



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Complaints Management and Resolution Policy</b>		
<b>Policy Group:</b> <b>Your Government and People</b>	<b>Policy Administrator:</b> <b>Corporate and Legislative Services</b>		
<b>Resolution No.</b> <b>CW-146-2022</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b> <b>CLS-03</b>		
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## 1. Policy Statement

- a) The Complaints Management and Resolutions Policy (hereafter referred to as "Policy") is to support the County of Prince Edward's dedication to serving the community, residents, and visitors.
- b) The County recognizes the importance of public input and welcomes Complaints as valuable forms of feedback.

## 2. Purpose

- a) This Policy provides the community with an avenue for submitting Complaints and provides the County with consistent and uniform process to respond to Complaints received from the public.
- b) By introducing guidelines and standards, the process of managing and resolving complaints will become more efficient allowing the County to respond to complaints in a timely manner and provide an opportunity to improve County programs and services.

## 3. Scope

- a) This policy applies to all Complaints received from the public regarding all administrative actions and functions of the County.
- b) All union and non-union full time, part time, temporary and contract employees, public members of committees and volunteers and persons or a body acting on behalf of the County, are covered in this Policy. Investigation of complaints regarding unionized employees will be conducted in accordance with applicable collective agreement provisions.

- c) This policy does not apply to:
- i. Allegations of violations under the Criminal Code of Canada;
  - ii. A decision of Council or of a Committee of Council;
  - iii. Internal employee complaints or complaints regarding health and safety;
  - iv. Matters addressed by legislation or an existing by-law or policy or requests to amend by-laws or policies;
  - v. Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.
  - vi. Complaints about Members of Council (as they are governed by the Council Code of Conduct and investigated by the Integrity Commissioner);
  - vii. Complaints regarding whether a meeting of Council was appropriately held in accordance with the Closed Meeting provisions outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25*;
  - viii. Requests for service such as requesting to repair a street surface, notifying the County of a missed garbage collection or reporting a by-law infraction, etc. or
  - ix. Complaints which involve ongoing litigation.

#### **4. Legislative Authority**

- a) Section 270 (1) 5 of the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25* requires the municipality to adopt a policy respecting the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public.

#### **5. Definitions**

- a) "CAO" means the Chief Administrative Officer;
- b) "Complainant" means an individual, resident, visitor, business or a community group filing the Complaint under this Policy;
- c) "Complaint" means an issue or concern raised regarding a County program, service or operation that is not resolved at the time of the incident, and for which the complainant submits their issues or concerns to the County in accordance with this Policy. A Complaint can be verbal or written.

#### **6. Informal resolution of Complaint**

- a) It is the responsibility of County staff to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal Complaints, and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

- b) For cases where informal resolution is successful, submitting a Complaint is not required.

## **7. Submitting a Complaint**

- a) A Complaint may be made in a number of ways:
  - i. Online through the County's website ([www.thecounty.ca](http://www.thecounty.ca)) using the Public Complaint Form;
  - ii. Verbal complaints are made in person or by telephone directly to staff;
  - iii. Written complaints may be filed in person, mail or e-mail with a staff member at the County office.
  
- b) A Complaint shall include the following components:
  - i. Contact details of the Complainant;
  - ii. Summary of Complaint (details, location, employee involved, resolution requested, enclosures, date complaint submitted);
  - iii. Photos related to the Complaint;
  - iv. Date.
  
- c) All Complaints should be submitted within 90 days. Complaints filed 90 days or more after the incident will only be investigated if the CAO determines that circumstances exist to reasonably justify investigating beyond 90 days from the incident.
  
- d) Anonymous complaints will be considered if the CAO determines that circumstances exist to reasonably justify investigating the Complaint.

## **8. Complaint Acknowledgment**

- a) A Complaint is generated when an informal resolution could not be successfully achieved. The Complaint will be acknowledged within 5 business days upon receipt indicating an estimated timeline for further follow-up and an indication of what next steps may be expected.

## **9. Assess**

- a) Staff will contact the Complainant to clarify the Complaint, if needed. The Complaint may be terminated at this point if a resolution is possible, if it is a duplicate or if it outside the scope of this Policy.

## **10. Assign**

- a) The Complaint is then forwarded to the staff member responsible in the appropriate department.

## **11. Investigate**

- a) The responsible staff member will:
  - i. Document all notes;
  - ii. Contact the Complainant where a quick resolve is possible;
  - iii. Notify the Complainant in writing of an approximate length of time if it is determined that the issue may result in a lengthy investigation process; and,
  - iv. Review the issues identified by the Complainant and in doing so may:
    - 1. Review relevant municipal by-laws and policies and provincial legislation;
    - 2. Review the municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
    - 3. Interview employees; and
    - 4. Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations.

## **12. Resolve**

- a) A resolution will be provided to the complainant in writing by the responsible staff member within 30 days upon receipt of the Complaint. If a resolution cannot be provided within 30 days, staff shall contact the Complainant about the delay and provide an estimation of time.
- b) The decision will consist of information such as:
  - i. Overview of Complaint;
  - ii. Details of how the investigation was conducted;
  - iii. Summary of the facts;
  - iv. Outline of the findings;
  - v. Identification of next steps;
  - vi. Suggestions of appropriate resolution along with the rationale supporting the proposed resolution.

## **13. Tracking and Reporting**

- a) The Complaint must be tracked from its initial receipt to its resolution.
- b) Complaint records will be reviewed regularly and analyzed to identify recurring issues to improve customer service and satisfaction. Annually, the number of Complaints, type of Complaints, and number of resolved Complaints shall undergo review by the Directors, with an annual report to the CAO.

- c) All personal information collected in carrying out this Policy will be dealt with in a confidential manner in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56*.