

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Customer Care Policy**

**October 2021**

## Version Control Sheet

*Title:* **Customer Care Policy**

*Purpose:* **To detail the commitment of Mid Devon District Council to provide customer services that meet the varying needs of customers and to set the standards that can be expected from the Council and it's officers to customers.**

*Owner:* **Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement**

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*Review Frequency:* **Every 2 years or sooner if required.**

*Next review date:* **October 2023**

*Consultation* **This document was sent out for consultation to the following:**

Operational and Corporate Managers

Leadership Team

Cabinet Member

### Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Version Approved</b>
Operational and Corporate Managers	<b>Nov 2021</b>	
Leadership Team	<b>Nov 2021</b>	
Portfolio Holder for Working Environment	<b>Nov 2021</b>	

\*- Delete if not applicable

## 1. Introduction

### Vision

Mid Devon District Council are committed to ensuring that customer service excellence is an integral part of planning, resourcing and delivery of our services. Our vision is to be an organisation that provides consistently high quality customer services, which add value to the customer and to the Council.

## 2. Strategy

The standard of service a customer receives when they contact the Council will influence their view of the Council and potentially the area it serves. At a time when customer expectations are continually changing and councils are striving to make efficiencies we aim to address these challenges by

- Making the best use of technology to deliver cost effective services
- Preventing valuable resources being wasted on providing poor customer service by reviewing what we do and how we do it.
- Transform services to make them simple to deliver and easy for customers to access
- Consider alternative methods of communications such as social media

Whilst this policy is concerned with standards, the Council has a policy specifically for Compliments, Comments and Complaints which is available via the website **Complaints and Feedback Policy (middevon.gov.uk)** or from the Customer Service Team (contact details included in this document). This policy guides customers through the process of making a compliment, comment or complaint.

## 3. Scope

This document applies to all Mid Devon residents and customers of the Council and all Council staff. Where third parties provide services on the Councils behalf, those third parties must be able to deliver a customer service which is broadly in line with this policy.

## 4. Related Documents

- a. Complaints Policy
- b. Chanel Access Strategy
- c. Customer Care Standards

## 5. Customer Service Promise

We will:

Have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service, and that meet the diverse needs of our customers.

Have staff that are polite and friendly to customers, and have an understanding of our customer needs.

Advise our customers and potential customers about our customer care standards and what can be expected from our services in terms of timeliness and quality.

We aim to improve how we learn from customer feedback, both good and bad and use that to improve services.

We will also ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to support customers and resolve queries at the point of contact wherever possible.

## **6. Customer Service Standards**

We would like all customers to know the standards and behaviours they can expect from us. Customer Service Standards set out how we will behave, and how quickly we will respond.

What the responsibilities of customers are when contacting us by their chosen method.

We will ensure that standards take into account our responsibility to deliver national and statutory standards and targets.

In addition to the standards set to support this policy, some services may also have standards and targets specific to their particular areas of work (e.g. Housing benefit applications, planning applications, grass cutting).

## **7. Measuring success**

Over time we aim to have customers involved in setting and monitoring customer service standards. The Council will develop ways of engaging with customers and encouraging customer feedback.

Performance will be monitored by self-assessment, comparisons with other organisations, customer satisfaction ratings and sometimes feedback from external bodies.

As a Council we are developing ways of getting customer feedback and finding out whether or not our customers are satisfied with the standard of service they have received. Comments, compliments and complaints are an important part of the continued improvement process and will be needed in order for us to be a customer-focused organisation.

## **8. Staff training**

Standards will be included in induction for all new staff. All staff will be required to read and adopt this policy via Learning Management System (LMS) and to review annually. A programme of targeted training and workshops for all staff, to ensure they know what is expected of them within their role in behaviour and response to customers will be delivered. This will be supported by a staff guide, regular promotion of good customer service and useful resources via The Link weekly staff newsletter and other resources available. Appraisals will include discussion around customer focus and customer service, linked to the core competencies for the role.