

The Department of Planning

Compliments and Complaints Policy

1. Background

Due to the intricate nature of the Department of Planning's work and its heavy interaction with customers it is inevitable that complaints will arise.

Currently complaints may be dealt with inside of each unit (e.g. Building Control, Current Planning etc.) but there is not a sole system in place to log complaints for the whole department. This is not ideal since much of the work in Planning is interlinked and leaders need to be aware of customer issues in order to improve our service.

2. Our Aim

The Department of Planning (DoP) is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- data protection principles are adhered to.
- a complaint is treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- complaints are dealt with it promptly, politely and when appropriate, confidentially
- a proper response is given - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- lessons learned from complaints are used to improve our service, and annually review the complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly
- keep matters low-key
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

3. Definitions

A **compliment** is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

A **formal complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction received from a customer, whether in writing or verbally, regarding any particular aspect of a service in which their needs or expectations were not met. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

4. Purpose

The DoP is always open to hear from people who are willing to provide feedback about the services we offer. All compliments and complaints are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to provide feedback to the member of staff or service.

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are logged, handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. Over time this will give the Dept. useful data which can help to drive decisions that can benefit both the Planning team and the customer.

5. Responsibilities

The Department of Planning's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within 5 business days;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate
- maintain a record of all compliments and complaints received noting the: employee, unit, date, nature of the compliment or issue and the resolution

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, with any supporting documents to The Department of Planning's attention normally within eight (8) weeks of the issue arising;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow The Department of Planning a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognize that some circumstances may be beyond The Department of Planning's control.

Customers who wish to make a formal complaint may do so using one of the following channels:

- a) Via email to Dopfeedback@gov.ky
- b) In person at the Dept. of Planning counters at the GAB.
- c) Via mail by sending to Senior Manager – Operations, Department of Planning, Cayman Islands Government, PO Box 113, Grand Cayman KY1-9000, CAYMAN ISLANDS.

6. Privacy Notice & Confidentiality:

DoP will collect personal data from complainants in order to carry out the duties required under this Policy, and will act as Data Controller pursuant to the Data Protection Act (2021 Revision).

Personal data collected will include name and contact details as supplied by consent of the complainant. The complainant may also choose to include personal data of third parties as parties to the complaint, or as may be requested as part of an investigation. This third party data may include data such as contact details for witnesses or information about a person or persons who may be in possession of evidence. Third party personal data will be processed and protected in compliance with the Data Protection Act. Where an individual is asked to provide personal data relating to other individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Act, DoP requests that the complainant ensure that each individual is made aware of how their personal data will be processed by directing them to this Notice and the DoP's Data Protection Policy on the Planning website (www.planning.ky/data-protection-policy).

When collecting information relating to the complaint, said information will only be used to deal with the complaint or to address systemic issues arising from the complaint.

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and The Department of Planning maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant. Nevertheless, Internal Complaint files will be kept electronically in a restricted access folder, accessible only by approved staff, and retained in accordance with an approved DoP Disposal Schedule.

7. Compliments Procedure:

Compliments are valuable and help provide positive encouragement to employees in what can at times be challenging and demanding roles. This in turn can help to create and maintain the kind of living and working atmosphere the people we support and employees alike will thrive in.

Stage 1 –

A formal compliment must be made in writing, making it explicitly clear whether the written compliment can be shared.

Compliments enable the Department of Planning to: -

1. understand that the service provided is satisfactory
2. provide positive feedback to our staff
3. influence our organisation and service development

8. Complaints Procedure:

Written record must be made by The Department of Planning and updated at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1 –

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the member of the public should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a member of the Management Team, to make this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint must be made in writing using the complaints form with supporting documents where necessary.
- b) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to the responsible supervisor most suited to resolve the issue. In the event of a complaint about the responsible supervisor, the complaint should be passed to the responsible manager, and if the complaint is about the responsible manager, this must be passed on to the Director.

- c) The responsible supervisor or responsible supervisor's superior, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within five (5) business days of receiving it (in conjunction with a complimentary call where necessary).
- d) One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached must be discussed with the staff member involved and their supervisor/manager.
- e) The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within twenty (20) working days of the complaint being received. The Response Letter will summarize the outcome of the investigation with reasons, including review/appeal mechanism. If this is not possible within the stated time, then a letter must be sent to the complainant explaining why.

Stage 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision they may:

- a) write to the Director of Planning. The Director will respond within twenty (20) working days in writing. The Director's decision will be final from the Department.
- b) write to the Office of the Ombudsman at:

The Ombudsman, 5th Floor, Anderson Square,
64 Shedden Road, G.T. Grand Cayman,
P.O. Box 2252, Grand Cayman KY1-1107.
Email: info@ombudsman.ky
Phone: (345) 946-6283

9. Employee Offences:

An offence occurs if an employee:

1. Fails to follow any aspect of this policy.
2. Fails to exercise due diligence in carrying out their duties, resulting in a complaint.

Three (3) offences may require disciplinary action to be taken.

9. Conclusion:

Although complaints may seem bad/negative at the time, it provides an opportunity to analyse problems and improve how we work as a department. Let us use this to our advantage in order to make our working lives easier and build trust and confidence with the public as we strive to become a world class civil service.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT FORM

CUSTOMER INFORMATION	
Customer Name:	Customer Phone:
Customer Address:	
COMPLAINT INFORMATION	
Complaint Date:	Complaint Taken By:
Complaint Details:	
FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY	
First Response Corrective Action:	
	Completed on and by:

Investigation Findings:

Completed on and by:

Corrective Actions:

Completed on and by:

What steps should be taken to avoid a repeat of the problem:

Complaint closed out on and by:

Signature:

