

Cambridgeshire County Council

Procedure Note – Persistent Complainants

Original referral

Referrals to the Departmental Representative may only be made by the Departmental Complaints officer.

If members of staff have concerns about, or difficulties with, their dealings with any individual, these concerns should be reported to their line manager and to the Complaints Officer.

The Complaints Officer will determine whether, in his view, an individual could fall under the definition of a persistent complainant as set out in the policy. If so, the Complaints Officer will make a referral to the Departmental Representative by completing **Form A**.

The Departmental Representative in conjunction with the Head of Customer Contact will determine whether the individual should be dealt with under the Persistent Complainants Policy. Consideration should first be given to alternative methods of managing the complainant, for example:

- Meeting with the complainant in order to address any outstanding issue
- Involving an independent person to mediate on the issue.

If no alternative means are applicable or successful and this Policy is to be applied, the Departmental Representative will then complete **Form A** determining in particular:

- a) Whether contact from the persistent complainant should be directed to, and only accepted by, a named individual
- b) Whether a strategy meeting should be called to co-ordinate the Department/Council's approach
- c) What additional support should be given to any individual identified in (b) above
- d) Whether the persistent complainant's means and manner of contact should be restricted
- e) Whether, and if so when, action outside existing policies and procedures should be authorised
- f) Whether a strategy for dealing with approaches by the press is necessary
- g) What assistance could be offered by external agencies
- h) Whether the Council should consider any formal legal action

Any action under (b), (d), (e) and possible (g) should be clearly and promptly communicated to the persistent complainant with reasons where appropriate.

When **Form A** has been completed the Departmental Representative will:

- a) Return the Form to the Complaints officer
- b) Place a copy on a central file
- c) If the decision has been to apply the Policy, diarise the review date

The Complaints officer will:

- a) Place the form on the Individual's Complaints file and, if the decision has been to apply the Policy,
- b) Send a copy to Legal Services, and any appropriate officer within their own Department
- c) Diarise the review date
- d) Circulate the name of the individual to all other Complaints Officers within the Council (in confidence)
- e) Consider whether other officers within the Council should be notified
- f) Notify the Contact Centre
- g) Notify the relevant local Member(s)

Review

The six monthly strategy reviews should be carried out by the Departmental Representative and the Head of Customer Contact to ensure that unnecessary action is not continued.

One week before the review date the Complaints officer will complete **Form B** and submit it to the Departmental Representative.

The Departmental representative and the Head of Customer Contact will consider the position and decide whether to extend the application of the Policy for a further 6 months, completing **Form B** accordingly (and then following the process set out above).

If a fresh issue is raised that needs to be addressed, it should first be referred to the Departmental Representative by the Complaints Officer to consider whether a strategy meeting or any other action is appropriate (see above).

The relevant local member(s) will be informed of the result of any review carried out.

The Head of Customer Contact will provide regular updates on the application of this policy to Resources Spokes.

FORM A

PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS POLICY

**CASE FOR CONSIDERATION BY DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES
AND THE HEAD OF CUSTOMER CONTACT**

Name of Customer:

Name of Departmental Representative:

Name of Departmental Complaints Officer:

Date of Submission:

Background leading to referral:

- The following documents are attached:
eg correspondence, emails, notes of telephone calls, reports

Has the customer exhausted the Statutory Complaints Procedure? Y/N
If not, at what stage is the complaint?

Has the customer exhausted the Corporate Complaints Procedure? Y/N
If not, at what stage is the complaint?

Has the customer complained to the LGO? Y/N
If yes, what was the outcome of the complaint?

Is a MP/Ward Councillor/Councillor involved? Y/N
Details:

Has an independent arbitrator/investigator been involved? Y/N
Details:

Has there been a meeting with the customer to discuss the particular concerns? Y/N

Signed: Date:

..... Date:

Determination of Departmental Representative and the Head of Customer Contact

We agree/do not agree that should be dealt with under the PC Policy for the reasons set out below:

Agreed actions are:
(tick relevant boxes)

- Convene a strategy meeting to co-ordinate the Department/Council's approach
Person identified to do this:
By (date):
- Contact from the persistent complainant should be directed to and only accepted by

The following additional support to be given to officer concerned

- Means and manner of contact should be restricted in the following way:
 - Press Office should be contacted for strategy
 - Legal Services to be contacted for advice on possible legal action
 - The following external Agencies to be contacted for assistance
- The Policy to be disapplied in the following way for the following reasons:
- Other (Specify)
- Information to be provided to Contact Centre
- Inform relevant local member(s)

Review Date (not more than six months ahead):

Signed:

Date:

.....

Date:

FORM B

PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS POLICY

CASE REVIEW BY DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES AND THE
HEAD OF CUSTOMER CONTACT

Name of Customer:

Date of Review: Date of Original Referral:

I recommend that

continues to be dealt with under the Persistent Complainants Policy

ceases to be dealt with under the Persistent Complainants Policy

For the following reasons:

Signed:

I agree

I do not agree

That continues to be dealt with under the
Persistent Complainants Policy for the following reasons:

Notify Contact Centre

Review date: (not more than six months ahead)

Signed:

Signed: