required.

At manager discretion, other activities may be assigned that fit the job description.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

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Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the CUSTOMER RELATIONS TEAM LEADER.

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but may be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will be required to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

All criteria at level A should be considered essential requirements.

Qualifications

Level A

Good level of education (such as GCSEs or equivalent), including English and Maths.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

None

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Identified and undertaken a minimum of four Management and Leadership Development courses offered by the council and agreed with your line manager, or other relevant training agreed with your line manager

Knowledge

Level A

1. A basic knowledge of services provided by unitary authorities, including ideally Adult and Children's social care, and knowledge of public sector complaints processes.
2. A good understanding of GDPR and its importance when handling customer data.
3. A basic knowledge of the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and how to apply it.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- A sound knowledge of the systems used, and the rules, processes and procedures that govern how you work, including:
 1. A practical knowledge of the electronic systems used for managing and processing compliments, complaints and comments.
 2. A practical knowledge of Medway Council's Feedback policy and its associated processes
 3. Either a practical knowledge of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and/or the Housing Ombudsman Service and their processes and powers, including the Complaint Handling Code and its associated guidance,
 4. Or, a practical knowledge of the DfE guidance, 'Getting the Best from Complaints', and awareness of legislation which supports the Adult's and Children's social care complaints processes.
 5. A good understanding of the Persistent Complainers Policy and how to use it to manage persistent and unreasonable behaviour.
 6. A good understanding of the Prevention of Violence and Aggression at Work Policy and associated reporting processes and mechanisms.
 7. A good understanding of the Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy.
 8. Completion of Customer Complaint and Customer Service training.
 9. Attend a minimum of one Complaint Handlers Group

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Expert knowledge in the areas in which you are working, including relevant procedures and the use of technical systems, so that peers, and colleagues at both higher and lower ranges, seek your advice.

This will include:

1. Thorough knowledge of the electronic systems used for managing, processing and reporting compliments, complaints and comments.
2. Thorough knowledge of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and/or the Housing Ombudsman Service and their processes and powers, including the Complaint Handling Code and its associated guidance.
3. Thorough knowledge of Medway Council's Feedback policy and all corporate complaint processes and

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associated processes, or a thorough knowledge of Adult's and Children's social care complaints processes, including the DfE guidance, 'Getting the Best from Complaints', and the legislation which supports the Adult's and Children's social care complaints processes.

4. Knowledge of processes involving complaint areas you do not regularly work in, and some understanding of the policies and legislation used in these areas.

Experience

Level A

1. Experience in working within a Public Sector Organisation and/or Customer Service function, preferably with responsibility to co-ordinate responses to complaints.
2. Experience in working from multiple mailboxes and Customer Record Management systems, managing own workload, and prioritizing deadlines.
3. Experience in dealing with internal or external customer interactions by telephone, email or face-to-face and liaising with other council (or similar) services.
4. Experience in carrying out a range of administrations tasks and understanding the procedures associated with them.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

1. A minimum of 12 months' satisfactory and consistent performance working within this or a comparable role including up to date mandatory training.
2. Experience of working well under pressure when dealing with multiple mailboxes and Customer Record Management Systems, for example, dealing with interruptions, or conflicting demands.
3. Experience in producing accurate and timely monthly, quarterly and annual compliment and complaints data.
4. Experience in responding to and effectively dealing with complex complaints, for example, those that span across multiple service areas.
5. Experience in dealing with challenging and difficult conversations during internal or external customer interactions by telephone, email or face-to-face,
6. Experience of triaging, logging and assigning social care complaints at all levels **or** stage 2 corporate and Ombudsman complaints, gaining consent where required, monitoring for, and quality checking responses, ensuring deadlines are managed and that accurate records are maintained.
7. Experience of supporting a colleague to develop using a range of leadership skills, such as mentoring, shadowing, and coaching.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

1. A minimum of 12 months' satisfactory and consistent performance working at the previous level including up to date mandatory training.
2. Met all training and performance targets.
3. Starting to gain experience in managing and prioritizing own, and others' workload, working with some work-related pressure, for example, from deadlines, interruptions, or conflicting demands.
4. Experience of triaging, logging and assigning social care complaints at all levels **and** stage 2 corporate and Ombudsman complaints, monitoring for, and quality checking responses, ensuring deadlines are managed and that accurate records are maintained.
5. Experience of using data to positively influence complaints performance within the team, for other teams, or pan council.
6. Experience in dealing with persistent and challenging complainants, or unreasonable behaviour, using the Persistent Complainers Policy.
7. Experience of presenting information to a meeting or small audience.
8. Experience in working on a small project where the desired outcome is clearly set by your line manager.

Skills

Level A

1. Proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel, Teams and Outlook.
2. Ability to work independently within defined procedures and rules and use initiative to deal with straightforward problems, referring to line manager for unusual or difficult problems.
3. Ability to develop and write a process (agreed with line manager) and to identify and communicate process improvements where required.
4. Ability to accurately record details of customer complaints efficiently and effectively using technology with minimal mistakes.
5. Ability to manage and communicate sensitive information with care and in accordance with GDPR.
6. Ability to take simple notes as a record of discussion and actions agreed at meetings, present them in a professional format and distribute them in a timely manner (with agreement of the chair).
7. Ability to identify and act on own development needs, monitoring own training records for expiry of mandatory training, recognising own areas of weakness or identifying career ambitions, and proactively seeking appropriate development opportunities in agreement with line manager
8. Ability to recognise when there is a concern for a customer's welfare and to take the appropriate course of action.
9. Ability to professionally manage customer interactions and expectations using soft skills, remaining calm, polite and courteous when dealing with customers.
10. Ability to work competently to consistently produce high-quality, accurate work.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

1. Proficient in the use of a range of Microsoft packages, including MS Teams, and all relevant bespoke/task specific systems for the management and reporting of compliments, comments and complaints.
2. Ability to work independently within defined Customer Relations procedures and rules but to work with initiative and use problem solving skills for complex situations, (for example a complicated problem which may include multiple issues and is difficult to understand or resolve and where there are no recognised procedures to create solutions) to agree them with line manager.
3. Ability to develop, write, regularly review and accurately maintain procedure notes relevant to the role, and to identify and communicate process improvements where required.
4. Ability to use Excel skills confidently to create and maintain spreadsheets, using simple formulas to calculate timescales, tools such as data validation lists capture agreed criteria, and conditional formatting to enhance information capture.
5. Ability to use written and oral communication skills to present varied and/or sensitive information in an understandable way to formulate a range of high-quality written communications to customers including complaint responses, produce and present regular, accurate and meaningful compliment and complaint data to the Customer Relations team, and to communicate effectively with managers.
6. Ability to take accurate minutes, for example at Alternative Dispute Resolution meetings, recording decisions and actions agreed at the meeting, present them in a professional format and distribute them in a timely manner (with agreement of the chair).
7. Ability to build and maintain relationships with internal customers.
8. Ability to accurately record details of escalated (stage 2 and above) complaints efficiently and effectively, carefully creating client case files, transferring all relevant data from the stage 1 file where appropriate and uploading all relevant new data (including personal and special category data) and evidence appropriately.
9. Ability to confidently comprehend Ombudsman enquiries and to effectively respond to them within timescales, and to identify and communicate risks arising from Ombudsman complaints, for example in relation to the Ombudsman's powers.

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10. Ability to appropriately identify and communicate risks arising from complaints, for example in relation to the media.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

1. Ability to confidently prepare for, effectively support, and start to lead discussions with senior managers and services, following Ombudsman's upheld decisions and to ensure learning from Ombudsman complaints.
2. Ability to present information to a new audience, for example, the Complaint Handlers Group or similar.
3. Ability to take responsibility for motivating and developing a member of the team through shadowing, mentoring, sharing best practice and undertaking one to one discussions.