



## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

**1 March 2018**

Document Control

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Revision History

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## Introduction

Yorcoms Ltd recognises the right of its customers to complain and indeed welcomes complaints as a valuable form of feedback about its services. Yorcoms Ltd is committed to using information gained from complaints to help drive forward improvements to services and to better meet the needs of customers.

This policy applies to complaints made to Yorcoms Ltd whether written or verbal.

## Definition of a complaint

Yorcoms Ltd has adopted the following definition of a complaint: "A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided by Yorcoms, a member of staff or someone acting on behalf of Yorcoms Ltd."

A justified complaint is defined as an instance where Yorcoms Ltd is at fault because it has failed to do something it should have, or has done something it should not have.

A grievance is defined as an instance where the customer is dissatisfied but Yorcoms Ltd is not at fault because it is following an agreed policy or procedure.

## Policy

It is the Policy of Yorcoms Ltd to ensure that:

All complaints shall be dealt with promptly, and where possible within the published timescales.

All complaints shall be dealt with confidentially.

Advice and assistance shall be offered to help an enquirer frame their complaint. Complaints may be accepted either verbally or in written format. Complaints made verbally will be confirmed in writing; once agreed the complaint will be processed in accordance with this policy.

All complaints are acknowledged, recorded and monitored by our complaints service.

All complainants will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint and of any delays.

All complainants will be advised of their right to question the response and how to request a review.

Yorcoms Ltd aims to handle all complaints fairly and honestly regardless of whoever makes a complaint. Yorcoms Ltd will treat all members of the community equitably and will not show bias to any particular individual or group.

The complainant will notify Yorcoms Ltd within 20 working days if they remain dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint at stage one or two of the complaints process.

Yorcoms Ltd will not re-address a complaint on broadly the same or similar lines where the issue has already been addressed through the complaint process and has reached a resolution, unless new evidence or information is provided or a completely new issue is raised. Such complaints may be designated persistent or vexatious and be managed in accordance with the persistent complainant's

policy.

Yorcoms Ltd will not enter into protracted correspondence with the complainant between the individual stages of the complaints process.

The management of the complaints process shall be regularly audited to ensure compliance with Yorcoms Ltd standards and procedures.

All complaints shall be monitored and performance indicators made available to demonstrate compliance with agreed timescales.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Yorcoms Ltd has a three-stage complaint process. Following the completion of each stage the customer will have the right to have the complaint escalated to the next stage of the process – subject to a clear explanation as to why they were dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation at the earlier stage and what more they think the council should do.

Yorcoms Ltd will not escalate a complaint simply because the complainant disagrees with the response. Evidence of fault must be provided.

The timescales for stages 1, 2 and 3 are:

### **Stage 1**

- Acknowledgement sent within three working days
- Investigation carried out by a manager of the service complained about
- Response sent within 10 working days

### **Stage 2**

- Clear reasons for the escalation of the complaint must be received no later than 20 working days from the date of the stage one reply
- Acknowledgement sent within three working days
- Response sent from the head of service within 15 working days

### **Stage 3**

- Clear explanation for the escalation of the complaint must be received no later than 20 working days from the date of the stage two reply
- Acknowledgement sent within three working days
- Response sent from the chief executive within 20 working days.

The complainant will be kept informed of any delays and when a full response will be expected.

Any complaints made concerning harassment or discrimination by an employee towards a customer will use the same three stage process.

## Definition of harassment and discrimination

*Harassment* - This is unwanted behaviour, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, sex, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

*Discrimination* - Treating an individual or group differently and less favourably than others under comparable circumstances. It may be based on a person's race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religious or other belief, or their sexual orientations. It may be unlawful and can include harassment.

## Responsibilities of Yorcoms Ltd contractors

Organisations contracted to provide services on behalf of Yorcoms Ltd will be required to comply with the policy. This includes responding to officers with information as requested concerning the complaint and providing assistance in the connection with further investigations as appropriate.

Yorcoms Ltd will reply on behalf of the contractor. If the contractor receives a complaint direct they will ensure that it is sent to the relevant service to record and action as appropriate.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed to respond to any changes and at least every two years.

## Implementation of Policy

This Policy shall be deemed effective as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018. No part of this Policy shall have retroactive effect and shall thus apply only to matters occurring on or after this date.

This Policy has been approved & authorised by:

**Name:** Peter J Reed-Forrester

**Position:** Managing Director

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018

**Due for Review by:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

**Signature:**

