

Complaints Policy

December 2021

Responsible Directorate: Customer and Transformation

Authorised By: Council

Date of Adoption: December 2021

Review Date: December 2025

Policy Type: Administrative

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The City of Boroondara (Council) recognises a customer's right to provide feedback to Council, both positive and negative, about its services and their experiences with them. Whether you speak with us on the phone, email or write to us, visit us in person or interact with Council in any other way, we want to make the experience consistently easy and consistently positive.

We are committed to providing a high standard of customer service that is timely, accurate, accountable and responds to the needs of the customer and the community. Complaints provide Council with vital information about whether we are meeting this commitment. They create an opportunity for Council to remedy negative experiences, build greater advocacy for Council and its services, and assist us with identifying areas of service delivery that need improvement.

The Complaints Policy (the policy) provides a framework to ensure Council identifies and manages complaints effectively. It also provides a framework that enables customers to raise their complaints with Council easily and with the confidence that Council will listen to their concerns, be responsive and handle their complaints fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

A Complaint Handling Procedure has been developed to guide and assist Council officers in the effective management of complaints. This procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated as required to continuously improve the experience for our customers and staff.

1.2 Scope

Dealing with complaints is a core part of Council business. We encourage people to contact us when they have a complaint and we are committed to:

- making it easy for members of the public to make complaints about the Council and its services
- responding to complaints by taking action to resolve complaints as quickly as possible
- learning from complaints to improve our services.

This policy relates to the management of complaints made to Council by any person who is affected by an action, inaction, or decision of Council. The policy applies to all Council employees and extends to volunteers and contractors carrying out work on behalf of Council to the extent provided for in their contract / agreement with Council. These will be referred to throughout this policy as Council staff and contractors.

This policy aims to:

- define what is considered a complaint to be managed under this policy
- outline the process for handling complaints
- ensure staff handle complaints consistently, respectfully and objectively
- outline roles and responsibilities of Council officers handling complaints; and
- outline how complaints will be captured and reported as input to continuously improve the delivery of Council's services.

What is a complaint under this Policy?

A complaint is defined as the communication, whether orally or in writing, to Council by a person of their dissatisfaction with:

- the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council; or
- the delay by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council in taking an action, making a decision or providing a service; or
- a policy or decision made by Council or a member of Council staff or a contractor.

In simple terms, a complaint to Council is any communication which involves the following:

- an expression of dissatisfaction
- about an action, decision, policy, or service
- that relates to Council staff, a Council contractor, or Council as a decision-making body.

What types of complaints are not handled under this Policy?

This policy does not apply to matters or complaints that are otherwise subject to statutory review or alternative procedures.

Below are some examples;

- complaints/objections relating to a planning application decision
- complaints/appeals relating to parking infringements
- complaints about alleging fraud, corruption or other criminal behaviour
- complaints relating to a councillor outside of their role as a councillor
- freedom of information requests
- a petition to Council about a particular matter
- comments or submissions received during a formal consultation or community engagement process, which has a specific process for management
- work related grievances from Council staff (i.e. complaints relating to their employment)
- complaints that have already been reviewed by an external agency

What is a request for service?

Unlike a complaint, a service request is raised when a customer wants Council to provide something, generally information or a service. A complaint, on the other hand, deals with a failure (in the eyes of the customer) to respond satisfactorily to a request or expectation that a service will be provided.

A service request is contact with Council to:

- seek assistance
- access a new service
- seek advice
- inform/make a report about something for which the council has responsibility.

The following are examples of a service request:

- a request for information or explanation of policies or procedures
- reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure (i.e. potholes)

- reports of hazards (e.g. fallen trees)
- a dispute concerning neighbours
- an insurance claim

See below table for examples of complaints and requests for service.

Complaint to be dealt with according to the Council's complaints policy	Request for service dealt with per related request management process
I put my bin out on time this morning and the truck didn't collect it.	I forgot to put my bin out this morning and missed the collection truck. Can you send someone to collect my bin this afternoon?
The Council has said the neighbour's barking dog isn't breaching any noise laws, but I think the Council is wrong and they just haven't investigated the situation properly.	My neighbour's dog keeps barking, and I can't sleep. Can the Council do something about it?
I reported a pothole on West Road to the Council six weeks ago. I haven't heard anything since, and it still hasn't been fixed.	There is a pothole on West Road. Can you send someone to fix it?
The Council made a decision related to my local area and I believe I was not provided an opportunity to have my say.	I provided feedback during a consultation and my recommendations did not result in a change. Can this process be explained?
I received a parking fine and am not satisfied with the way it was reviewed and handled.	I would like to object to my parking fine.

1.3 Complaints received by Councillors

When a Councillor receives a complaint from a member of the public, it will be referred to Council via boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au to be registered, assessed, and allocated for management as per the complaints handling process.

Response timeframes will be in accordance with the Council's Customer Service Charter and a copy of the outcome response will be shared with the Councillor.

1.4 Complaints about contractors

Council retains a level of responsibility for services carried out by contractors on its behalf.

This policy applies to all contractors carrying out services or works on Council's behalf to the extent provided under their contractual obligations with Council.

Officers responsible for the oversight of contractors will ensure the contractors are made aware of their obligations under this policy, and where required, review any complaint handling during status update meetings.

Where a complaint is made in relation to services or works carried out by a contractor, the complaint will go straight to the **investigation stage** and be assigned to an appropriate officer to examine the complaint and liaise with both the customer and the contractor.

The outcome of the initial investigation will be provided in writing to the customer and include the name and contact details of a council officer who the customer may escalate their complaint to for an **internal review**, should they not be satisfied with the initial outcome.

If the customer believes the complaint remains unresolved, they can escalate the matter for **external review** as outlined in this policy.

1.5 Complaints about a named Council officer

Any complaints about a named Council staff member will be received by the relevant Director and handled in line with the complaints handling procedure and in accordance with Council's employee code of conduct.

1.6 Complaints regarding breach of privacy

Council views the protection of an individual's privacy as an integral part of its commitment to accountability and integrity in all its activities and programs. The [Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#) outlines Council's commitment to protecting an individual's right to privacy and the management of personal information.

Complaints about a privacy breach, in the first instance, may be directed to Council's Coordinator Governance who will investigate the complaint in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and Council's privacy and Data Collection Policy.

Alternatively, complaints can be directed to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC), although the Information Commissioner may decline to consider a complaint if the complainant has not first complained directly to Council.

1.7 Complaints about specific matters - alternative procedures

There are specific complaint procedures which will apply to certain types of complaints. If the complaint received would be better handled through another process outside this complaints policy, this will be explained to the customer at the start. In these circumstances, the nature of the complaint and the parties nominated in the complaint will determine how the complaint is investigated and responded to.

Complaint type	Handling procedure
Complaints about improper or corrupt conduct with public interest disclosure	<p>Where a complaint involves allegations of improper or corrupt conduct by the Council, Chief Executive Officer or another employee of Council, it will be handled by the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator in accordance with the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act, 2012</i>, Council's Fraud and Corruption Control Policy, Council's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle-blowers) Procedures for the City of Boroondara and Staff Code of Conduct and Ethics.</p> <p>Disclosures of alleged improper or corrupt conduct that relate to Councillors must be made directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) or the Victorian Ombudsman.</p> <p>Further information about how to report improper conduct using the public interest disclosures process can be found on our website.</p>
Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	<p>Complaints about the CEO are limited to conduct which is defined as 'any action or behaviour of the CEO of a Council involving bullying, victimisation or harassment, including sexual harassment'. Complaints received which meet these criteria will be referred to the Director, Customer and Transformation for investigation.</p> <p>Complaints about the CEO must be made in writing.</p>
Complaints about Councillors from members of the public	<p>Complaints about Councillors are limited to conduct that is defined as 'any action or behaviour of a Councillor involving bullying, victimisation or harassment, including sexual harassment'. Complaints about Councillors which meet this definition will be referred to the Mayor for investigation. If the complaint involves the Mayor, it will be referred to the Deputy Mayor for investigation. In each instance, the Councillor(s) who are the subject of the complaint will be notified by the Mayor</p>

Complaint type	Handling procedure
	<p>or Deputy Mayor after the complaint details have been established. All interactions with the customer will be documented.</p> <p>Alternative procedures are in place to handle complaints about specific matters such as allegations of corrupt conduct or misconduct (Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012, Council's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle-blowers) Procedure and the Councillor Code of Conduct. Complaints about Councillors while performing their role as a Councillor must be made in writing.</p>
Complaints about procurement activity	<p>Where a supplier or third party raises a complaint in relation to a procurement activity it will be investigated per the Procurement Complaints Management Process outlined in the Procurement Policy.</p>

1.8 Corporate framework

This policy supports Council's mission and vision by addressing the following objective(s) in the Council Plan 2017-21.

- Ensure transparent decision making through open governance processes.
- Provide enhanced online services to our community, placing the customer at the centre of everything we do, with a focus on making Council more efficient and effective.

1.9 Guiding principles

Complaints which fall within the scope of this policy will also be considered in the context of the seven principles as outlined in the Victorian Ombudsman's Councils and Complaints - A Good Practice Guide (2nd edition), July 2021.

1. Commitment

We are committed to resolving complaints that we receive. Our culture recognises people's right to make a complaint and considers complaint handling to be part of our core business in serving the community and improving service delivery.

2. Accessibility

People can easily find out how to complain to Council and Council staff will actively assist them with the complaint process.

3. Transparency

The complaint handling system clearly sets out how to complain, where to complain, and how the complaint will be handled. The steps taken to respond to a complaint will be recorded and will stand up to scrutiny.

4. Objectivity and fairness

Under the complaint handling system, complainants and staff will be treated with respect and courtesy, and complaints will be judged on merit and fact.

5. Confidentiality

The complaint handling system protects the personal information of people making a complaint, and Council staff will be informed only on a 'need to know' basis.

6. Accountability

We are accountable, both internally and externally, for decision making and complaint handling performance. We provide explanations and reasons for decisions and will ensure decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.

7. Continuous improvement

We regularly analyse complaint data to find ways to improve how Council operates and how services are delivered and will use this information to inform changes.

2 Background

2.1 Policy environment

Council continues its commitment to managing customer complaints using best practice. The development of this policy is an opportunity to amend the previous policy to align to the new requirements for complaint handling in the *Local Government Act 2020* and best practice guides.

2.2 Policy context

This policy has been developed in accordance with the requirements of sections 106 and 107 of the Local Government Act 2020. The policy has also been developed with consideration of:

- Victorian Ombudsman's Good Practice Guide to Dealing with Challenging Behaviour (May 2018).
- Victorian Ombudsman's Revisiting Councils and Complaints (October 2019).
- Victorian Ombudsman's Councils and Complaints: A Good Practice Guide 2nd edition (July 2021).
- The Australian/New Zealand Standard - AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations.

3 Policy statement

The Council recognises complaints to inform what is causing dissatisfaction with customers and will work closely with the customer to remedy the issue and look for ways to improve services and future experiences.

Council aims to make it easy and accessible for a customer to make a complaint.

3.1 How to make a complaint

A person can make a complaint in a number of ways.

Email:

boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au

Website:

www.boroondara.vic.gov.au - "Contact Us"

Mail:

Boroondara City Council
Private Bag 1
Camberwell VIC 3124

Telephone:

Customer Service Team 03 9278 4444 (after hours calls will be transferred to Council's after-hours service)
National Relay Service: TTY 13 36 77
Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

In person:

Boroondara Council Offices
8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell VIC 3124

We encourage individuals to try and raise concerns directly with the Council staff member or contractor in the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved the complaint will be escalated to a complaint handler or more senior officer.

Information that is helpful to include in your complaint

- your name and contact details. You can complain anonymously, but this may limit how the Council responds to you
- identify the action, decision, service or policy you are complaining about, and why you are dissatisfied
- relevant details, such as dates, times, location or reference numbers, and documents that support your complaint
- the outcome you are seeking from making your complaint
- whether you have any communication needs.

Anonymous complaints

Although anonymous complaints will not be rejected, Council's ability to investigate the matter fully will be limited as specifics may not be fully available. Additionally, Council will be unable to provide a response, in writing, of any decisions or actions taken.

Non-specific complaints

Correspondence regarding complaints which are non-specific in nature, or not relevant to the operations of Council and/or generally classed as haranguing in nature will be received and recorded but not responded to. Reasons for the determination will be filed along with the correspondence.

3.2 Accessibility

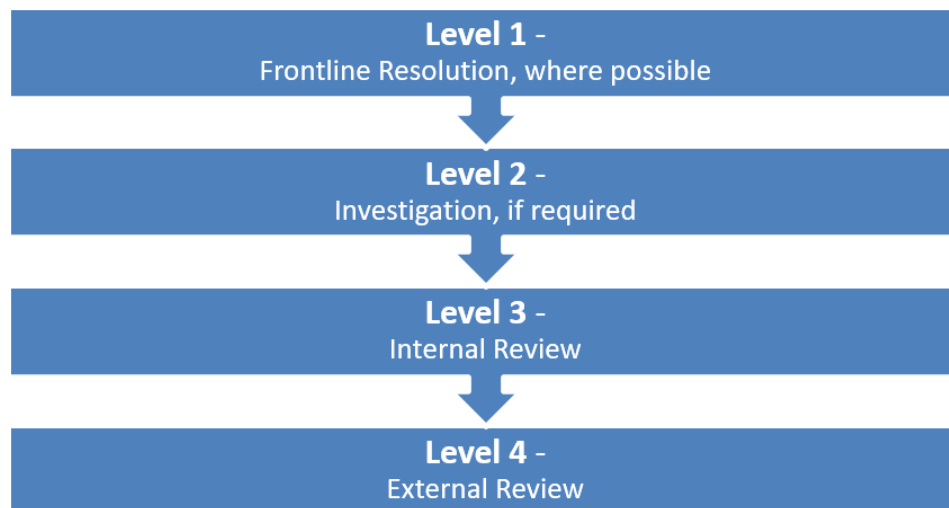
Anyone who has been affected by an action or inaction of Council can make a complaint and lack of accessibility should not be a barrier to that right.

Council has the following services in place to assist people with specific needs to make a complaint:

- Council can be contacted through the National Relay Service (NRS): TTY users can phone the NRS on 13 36 77 then ask for 03 9278 4444.
- Speak & Listen (speech-to-speech) users phone the NRS on 1300 555 727 and ask for 03 9278 4444.
- Interpreting services are available.

3.3 Complaint handling framework

The City of Boroondara incorporates a four-level approach to handling complaints. This approach is informed by the recommendations of the Victorian Ombudsman's



Councils and Complaints: A Good Practice Guide (February 2015) and the updated second edition of the Good Practice Guide (July 2021) and supports our customers with a standardised, responsive, fair and transparent experience and response.

1. **Frontline Resolution:** frontline staff receive the complaint and resolve it within the scope of their authority immediately, if possible.
2. **Investigation, if required:** if frontline staff cannot resolve the complaint, they will refer it to a more senior Council officer for investigation and resolution.
3. **Internal Review:** if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they can request an internal review. This will be referred to an appropriate senior officer who is independent of the person who took the action, made the decision or provided the service.
4. **Access to external review:** if the complainant is not satisfied with the process or outcome of the internal review, they will be informed of any external avenues through which they may pursue their complaint.

3.4 Our complaint handling process

Level 1: Frontline Resolution

When we receive your complaint, we will assess the information available and decide the most appropriate course of action. Where possible, we will attempt to resolve your complaint at the time you first contact us.

We will respond to all complaints in line with our [customer service charter](#).

After our initial assessment, we may:

- take direct action to resolve your complaint
- refer your complaint to a case manager for further investigation. This case manager will be your primary contact and will take responsibility for working through the resolution of your enquiry on behalf of the Council
- advise you if there is an alternative process to deal with your complaint including if you have a right to a statutory review of your complaint (such as a right of appeal to VCAT).

If we decide not to take action on your complaint, we will explain why, and, to the extent they are available, inform you about other options.

Level 2: Investigation, if required

Complaints unable to be resolved at first point of contact will be referred to a more senior council officer for investigation and management.

As part of our investigation, we will:

- make prompt contact with you to discuss the matter and understand what resolution outcome you are seeking
- assess the information against relevant legislation, policies and procedures
- refer to Council documents and records
- convene with affected parties, when appropriate to discuss the issue and possible solutions
- take ownership of your complaint, clearly set out actions and timeframes and keep you updated regularly
- advise you of the outcome and explain our reasons and follow this up with a response in writing if required.

We will respond to all complaints within timeframes set out in our [customer service charter](#).

Level 3: Internal Review

How to request an internal review

If you are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the level 1 frontline resolution or level 2 investigation, you are able to request an internal review in writing by emailing your request and accompanying information and supporting documentation to boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au or via letter.

The internal review will be assigned to a suitable senior officer who is independent of;

- the person who took the action; and
- the person who made the decision; and
- the person who provided the service

The officer will undertake a review of the complaint and gather information and expert advice where necessary.

We will inform you of the outcome of the internal review in writing at the conclusion of the review and explain our reasons.

The outcome letter will advise you of any avenues of external review available in relation to the matter, such as the Victorian Ombudsman.

Level 4: External Review

How to request an external review

If you are not satisfied with Council's final response, you can contact the Ombudsman Office and/or other external agencies to request an independent review.

You can request an external review from the following organisations.

Name of Organisation	Summary of responsibility	Contact details
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)	IBAC accepts complaints about suspected corruption and misconduct in the Victorian public sector.	IBAC www.ibac.vic.gov.au Ph. 1300 73 5135
Local Government Inspectorate	The Local Government Inspectorate is responsible for assessing and investigating complaints about Victorian councils and Councillors that relate to breaches and offences of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Act). This includes complaints considered to be public interest disclosure and election complaints.	Local Government Inspectorate www.lgi.vic.gov.au Complaints hotline: 1800 469 359
Office of the Victorian	OVIC can investigate complaints about certain actions or action failed to be taken	OVIC www.ovic.vic.gov.au

Name of Organisation	Summary of responsibility	Contact details
Information Commissioner (OVIC)	by an agency under the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Vic). Privacy complaints can also be pursued through OVIC.	
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	VCAT assists resolve a range of disputes between people and government in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning and environment - land valuation - building and construction 	VCAT www.vcat.vic.gov.au Ph. 1300 01 8228
Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission	The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission helps people resolve complaints of discrimination, sexual harassment, racial and religious vilification, and victimisation.	Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission www.humanrights.vic.gov.au Ph. 1300 292 153 or email: enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au
Victorian Ombudsman	The Ombudsman can assist when you have a complaint about the decision or action of Council, and you are unhappy with the Council's response to that complaint. This includes failures to consider human rights or failure to act compatibly with a human right under the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> (Vic).	Victorian Ombudsman www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au
Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC)	VEC can assist with alleged breaches of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> by a candidate, party, organisation or individual	VEC www.vec.vic.gov.au

4 Implementation and monitoring

4.1 Recording complaints

All complaints will be recorded within Council's customer request management system and/or electronic document management system.

We will analyse our complaint data and use that to measure our effectiveness in handling complaints, inform how we can reduce complaints, improve services, and the outcomes of service improvements. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for acting on the recommendations in these reports.

We will record the following information for each complaint:

- the complainant's details
- how the complaint was received
- a description of the complaint
- the complainant's desired outcome (if known)
- the Council officer responsible for handling the complaint
- any action taken, including contact with the complainant, response times and the outcome
- any recommendations for improvement.

4.2 Your privacy

This Complaints Policy is subject to our [Privacy Policy](#) which outlines how we manage personal information.

We will keep your personal information secure. We will use your information to respond to your complaint and may also analyse the information you have provided for the purpose of improving services that relate to your complaint.

Where we publish complaint data, personal information will be removed.

We accept and action anonymous complaints, provided we have received enough information to do so, but will be unable to provide a response without contact information.

4.3 How we learn from complaints

Complaints from people who use or who are affected by our services provide us with valuable feedback about how we are performing.

We will analyse our complaint data regularly to identify trends and potential issues that deserve further attention. We will use this information to come up with solutions about how we can improve our services.

We are open and transparent about the complaints we have received, and what we have done to resolve them.

4.4 Reporting on performance

Appropriate performance data will be captured to enable Council to review the timeliness and efficiency of Council's complaint handling as well as identifying trends and patterns in complaints to be used to inform service improvements. Such data may be reported annually in Council's Annual Report.

4.5 Revision

The Complaints Policy will be reviewed at least every four years, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation or internal processes impacted on the policy.

4.6 Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this policy, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position Title	Contact number	Contact department email
Head of Customer Connect and Corporate Information	9278 4444	boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au

4.7 Roles and responsibilities of Council staff and contractors

Role	Responsibility
All staff will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise themselves with this policy and the Council's complaint process Assist members of the public to make a complaint Treat members of the public respectfully and professionally Forward all complaints to boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au to allow the complaint to be recorded and investigated per the policy Record related correspondence in Council's electronic document management system Provide information/advice to support the officer handling a complaint to effectively and efficiently manage a complaint, so it is done in a timely manner Review the content of complaints and use this information to initiate improvement activities that address the cause of the complaint and improve outcomes for the customer
Frontline staff will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and assess complaints and where possible resolve the complaint at the point of contact, within the scope of their role Where required, seek the assistance of their supervisor, to enable the complaint to be resolved at this point of contact Lodge complaints in Council's customer request management system
Case Management function will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and assess complaints that have not been resolved at first point of contact Handle complaints in line with complaints policy and related procedures Where required, seek assistance from relevant senior officers to enable the complaint to be resolved at this stage When requested by the customer, escalate a complaint to the appropriate level officer for internal review When required, advise customer of avenues for external review
Senior Managers, Team Leaders, Coordinators, Managers and Directors will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage complaints that are escalated and or referred for internal review in line with the complaints policy and related procedures Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures Manage conflicts of interest in the complaint process Report on and identify improvements from complaint data Support staff who deal with complaints Monitor complaints and ensure response timeframes are met Model a customer focused continuous improvement mindset and promote the value of receiving and recording complaints
Chief Executive Officer will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote positive behaviours and practices relating to enabling, responding to and learning from complaints Support service improvements that arise from complaints Receive and manage any escalated complaints that cannot be resolved at the Director level Manage complaints about Directors
Councillors will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise themselves with this policy and the Council's complaints process Refer complaints to boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au to be dealt with in accordance with the Council's complaints handling process
Mayor will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote positive behaviours and practices by councillors relating to enabling, responding to and learning from complaints Manage complaints about Councillors
Third party contractors will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the Council contract manager informed of any trends and/or major issues, and handle complaints in accordance with Council's complaints handling process
Volunteers will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer complaints to boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au to be registered

4.8 Unreasonable complainant conduct

We require our staff to be respectful and responsive in all of their communications with members of the public. We expect the same of you when you communicate with our staff.

We may change the way we communicate with you if your behaviour or conduct raises health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council staff involved in the complaints process.

In managing unreasonable conduct, we will try to ensure:

- the complainant's expectations are clear and realistic
- we maintain firm and clear communication, either in writing or verbally
- a complainant understands what Council can do and not do in relation to the complaint, and
- we provide clear reasons for our decisions.

Council may decide to deal with unreasonable conduct in one or more of the following ways:

Who they contact:

Where a customer demonstrates unreasonable persistence or demands, it may be appropriate to restrict their access to a single staff member (a sole contact point) and request that communication be made in writing to assist with quality control.

This staff member will exclusively case manage their complaint(s) and interactions with Council. This will ensure they are dealt with consistently and will minimise the chances for misunderstandings, contradictions and conflict.

What they can raise with Council

Where customers continue to engage in unreasonable conduct about issues that have already been comprehensively considered and/or reviewed (at least once) by Council, restrictions may be applied to the issues/subject matter the customer can again raise with Council.

When, where and how they can have contact

A customer's telephone, written or face-to-face contact with the Council may place an unreasonable demand on time or resources because it affects the health, safety and security of staff. It may also be behaviour that is persistently rude, threatening, abusive or aggressive. As such, Council may limit when, where and/or how the customer can interact with Council.

5 References

5.1 Related documents

This Policy has been developed particularly in accordance with the following legislation, regulations, policy and standards:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
- Victorian Ombudsman: Councils and complaints - A Good Practice Guide 2015
- Victorian Ombudsman: Revisiting Councils and Complaints 2018
- Victorian Ombudsman: A Good Practice Guide (2nd edition) 2021
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Relevant Council policies and procedures include but are not limited to:

- Customer Service Charter
- Complaint Handling Procedure
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowers) Procedures for the City of Boroondara
- Privacy and Data Protection Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Workplace Issue and Grievance Policy
- Performance Improvement and Disciplinary Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Corporate Information Management Policy

5.2 Definitions

Term	Definition of Term
Complaint	The communication, whether orally or in writing, to the Council by a person of their dissatisfaction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council; or the delay by a member of Council staff or a contractor engaged by the Council in taking an action, making a decision or providing a service; or a policy or decision made by Council or a member of Council staff or a contractor.
Complainant/ Customer	Person or entity affected by the action or inaction of Council, making the complaint.
Complaint handling system	The way individual complaints are dealt with by Council, including the policy, procedure, technology, reporting, evaluation and improvement.
Compliment	An expression of praise or regard for staff, processes or services provided and the experience when interacting with any of these.
Customer request management system	Council's corporate system to record information and administer workflows related to community and resident requests for service, enquiries and complaints.
Feedback	Feedback may take the form of positive and/or negative comments about a service, product, experience or process of Council that may not necessarily require corrective action, change of services or a formal review of a decision. Feedback may however be used to influence future service reviews and delivery approach.
First point of contact	The person who the complainant contacts to express their complaint. This could be any staff member at any level, or a councillor.
Front line staff	All staff and their teams who have authority in their role to manage complaints. This is typically staff who have direct contact with customers but could be any staff member who initially receives a complaint, regardless of their position or role within the organisation.
In writing	Communication in writing refers to email or letter.
Internal review	Internal review can be requested if the complainant is not satisfied the complaint has been resolved or was handled correctly. The review will be handled by a senior staff member who has not been involved with the original decision, action or investigation.
Request for service	Contact with the Council to seek assistance, advice, information, access to a new service or to inform/make a report about something for which the Council has responsibility.
Unreasonable Complainant Conduct	Unreasonable complainant conduct ('UCC') is any behaviour by a current or former complainant which, because of its nature or frequency raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for Council, our staff, other service users and complainants or the complainant himself/herself. UCC can be divided into six categories of conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unreasonable persistence Unreasonable demands Unreasonable lack of cooperation Unreasonable arguments Unreasonable behaviours Abusive, offensive or threatening language or tone