

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10am, Tuesday 28 February 2017

Managing Customer Contact in a Fair and Positive Way Policy – Assurance Statement

Item number 7.3
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive Summary

Council policies are key governance tools. They help realise the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes and are critical to its operations, ensuring that statutory and regulatory obligations are met in an efficient and accountable manner.

To strengthen arrangements in this area, a corporate policy framework was approved in September 2013 to ensure that all current policies are easily accessible and created, revised and renewed in a consistent manner and to an agreed standard.

The Managing Customer Contact in a Fair and Positive Way Policy sets out the Council's process for addressing unreasonable demands or behaviour from customers. It provides strategies to staff for managing behaviour at a local level, to ensure that all customers are able to access the services they are entitled to. This report sets out the outcome of this policy's review.

Links

Coalition Pledges
Council Priorities CO 25
Single Outcome Agreement

Managing Customer Contact in a Fair and Positive Way Policy – Annual Review

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note this policy has been reviewed and is considered to remain current, relevant and fit for purpose.
- 1.2 To note that this policy will form part of a wider review into complaints management and will link in to the Council's Customer Strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 Council policies are key governance tools. They help realise the Council's vision, values, pledges and outcomes and are critical to its operations, ensuring that statutory and regulatory obligations are met in an efficient and accountable manner.
- 2.2 To strengthen arrangement in this area, a corporate policy framework was approved by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 3 September 2013 to ensure that all current Council policies are easily accessible and created, revised and renewed in a consistent manner and to an agreed standard. These arrangements include the development of a comprehensive register of Council policies and introduction of a policy template to provide the Council with a standardise format in terms of content and style.

3. Main report

- 3.1 A critical element of the policy framework is to ensure that all Council policies remain fit for purpose. This requires each directorate and Head of Service to review, on an annual basis, all policies within their respective remits and to provide the necessary level of assurance that these remain current and relevant.
- 3.2 The [Managing Customer Contact in a Fair and Positive Way policy](#) was launched in September 2014. It follows similar practice and guidance used by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and is intended to be invoked only in exceptional circumstances. It is intended to help staff manage behaviour before it escalates to a requirement to formally restrict access or obstruct the Council's ability to resolve individual issues.

- 3.3 While often linked to a complaint situation, unacceptable behaviours and actions are not exclusive to complaints handling. All services will, on occasion, deal with customers who demonstrate unacceptable behaviours. In this context, the policy has relevance to the development of the Council's broader Customer Strategy. The policy is currently overseen by the Corporate Complaints Management Group which is chaired by the Information Compliance Manager.
- 3.4 The policy is supported by a best practice guide which provides advice to staff on how to handle difficult situations. There is also an e-learning package which addresses both this policy and the Council's general procedure for managing complaints, including escalation processes. This has been completed by 2169 colleagues.
- 3.5 The Council's approach to recording and managing complaints is currently under review and has been established as a project under the Council's Transformation Team. The aim is to identify issues and implement change, ensuring complaints management is consistent across the Council and a driver for service improvement. The current policy will also be reviewed as part of this process.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Access to up-to-date and relevant Council policies, for internal and external stakeholders, which are quality-assured and reviewed on an annual basis.

5. Financial impact

None. . The policy and associated guidance and training are available on the ORB. ,

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Maintaining and publicising relevant policies promotes increased accountability, transparency and efficiencies concerning Council actions and operations.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 This policy balances the rights of individuals and Council staff to deal with customer contacts without discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no sustainability issues arising from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with the Council Complaints Management Group).

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 [Unacceptable Actions Policy](#), Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

Contact: Kevin Wilbraham, Information Governance Manager

E-mail: kevin.wibraham@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 6174

Contact: Sarah Hughes-Jones, Information Compliance Manager

E-mail: sarah.hughes-jones@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0141 469 3208

11. Links

Coalition Pledges

Council Priorities

CO25 the council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives.

Single Outcome Agreement

Appendices