Appendix A

We lift our region… we work together… we make an impact…we are human

EMCCA Customer Enquiries, Complaints, Compliments & Compliance Process Policy

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Unique document ID	1.0
Next review date	1st May 2026
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1. Purpose

This policy explains how to contact EMCCA, what to expect when you do, and how we handle customer enquiries, feedback, compliments, complaints and compliance-related contact. It sets clear standards of transparency, integrity and fairness in line with EMCCA values and good administrative practice.

The policy also explains what we can consider under this process, what we cannot, and how we will signpost you to the correct route where another process is more appropriate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of EMCCA, including colleagues, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices, who receive, record, triage, investigate or respond to customer contact.

This policy does not form part of any individual's contract and may be amended from time to time to reflect legislation, guidance or organisational change.

3. Related policies and procedures

- Unreasonable Behaviour / Unreasonably Persistent Contact Policy
- Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy / Privacy Notice
- FOI/EIR & Transparency Policy/Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure

- Procedure for managing threats, aggressive behaviour, violence and crime from members of the public

4. Principles and standards

When handling customer contact, we will:

- Act with integrity and impartiality, and avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- Be open and transparent about how decisions are made and what we can and cannot do.
- Treat people fairly and respectfully, making reasonable adjustments where required.
- Record contact accurately and promptly so that learning and accountability are supported.
- Resolve issues as quickly as reasonably possible, focusing on putting things right where we can.

5. How to contact us

You can contact EMCCA by:

- Online via our website
- Email: [complaints@eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk] or [contact@eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk]
- Phone: 01246 903504
- Post: East Midland Combined County Authority, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby,

5.1 Reasonable adjustments: We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure everyone can access this process (e.g., alternative formats, interpreter support).

5.2 Equality and optional demographic data: Where we collect optional demographic information (e.g., via online forms), it is used to help us understand equality, diversity and inclusion metrics and improve accessibility.

6. Definitions

General enquiry/feedback: A request for information or general comment about our services. We welcome feedback and use it to improve, but we may not always respond individually.

Service request: A request asking us to provide or improve a service, fix a problem, or reconsider an operational matter. We aim to resolve service requests through direct communication with service teams; if unresolved, it may become a complaint.

Complaint: Any expression of dissatisfaction—however made—about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by EMCCA, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group. You do not need to use the word “complaint” for it to be treated as one.

Compliment: Positive feedback about what we have done well, which helps us understand what works and how to improve.

Compliance-related contact: Contact raising concerns about policy/process compliance or conduct connected to service delivery. These may be handled within this process or signposted to specialised routes (e.g., whistleblowing, code of conduct).

7. What we can action under this policy

- Complaints about our work, services, products, decisions or customer service (where no statutory appeal route applies).
- Service requests to fix problems or improve services.
- General enquiries and requests for information where appropriate (subject to FOI/EIR and data protection rules).
- Compliments.

8. What we cannot action under this policy

If your issue falls into one of the categories below, we will signpost you to the appropriate route. This list is not exhaustive.

8.1 Wrong organisation / another authority's function: If the issue relates to a function of another authority, we will signpost you to the correct organisation wherever possible.

8.2 Time limits: We would not normally investigate issues that occurred more than 12 months ago, unless exceptional circumstances apply. We will consider older matters case-by-case.

8.3 Employment/recruitment & HR matters: These are handled under relevant HR procedures.

8.4 Whistleblowing: Issues covered by our Whistleblowing Policy will be handled under that policy.

8.5 Legal proceedings / court or tribunal decisions: Matters subject to legal proceedings or already decided by a court/tribunal will not be investigated under this policy.

8.6 Procurement / tenders / grant award challenges: These are handled under procurement/grant processes unless clearly unrelated to an award decision.

8.7 Members' Code of Conduct: Complaints about elected members' conduct are handled via the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct process.

8.8 Data protection concerns: Complaints about how we process personal data should be directed to the Data Protection Officer at [DPO email].

8.9 FOI/EIR concerns: Complaints about FOI/EIR handling should be made to [FOI contact].

8.10 Policing and crime (where applicable): Complaints relating to Mayoral policing and crime functions will be handled under the PCC complaints process.

8.11 Ongoing investigations / compliance action: Where the complainant is the subject of an investigation, review, prosecution, or regulatory compliance action by EMCCA, we may log the complaint but pause action until proceedings (including any appeal) conclude and the complainant confirms they still wish to proceed.

9. Transport-related complaints (operators vs authority services)

9.1 Where the issue relates to a bus/train operator's service (e.g., reliability, staff conduct, fares/tickets, vehicle condition), complaints should normally be made directly to the operator. We will signpost you to operator contact details where needed.

9.2 Where the issue relates to an EMCCA-managed transport function (e.g., concessionary travel schemes, authority-delivered services, or other responsibilities), we will handle it under this policy.

10. Confidentiality, consent and data protection

10.1 We treat enquiries and complaints confidentially. Personal details will not be shared outside EMCCA (or internally) unless necessary to resolve the issue.

10.2 Complaints made on behalf of others: If you contact us for someone else and this involves sharing their personal data, we will usually require evidence of their consent unless this is not possible; we will assess case-by-case in line with data protection legislation.

11. Information required

To help us investigate efficiently, please provide:

- Your name and contact details
- A description of what happened (including dates)
- Any supporting evidence (documents, screenshots, photos, reference numbers)
- The outcome you are seeking

12. Our approach: informal resolution, service requests and complaints

12.1 Informal resolution: On receipt of contact, we will consider whether the matter can be resolved quickly without entering the formal complaints stages.

12.2 Service requests: Where the matter is a service request, it will be assigned to the relevant team promptly. We aim to provide a substantive response or update within 5 working days, and to complete service requests within 5–20 working days depending on complexity.

12.3 Formal complaints: If the matter meets the definition of a complaint, we will follow the two-stage process set out below.

13. Complaints process (two stages)

13.1 **Acknowledgement**: We will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within 5 working days, provide a reference number, and explain whether we are treating the matter as a service request or a complaint.

13.2 **Stage 1 – Response and Resolution**: We aim to provide a full response within 10 working days. If we need longer, we will tell you why and provide a revised timeframe. Any extension will normally be no more than a further 10 working days, unless there is a good reason for a longer period. Stage 1 focuses on putting things right quickly where possible, including apologies where appropriate, and explaining decisions where we cannot meet the requested outcome.

13.3 **Stage 2 – review/investigation**: If you remain dissatisfied, you can request escalation to Stage 2 within 28 days of the Stage 1 response (unless exceptional circumstances apply). Stage 2 will be reviewed by a more senior officer and/or an investigating officer at head-of-service level or above. We will acknowledge within 3 working days and aim to provide a full response within 10 working days (or provide a revised timeframe. Any extension will normally be no more than a further 10 working days, unless there is a good reason for a longer period.).

13.4 **Outcomes and remedies:** Where we uphold a complaint (in whole or part), we may explain what went wrong, apologise, set out service improvements or corrective actions, and provide an appropriate remedy (including compensation where justified).

14. Final internal position and external escalation

14.1 After Stage 2, we will confirm our final internal position and signpost you to the appropriate external route.

14.2 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO): If you remain dissatisfied after completing our internal process, you can complain to the LGSCO. The Ombudsman may refer matters back if they have not been through both stages.

14.3 There is no further stage of the internal complaints review after Stage 2. Our stage 2 response is final under this Policy. In exceptional circumstances EMCCA may review complaint handling for internal governance or learning purposes, but this will not form delay a complainants right to refer the matter to the LGSCO.

15. Unreasonable or unreasonably persistent contact

If a complainant's behaviour is considered unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, the matter will be managed in line with EMCCA's Unreasonable Behaviour / Unreasonably Persistent

Contact Policy. This may include restricting contact channels or frequency to protect staff and ensure fair access for all service users.

16. Equality impact and accessibility

In applying this policy, we will consider potential equality impacts and ensure reasonable adjustments are made so that people are not disadvantaged when making contact.

17. Recording, customer contact register and retention

17.1 Logging and register: All enquiries, service requests, complaints and compliments must be recorded in the appropriate system (the "customer contact register"), with sufficient detail to enable investigation, learning and reporting.

17.2 Minimum record fields (as applicable): contact type; customer details; date received; subject; service area; summary; evidence received; actions taken; outcome; remedy; response dates; and any learning/improvement actions.

17.3 Data protection and retention: Personal data is processed to manage contact and is not used for unrelated purposes or shared externally unless required to handle the case. Records will be retained for a minimum of 1 year after resolution and then securely destroyed, unless legal/regulatory requirements necessitate longer retention.

18. Monitoring, learning and reporting

We will monitor volumes, timeliness, outcomes and themes across enquiries, complaints and compliments; identify learning; and implement service improvements where appropriate. We may report anonymised themes and performance measures to support accountability and continuous improvement.

19. Compliance, roles and speaking up

19.1 Compliance with this policy is a condition of working for EMCCA in a customer-facing capacity. Everyone covered by this policy is responsible for reading it and applying it in practice.

19.2 Roles: The Head of Business Operations and Customer Service is the policy owner. Managers are responsible for ensuring teams apply the policy consistently. Investigating officers must be appropriately senior and independent for Stage 2 reviews.

19.3 Reporting concerns: If you suspect improper handling of customer contact, failure to record, undue influence, falsification of records, or other misconduct, you must report this to the Monitoring Officer as soon as possible. If for any reason you cannot do this, report to the Independent Chair of the Internal Audit Committee. Concerns may also be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy (including anonymously).

19.4 Breach and action: EMCCA will investigate alleged breaches of this policy. Substantiated breaches may result in management action and/or formal action under relevant HR policies (including disciplinary procedures).

20. Review and updates

This policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner where legislation, guidance, or organisational changes require).

Appendix A – Quick process overview

• Enquiry/service request received → assigned to team → response/update within 5 working days (target completion 5–20 working days).

• Complaint received → acknowledged within 3 working days with reference number.

• Stage 1 → full response target within 10 working days (or revised timeframe agreed/communicated).

• Stage 2 (if requested within 28 days) → review/investigation target within 20 working days (or revised timeframe agreed/communicated).

• Final internal response → signpost to LGSCO or other appropriate external route.

Appendix B – Triage checklist (for staff use)

- Is this an enquiry, service request, complaint, compliment, or compliance-related contact?
- Is EMCCA the correct organisation to handle this?
- Is there another statutory or specialist route (FOI/EIR, data protection, whistleblowing, procurement, code of conduct, HR)?
- Does the issue fall within the usual 12-month timeframe (or are there exceptional circumstances)?
- Are reasonable adjustments required?
- Has the contact been logged with sufficient detail and allocated to the correct service/team?
- Have acknowledgement and response timescales been diarised and monitored?