

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Customer Care Policy**

**January 2024**

## 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 its officers to customers.**

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*Status:* **DRAFT**

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

*Next review date:* **December 2025**

*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>Jan 2024</b>	
Leadership Team	<b>Jan 2024</b>	
Portfolio Holder for Working Environment	<b>Jan 2024</b>	

## **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 or from the Customer Service Team. 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 behalf of the Council, 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. [Customer Care Standards](#)
- c. [Equality Policy](#)
- d. Safeguarding

## **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 policies and procedures which support our most vulnerable residents to ensure access to council services and their interactions with us.

Have staff that are polite and friendly to customers and understand 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 consider 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 areas of work (e.g. Housing benefit applications, planning applications, social landlord function).

## **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 similar 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 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 are needed 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.