

# General Support Process

Process Title:	How to handle a formal complaint
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## Key things to know:

- We have a Complaints Resolution Policy in Laserfiche at \Mackenzie\Corporate\Corporate Policies\Organisational
- We have a Complaints Register in Laserfiche at \Mackenzie\Corporate\Corporate\MDC Complaints Register.
- There are user-friendly brochures for customers at the front desks in Fairlie and Twizel
- We value complaints because we respect our customers and look forward to improving our services to them

1. If you cannot resolve an incident with a customer at the first point of contact with them you can invite them to raise a formal complaint. For example: "I'm sorry we haven't been able to resolve this issue to your satisfaction. Would you like to raise a formal complaint?"
2. If the customer says YES, that will start the formal complaint resolution process. At that point we have two working days to acknowledge their formal complaint.
  - a. Note: The Complainant MUST give their full name and contact details (preferably email address too).
3. Acknowledging the Complaint: This is best done via email so there is a written record. For example:

Dear XXXX, This email acknowledges that you would like to engage the Mackenzie District Council formal Complaints Resolution process. Our commitment is to work with you to resolve this as soon as we can.

Within two working days we will acknowledge your request for the formal Complaints Resolution process and that we will investigate the issue and provide you with a report which will be discussed with you within ten working days.

If you do not accept the resolution we have provided to you at that stage, you can request for your formal complaint to be escalated to the relevant General Manager, who will re-investigate the issue. You will be provided with a new report which will be discussed with you within ten working days.

If, at that stage, you still do not accept that the issue is resolved you may request for the matter and your formal complaint to be further escalated to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer will review the issue and provide you with a new report which will be discussed with you within ten working days.
4. Logging the Complaint: As soon as possible after the Complainant has said YES to raising a formal complaint, you must let your manager know, and enter the complaint yourself into the Complaints Register. The register is in Laserfiche at \Mackenzie\Corporate\Corporate\MDC Complaints Register.

5. If you are the Investigating Officer i.e. the person at Stage One working to resolve the issue and to provide the report back to the Complainant you must either meet the 10 day timeframe or, if you think you might not be able to, let your manager know as EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

## About the Complaint Resolution Process

Please note that this is just a quick summary. Please ensure that you read the full Policy for more detail.

### What is a Complaint?

- Any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction
- About an incident that has not been resolved at the first point of contact
- Relating to either People or Process / Procedure

### What is NOT a Complaint?

- Disagreement with a Council policy or a Council decision
- Refusal to accept statutory obligations
- Where the issue is already with the Court
- Insurance claims
- Where a formal right of appeal already exists
  
- Please note that all complaints must include the relevant contact details

### Why have a policy?

- We are here to serve our community
- Our expectation is excellent customer service
- Regardless of internal or external factors
- Respects integrity of Complainant
- Ensures transparency of Council processes
- Protects our reputation

### Complaint Seriousness?

- Minor: no financial impact / one-off minor regulatory non compliance
- Low: Short-term loss of community confidence
- Medium: possible financial impact / short-term loss of confidence
- High: significant financial impact; loss of community confidence that will take time to repair
- Extreme: major financial impact / court or criminal proceedings

### About the Complainant and dealing with their issue

- We will treat their complaint with the strictest of confidentiality
- Invite them to bring a friend or family member

- Abuse or inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable
- Persistently making the same claim is not acceptable
- Repeatedly changing aspects of the complaint or the desired outcome is not acceptable
- Policy and brochures available

### **3-Level Process**

- Stage One – 10 working days
  - Formal complaint acknowledged in writing within 2 working days
  - Full reply from Investigating officer within 10 days
  - Resolved or escalated...
  - Stage Two – 10 working days
    - Escalation to GM acknowledged in writing within 2 working days
    - Full reply from GM within 10 days
    - Resolved or escalated...
- Stage Three – 10 working days
  - Escalation to CEO acknowledged in writing within 2 working days
  - Full reply from CEO within 10 days
  - Resolved (could involve mediation / external facilitation)