



Customer Feedback Management

Policy Statement

Purpose

1. Provide the guiding philosophy and commitment of the Department to the principles of effective complaints handling.
2. Meet an appropriate standard of complaints management including suitable commitment and resources, monitoring and evaluation of complaints processes and data received by agencies to ensure service delivery improvement.
3. To ensure equitable access to, and knowledge of, customer feedback services offered by the Department.
4. To maintain compliance with the Australian Standard on Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (AS ISO 10002-2006).

Scope

5. All staff and business areas of the Department of the Attorney General.
6. This policy relates only to feedback regarding the services provided by the Department to the public.
7. This policy does not relate to feedback regarding matters directly related to purchasing and contracting for goods and services. A separate dispute resolution process exists for this feedback and is managed by the Contracts and Services Branch.
8. This policy does not relate to feedback made by staff about internal matters. These issues are covered by the Department's Workplace Grievance Management Policy.
9. This policy does not relate to Ministerial correspondence. Ministerial correspondence is not to be counted or recorded as customer feedback. Ministerial correspondence is to be managed independently through the Ministerial Correspondence System.
10. As per Premiers Circular 2009/27 this policy does not relate to feedback related to administrative law, appeal decisions or judicial decisions. This type of feedback is acknowledged and processed according to the business area's local processes.
11. This policy does not relate to feedback regarding public interest disclosures and allegations of misconduct and corruption. These are governed by specific legislation.

Policy

12. The Department actively supports the commitment made by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to all Western Australians to improve the standard of complaints handling across all Government agencies.
13. Feedback will be administered in accordance with relevant legislation, public sector policies and standards.
14. All feedback is treated seriously and in the strictest confidence.
15. No fee will be charged for lodging a complaint with the Department.

16. Feedback from customers is welcomed and encouraged.
17. Complaints are heard and actioned in a way that is fair and accessible.
 - 17.1. Fairness

The complaints process must be fair. This means that:

 - the complainants must be given the option to be identified to the individual(s) they are complaining about;
 - both parties to a complaint are entitled to be listened to and to have their views taken into account;
 - the person being complained about must know all the claims that are made against them and have the opportunity to put their case forward;
 - all information relevant to the case must be taken into account; and
 - the decision made must be fair and unbiased.
 - 17.2. Accessibility
 - 17.2.1 As stated in the Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, complaints can be made in a variety of formats.
 - 17.2.2 Customers can nominate another person to represent them in lodging a complaint.
 - 17.3. Department employees are to exercise proper courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in their dealings with members of the public.
 - 17.4. The Department is committed to utilising customer feedback in order to maintain and improve the quality of services provided.
 - 17.5. The policy supports the principles of other departmental policies and plans that impact on customer service delivery, including, but not limited to:
 - 17.5.1 Disability Services Access and Inclusion Plan; and
 - 17.5.2 Language Services Policy.
- 18. Visibility: Formats for feedback**
 - 18.1. Information about how and where to complain will be publicised through a variety of service delivery points.
 - 18.2. Customers may provide feedback to the Department via a variety of methods including electronic form available on the Department's website, hard copy customer feedback form, letter, telephone, fax, email and in person.
- 19. Recording Feedback**
 - 19.1. Customer Feedback Management System
 - 19.1.1. Complete, accurate and auditable customer feedback records will be maintained.
 - 19.1.2. All types of feedback lodged with the Department should be entered into the Department's Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS).
 - 19.1.3. Complaints resolved immediately do not need to be recorded in the CFMS.
 - 19.1.4. All responses to complainants and actions taken to resolve complaints should be uploaded to the CFMS.
 - 19.2. Records Management

19.2.1. Under the *State Records Act 2000* all feedback correspondence, including complaints requiring a specific response, must be kept for a period of seven years after the last action.

19.2.2. In the case of a complaint, this is seven years after the last action relating to the investigation or resolution of the complaint.

20. Administration of the CFMS and unallocated feedback

20.1. The Corporate Services Executive Feedback Management Coordinator will be responsible for the administration of the entire Customer Feedback Management System. This role will include the responsibility of allocating feedback which is unallocated on submission by the public.

20.2. The Corporate Services Executive Feedback Management Coordinator is also responsible for the management of system upgrades and delivery of related training.

21. Responding to allocated feedback

21.1. Feedback that is allocated to a business area is the responsibility of the Feedback Coordinator. The Feedback Coordinator has the authority to allocate the feedback to a designated officer known as Officer Managing.

21.2. An initial letter or email acknowledging receipt of the feedback should be sent to the customer within five working days.

21.3. All complaints require a final response letter or email to be sent within ten working days.

21.4. Suggestions and compliments require a final response letter or email within the same timeframes.

22. Reporting

22.1. Reporting will be coordinated by Corporate Services Executive.

22.2. Quarterly reporting on the performance of customer feedback management across the Department will be provided to the Department's Corporate Executive Committee. It will include whether the complaint relates to a business improvement matter (focused on an individual) or whether it is a systemic problem that requires risk management processes and additional controls implemented. In these cases the matter is to be referred by the Corporate Services Executive Feedback Management Coordinator to the Manager, Management Assurance and will be managed in accordance with the Department's Risk Management Policy..

22.3. Reporting on feedback management in the Department's Annual Report will be prepared. It will include the number of complaints, compliments and suggestions received for the Department, trends and business improvements or initiatives developed as a result of feedback analysis.

23. Dissatisfied customers

23.1. Where a customer is dissatisfied with the response received from the Department they are entitled to discuss this further with the Feedback Coordinator for the Business Area.

23.2. Where a customer has spoken with the Feedback Coordinator and remains dissatisfied with the response received from the Department, the Department can refer the complainant to the Ombudsman of Western Australia.

24. Recurrent complaints

Where a complaint has been received on numerous occasions and cannot be resolved by the Department to the satisfaction of the customer, the Feedback Coordinator is responsible for the preparation of a response to the customer.

25. Management of abusive or inflammatory feedback

Where correspondence to the Department contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or material clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to the sender and not acted upon. Where such comments are made in telephone conversations or interviews, these may be terminated at the discretion of the staff member after providing a warning to the caller of that intention.

26. Management of public disclosures regarding corrupt or improper conduct

Where a public disclosure is made by staff or members of the public regarding corrupt or improper conduct, the Department's Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Officer will be responsible for receiving disclosure and managing to conclusion.

Procedures

27. Process for nominating new Feedback Coordinators or Managing Officers

The Business Area Manager can nominate a new or replacement Managing Officer or Feedback Coordinator at any time. To add a person on to the Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS) the following information is required to be sent to the Corporate Services Executive Feedback Coordinator in an email:

- the login name;
- first name and surname;
- position;
- business area;
- email; and
- telephone number.

The Corporate Services Executive Feedback Coordinator will arrange for the person to have access and rights to use CFMS. They will then send a confirmation email to the person together with a copy of the user guide for training purposes.

28. Process for recording feedback submitted by telephone

The officer who has received feedback via a telephone call should offer the customer the opportunity to provide feedback via one of the following formats:

- access feedback form via DotAG Website;
- send out a feedback brochure by mail for them to record their complaint with which a reply paid envelope is provided; or
- offer to record the feedback for them over the telephone. The officer must create a new record on CFMS and lodge the feedback on behalf of the client if they request this method. At the end of the process they must give the feedback reference number to the client.

29. Process for recording feedback submitted in person

The officer who has received feedback in person must establish the type of feedback it is.

29.1 Complaint

The officer who received a complaint from a customer must determine whether it is a complaint that can be handled on the spot, or a complaint which requires further investigation.

29.1.1 On the spot resolution

Where the complaint can be resolved on the spot, it does not need to be recorded on the CFMS.

29.1.2 Complaint requires further investigation

Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately and requires further investigation, the officer should offer the customer the following formats:

- access complaint form via DotAG website; or
- offer a complaint form for them to record their complaint with which a reply paid envelope is provided.

29.2 Suggestion

The officer who has received a suggestion from a customer can offer the customer the opportunity to provide their feedback in one of the following formats:

- access complaint form via DotAG website; or
- offer a complaint form for them to record their complaint with which a reply paid envelope is provided.

29.3 Compliment

The officer who has received a compliment from a customer can offer the customer the opportunity to provide their feedback in one of the following formats:

- access complaint form via DotAG website; or
- offer a complaint form for them to record their complaint with which a reply paid envelope is provided.

30. Process for recording feedback submitted on form or letter or email

30.1 Where feedback is received by form, letter or email the officer must record the feedback on the CFMS.

30.2 The officer must notify the customer that the feedback has been recorded and advise the feedback reference number.

31. Allocating feedback received through the Customer Feedback Management System

An automatic email is sent to the Feedback Coordinator of the business area nominated by the customer.

31.1 The Feedback Coordinator confirms that the feedback relates to their business area.

31.1.1 If the business area is incorrect, the Feedback Coordinator should contact the Customer Services Coordinator to request re-allocation of the feedback.

31.2 The Feedback Coordinator reviews feedback and assesses incident.

31.2.1 Insignificant, minor or moderate feedback

Feedback Coordinator nominates incident level and allocates to officer manager for investigation and drafting of response.

31.2.2 Major/catastrophic feedback

The feedback Coordinator notifies the relevant business area manager and briefs them on complaint. Where incident level is determined to be major/catastrophic, the Manager must notify their Director. The Director is responsible for coordinating preliminary research into the complaint and must notify the Executive Director or equivalent. The Executive Director or equivalent must notify the Director General of the complaint, the recommended actions and the proposed solution.

- 31.3 The Feedback Coordinator selects an Officer Managing from the list of officers available and allocates the feedback to them to manage.

32. Timelines for responding to feedback

- 32.1 The Officer Managing prepares and sends acknowledgement letter within five days of initial feedback being lodged. Standardised templates are available on CFMS.
- 32.2 The Officer Managing must aim to finalise a response to feedback within 10 working days of the receipt of the initial feedback.
- 32.3 Where a response finalising the feedback cannot be sent within 10 working days, an interim response letter must be sent to the customer at the earliest possible point in time.

33. Preparing the final response letter and closing feedback

Standardised templates are available on the CFMS.

- 33.1 Approval of final response letter must be given by relevant manager, Director, Executive Director (or equivalent) or Director General.
- 33.2 The letter is sent and copy uploaded onto Customer Feedback Management System.
- 33.3 Customer Feedback Management System feedback is closed.

34. Managing customers dissatisfied with response

Where a customer is dissatisfied with the Department's response:

- 34.1 the Feedback Coordinator explains response;
- 34.2 the Feedback Coordinator can refer the customer to the Ombudsman of Western Australia; and
- 34.3 the Feedback Coordinator should note CFMS with details of advice given to the dissatisfied customer.

35. Managing customers with recurrent complaints

Where a complaint is recurrent and cannot be resolved:

- 35.1 the Feedback Coordinator prepares a response to the customer;
- 35.2 the Feedback Coordinator provides a copy of the response to the relevant business area manager;
- 35.3 the Business Area Manager notifies the Director; and
- 35.4 the Director notifies the Executive Director or equivalent.

MANAGING SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

36. Managing complaints about staff members

- 36.1 Where a complaint is received about a specific staff member, the Feedback Coordinator is responsible for the management of the task to completion.
- 36.2 The Feedback Coordinator must create a separate administrative file for the complaint to be retained by the business area using the following file naming convention: Keyword = Community Relations, Descriptor = Public Reaction, Organisation = Branch/Business Area Name.
- 36.3 The Feedback Coordinator must notify the business area manager of the complaint.
- 36.4 The business area manager must notify the staff member to whom the complaint relates.
- 36.5 Normal process and timelines for responding to feedback apply.

37. Managing compliments about staff members

- 37.1 Where a compliment is received about a specific staff member, the Feedback Coordinator is responsible for the management of the task to completion.
- 37.2 The Feedback Coordinator notifies the business area manager.
- 37.3 The business area manager notifies the staff member to which the feedback relates.

38. Managing suggestions

- 38.1 Where a suggestion is received the Feedback Coordinator allocates the feedback to an Officer Managing.
- 38.2 The Officer Managing prepares a letter of acknowledgement. Normal timelines for responding to feedback apply.
- 38.3 The Officer Managing refers the suggestion to the Feedback Coordinator.
- 38.4 The Feedback coordinator refers the suggestion to the Business Area Manager.
- 38.5 The Business Area Manager considers the suggestion and provides feedback to the Feedback Coordinator regarding its implementation.
- 38.6 The Feedback Coordinator prepares a response and closes off record on CFMS.
- 38.7 The Feedback Coordinator emails the Customer Services Coordinator with advice of business improvement if applicable for inclusion in quarterly reporting to Corporate Executive Committee.

39. Managing Public interest disclosures

- 39.1 Where a public interest disclosure is made by staff or members of the public regarding corrupt or improper conduct, the Customer Feedback Management System (CFMS) Officer managing the query will close the complaint.
- 39.2 The CFMS Officer will contact the Department's Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Officer by email giving them a full review of the complaint and details of the complainant. The contact details of the PID Officer are as follows:

Manager, Management Assurance
Level 12, Westralia Square
Phone (08) 9264 6333 (confidential line)

39.3 The PID officer will manage the feedback from this point forward.

40. Managing communication between the Department and central agencies responsible for public accountability

40.1 Manager, Management Assurance coordinates and manages communication between the Director General and central agencies responsible for public accountability; this includes the Corruption and Crime Commission, Ombudsman WA and the Office of the Auditor General. In the event that any of these agencies contact you, regarding complaints, they are to be referred to the Manager Management Assurance.

References and Attachments

References

- Australian Standard on Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations (AS ISO 10002-2006)
- Premiers Circular 2009/27 – Complaints Management
- Department of the Attorney General Disability Services Access and Inclusion Plan
- Department of the Attorney General Language Services Policy
- Ombudsman Western Australia
- Department of the Attorney General Workplace Grievance Management Policy
- Department of the Attorney General Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- Department of the Attorney General Risk Management Policy

Attachments

- Customer Feedback Management System User Guide