Customer complaints policy

Version 1, May 2020

If you or your representative contact us and are not happy about our service we will ask if you want to have your concern managed as a complaint.

If you would not like your concern managed as a complaint, we will take it on board as feedback and consider how we might improve our service.

## How do I make a complaint?

Complaints can be made:

* Customer Service Online 24/7 – <https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-and-service-requests>
* Phone (03) 9209 6777
* Mail City of Port Phillip, Private Bag 3, ST KILDA 3182
* In person St Kilda Town Hall, 99A Carlisle Street, St Kilda

Need to contact us in your language? Please phone our language-specific service:

* Русский (Russian): [03 9679 9813](tel:0396799813)
* Polski (Polish): [03 9679 9812](tel:0396799812)
* Ελληνικά (Greek): [03 9679 9811](tel:0396799811)
* 廣東話 (Cantonese): [03 9679 9810](tel:0396799810)
* 普通話 (Mandarin): [03 9679 9858](tel:0396799858)
* Italiano (Italian): [03 9679 9814](tel:0396799814)

For other languages not listed, phone [03 9679 9814](tel:0396799814).

National Relay Service

[National Relay Service logo and link to website](https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service)

If you're deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service). Ask for ASSIST - Port Phillip at 03 92096777.

## How quickly will Council respond to my complaint?

We are committed to resolving all simple complaints within 5 business days, but will try to solve it immediately if possible. We are committed to resolving complex complaints within 28 business days. While we try to resolve all complaints in a timely manner, we recognise that some take precedence over others. We will try to resolve all complaints as soon as we can.

If we cannot resolve your complaint within 28 days we will contact you to explain the reasons for the delay and provide an updated timeframe for response.

## How will council respond to my complaint?

If you decide to make a complaint, we’ll immediately acknowledge the complaint and give you:

a) A unique reference number so you can identify and follow up on your complaint;

b) An estimated timeframe for when we’ll resolve your complaint; and

c) Details on how you can get information about our complaint handling process.

We will ensure we get this information to you within one working day of receiving your complaint.

Council will address different types of complaints in different ways:

* Services – where we have failed to deliver a service to you, we will work with you to remedy the situation. You might expect:
  + An explanation of why the error occurred and how we will prevent it from happening in the future
  + A reversal of a decision
  + Working with you to determine what a good outcome might be
  + Offering an apology

If you are making a complaint about a service for which you are not a direct customer, we will need to consider any impact that responding to your complaint might have on the direct customers of the service.

* Staff behaviour – where staff have not behaved professionally we will coach them. Serious failures in staff conduct will be dealt with according to our Human Resource Policies.

Council is not the only organisation which provides services within the municipality. When you make a complaint and we can’t help you, we will do our best to help you find who is responsible so that you can resolve your complaint with them.

## How can I monitor my complaint?

For complaints which take longer than five days to resolve we’ll provide you with progress updates so you know what’s happening. You can also contact us to check the progress of your complaint.

## What if I’m not happy with Council’s response?

Upon resolving your complaint we will provide you with information about how to request an internal review if you are unhappy with the outcome we have given you.

If you have already asked for an internal review and are not happy with our response, you can contact the Victorian Ombudsman to review your complaint.

## Will the details of my complaint be kept private and confidential?

Information gathered when investigating your complaint will be used only to deal with your complaint or to address issues identified in the investigation. Information may be de-identified and will only be shared with relevant staff.

## The behaviour you should expect from Council

You should expect that you will be listened to, treated with respect, and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate.

If you make a complaint we will:

* investigate the complaint competently, diligently and impartially, obtaining additional information as necessary;
* assess fairly, consistently and promptly:
  + the subject matter of the complaint;
  + whether the complaint should be upheld;
  + what remedial action or redress (or both) may be appropriate; and
* if appropriate, whether we have reasonable grounds to be satisfied that another respondent may be solely or jointly responsible for the matter alleged in the complaint; and
* comply promptly with any offer of remedial action or redress accepted by the complainant.

## The behaviour Council expects from you

While we strive to deliver a great service to our customers, we aren’t perfect and understand that at times we get things wrong and this can be frustrating.

Like you, our staff also want to be listened to, and treated with respect.

Some types of behaviour are never acceptable. They include verbal abuse, threats and violence.

Where a customer’s behaviour is unreasonable Council has processes in place to protect staff. We may remove customers from the premises, consider placing restrictions on customers, or ban customers. We may also recommend mediation or refer a customer to the Victorian Ombudsman. Restricting customers access to services or buildings is a serious decision and will only be made by the most senior staff in Council.

If Council restricts a customer’s access to services or buildings, we will be very clear about what the limit is, and we will always abide by the Human Rights Charter to help customers access services they need.

## What to do if Council has restricted your access or banned you

Council will only limit a customer’s access to services or buildings if after an investigation by senior staff, their behaviour has been found to be unreasonable. If Council has limited your access, you have certain rights:

* The right for your case to be reviewed by Council in 12 months time. You can do this in writing or by phone.
* To make a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman:
  + Phone: 03 9613 6222
  + Fax: 03 9602 4761
  + Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au
  + Web: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

## Policy governance

Responsible Service/Department: Customer Experience & Transformation

Adoption Authorised: ELT

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Endorsed CEO or ELT member or department manager to make or approve document editorial amendments: General Manager Customer, Operations & Infrastructure

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Review date: 1 June 2022

Completion date: 1 June 2024

Version number: 2

Stakeholder review and engagement: Waste, Councillor & Executive Support, Digital & Technology Services, Planning and Performance, Parking Services, Planning, Parks, and Rates.

Associated Strategic Direction #: Our Commitment to You

Associated Instruments: Managing Complaint Procedure, Unreasonable Complainant Policy, Unreasonable Complainant Procedure

Supersedes: Complaints Handling Policy 2019

Review History:

| Name | Content Manager File Reference | Date | Description of Edits |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Complaints Handling Policy | # | March 2019 | NA |
| Managing Complaints Policy | E84134/20 | 01/06/2020 | Complete review of all content |