

CWOP/22/10

Policy & Scrutiny Committee Community Wellbeing and Older People

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Complaints Procedure

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Governance

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ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Representations are an important way for Essex customers to work with Members' support, to give feedback about their direct experience of Adult Social Care services. Compliments, comments, concerns and complaints are all forms of Representations. This paper explains the procedure to be followed wherever a Representation is made.

There are statutory regulations to ensure that Local Authorities have established procedures for considering any Representations made to them.

INFORMAL INFORMATION ENQUIRIES FROM MEMBERS

The Executive Office (01245 435541) will co-ordinate responses to requests for general information within 48 hours (for example, a request for information about a general policy issue or approach), to ensure that members can access information quickly when there is an immediate need.

See diagram 1

Locality managers work in conjunction with the Executive Office to keep members informed of local developments or key local matters, as they arise. Locality managers will also continue to play a key role in local member briefings, which provide regular opportunities for discussion and informal information sharing.

Representations which relate to specific service users **MUST** be handled under the Members' Representation procedures, as described in *Appendix A – Essex County Council Protocol for Member/Officer Relations*.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

The Executive Office (01245 435541) will co-ordinate responses to any requests made by the media for comments, information and briefings to ensure that members are supported in this. See diagram 3.

COMPLAINTS POLICY FRAMEWORK

Where a complaint is made procedures are laid down in the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, which all came into force on 1 April 2009; these introduced simplified and unified health and social care complaint procedures, which focus on achieving satisfactory outcomes for the customer within a flexible and responsive complaints handling framework. A single stage replaces the

previously tiered approach and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman will undertake a single system of review.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REPRESENTATIONS

When a Member wishes to make a Representation on behalf of a customer they should write to or contact Liz Chidgey, Deputy Executive Director (Ednet 40123), who will initiate immediate enquiries.

See diagram 2

The central Complaints and Representations team will co-ordinate responses to Representations to ensure that responses are registered, prioritised, quality assured and so that learning outcomes are identified.

1. Written representations which relate to services provided by Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing, **wherever they are received**, will be date stamped and forwarded without delay to the Complaints and Representations Team.
2. Where oral representations are made staff will take full and comprehensive details and forward this to the Complaints and Representations Team.
3. Upon receipt, the Complaints and Representations Team will undertake a risk assessment in line with current risk management arrangements to determine whether an urgent response is required.
4. The Complaints and Representations Team will register the representation and acknowledge its receipt, within three working days.
5. The Complaints and Representations Team will ask the relevant service to prepare a draft response.
6. The relevant service will forward a draft response to the Complaints and Representations Team by the date required.
7. The Complaints and Representations Team will review the draft response and liaise with the relevant service if required.
8. The Complaints and Representations Team will forward the draft response for quality assurance by the Deputy Executive Director or her nominated Deputy.
9. The response will be dispatched by the Deputy Executive Director's office or forwarded by the Complaints and Representations Team to the appropriate office for dispatch (for instance, Joanna Killian, Cllr Peter Martin and Cllr Ann Naylor) **within 10 working days** of receipt by ECC.

10. The Complaints and Representations Team will write to Members to inform them of the progress of individual representations, where the timescale for a response is amended or where circumstances change.
11. The Complaints and Representations Team will, where appropriate, advise the Member and/or their constituent and the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing, as to how the issues raised in the complaint have affected the development of operational and policy matters.

KEY FEATURES:

TRIAGE In line with national policy arrangements Essex has adopted a grading system to help determine the severity of Representations and their consequences, in order to decide what level of intervention is appropriate to the risk to customers, service users, their carers and families and the Local Authority

CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT Customers will receive a copy of the acknowledgement letter sent to Members. This will offer customers the opportunity to discuss their concerns and how these will be handled and, where appropriate, enable them to receive feedback on any changes that we have made as a consequence of their representations.

LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK Identifying learning from representations and using this to improve services and the quality of people's experience of services is an integral aim of our procedure. Details of this will be included in the annual report and where appropriate customers will be informed as to how their representation is being used in the development of our services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Ros Wilson, Service Manager Internal Standards and Governance

Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing

PO Box 297, County Hall

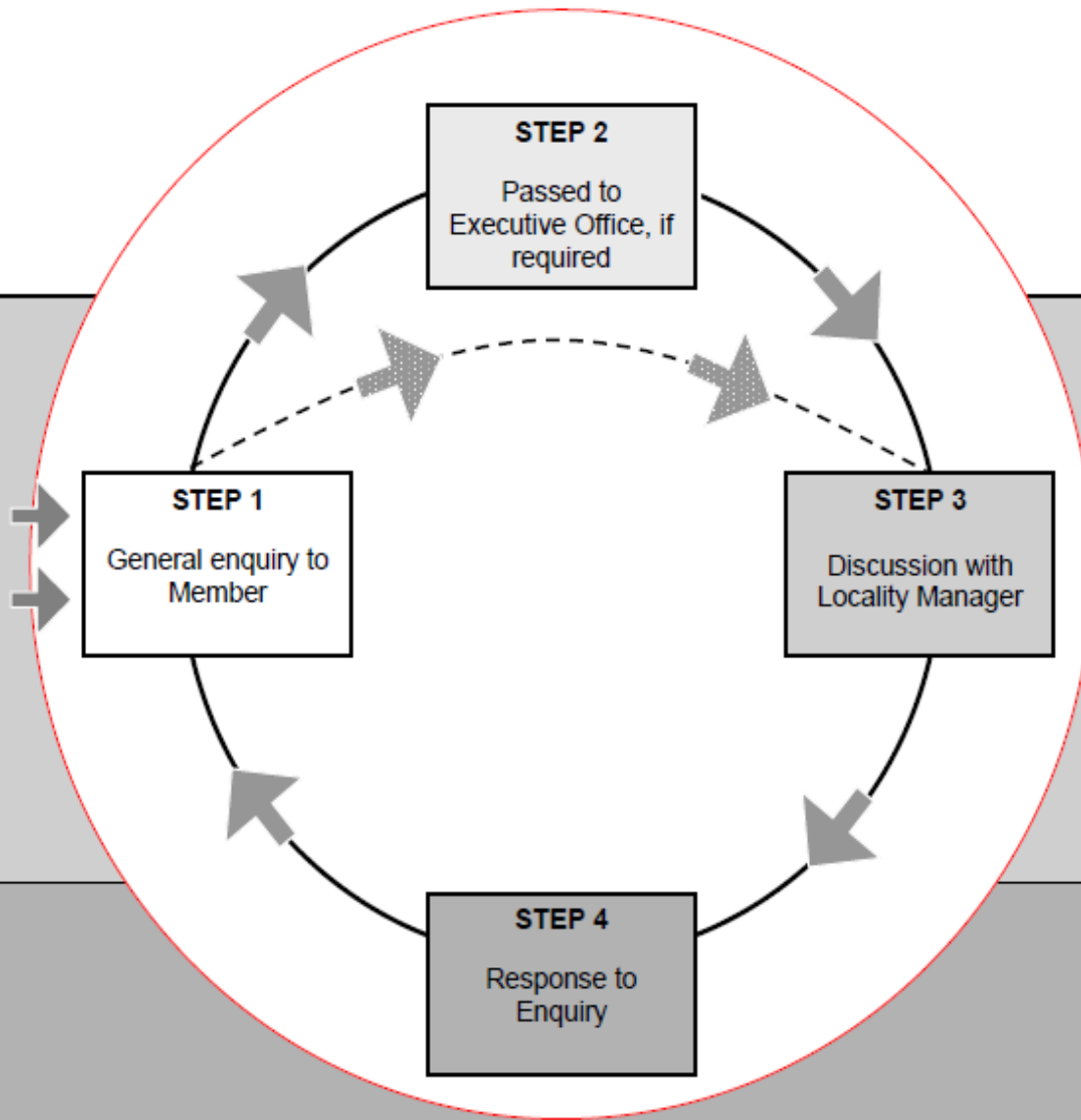
Chelmsford

Essex CM1 1YS

Telephone: 01245 434109 Fax:01245 434731 Email

complaintsofficer.socialcare@essex.gov.uk

Handling **GENERAL** Information Enquiry
e.g. general information or policy issues

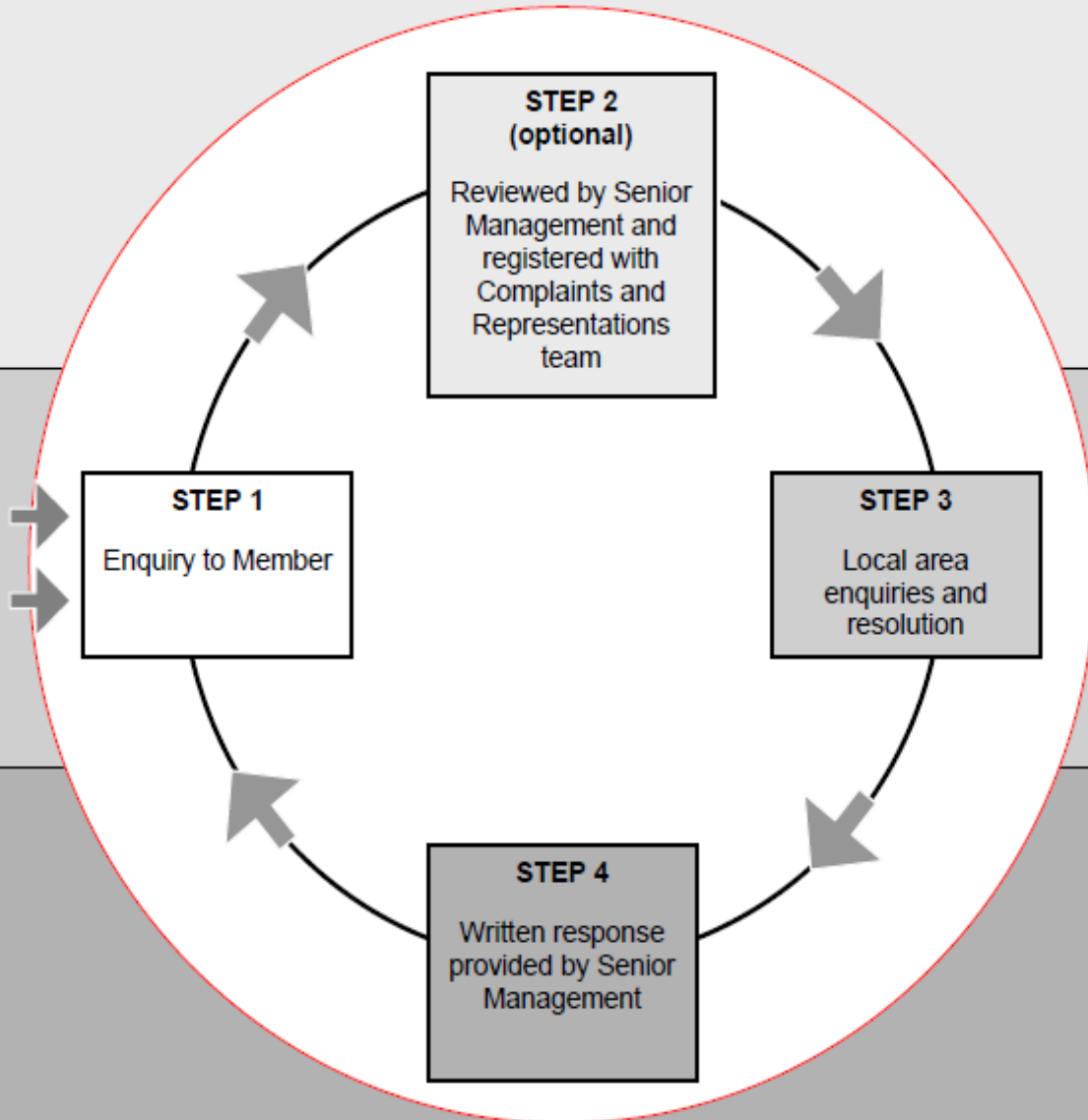


STEP 2	<u>Executive Office</u>
	01245 435 541 robert.field@essex.gov.uk

STEP 3 – IF REQUIRED	<u>Locality Manager</u>
	To be consulted when necessary i.e. if enquiry relates to a specific locality issue
	Mid Locality – 01376 555431 audrey.bancroft@essex.gov.uk
	South East Locality 01268 746118 pauline.holroyd@essex.gov.uk
	West Locality 01992 565165 john.mmackinnon@essex.gov.uk
	North East Locality 01206 266156 nick.presmeg@essex.gov.uk

STEP 4	<u>Response</u>
	General enquiries can receive a direct response. Response should be within 24 – 48 hours

Resolving **FORMAL** Information Enquiry
e.g. issues which relate to a specific case

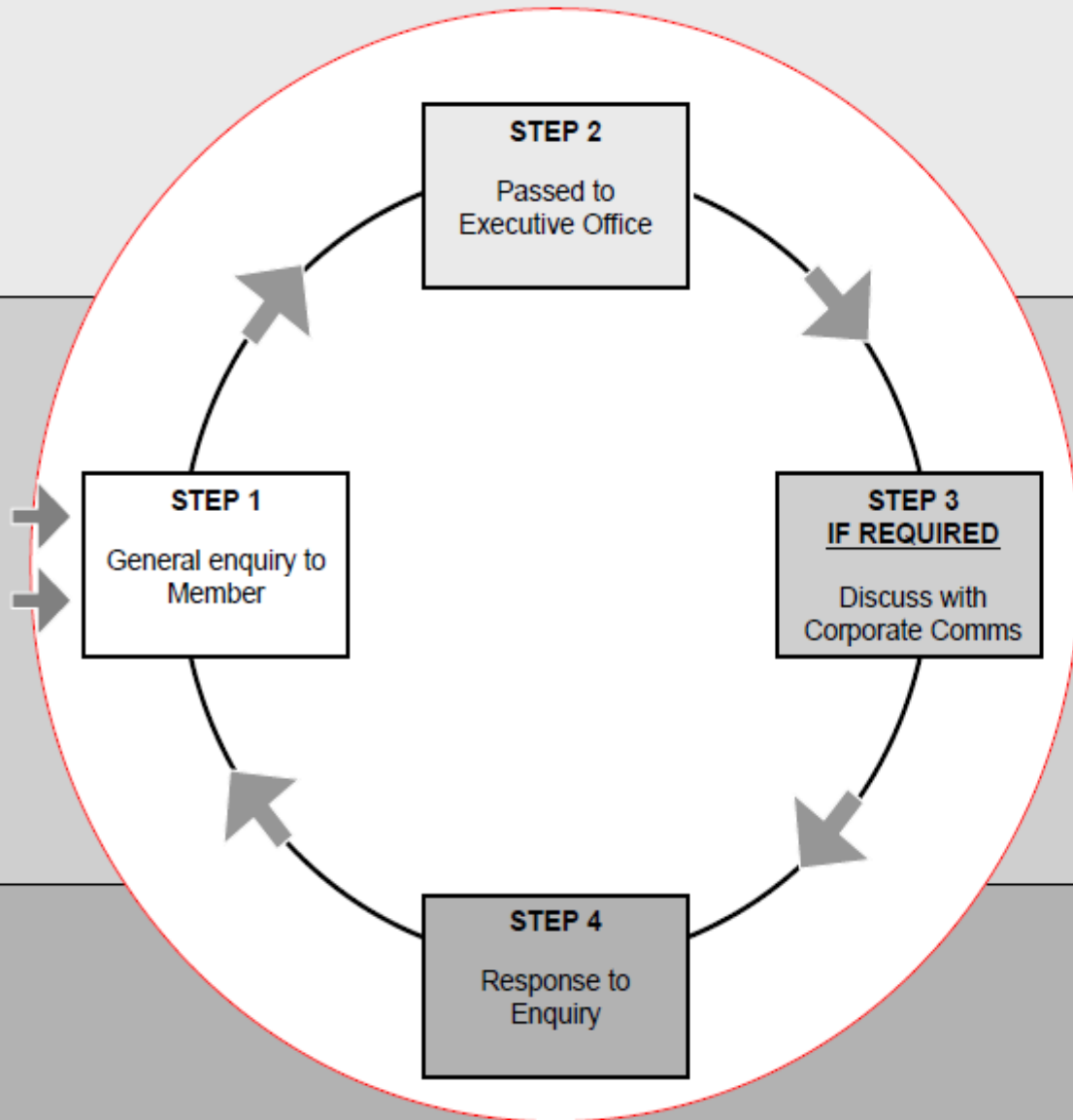


STEP 2 - optional	<u>Senior Management</u>
	Liz Chidgey
	01245 43412
	liz.chidgey@essex.gov.uk

STEP 3	<u>Complaints and Representations team</u>
	Acknowledged and customer informed that received and being managed.
	PRIORITY ASSESSED
	01245 434109 complaintsofficer.socialcare@essex.gov.uk

STEP 4	<u>Response Times</u>
	HIGH Priority Respond within 1-9 days
	STANDARD Priority Respond within 10 days
	COMPLEX case Extended pathway, ongoing communication

Handling **MEDIA** Information Enquiry
e.g. enquiry from local or national press



STEP 2	<u>Executive Office</u>
	01245 435541 robert.field@essex.gov.uk

STEP 3 – IF REQUIRED	<u>Corporate Communications</u>
	If the enquiry warrants further communication the Executive Office will liaise with Corporate Communications to issue a press release

STEP 4	<u>Response</u>
	Response should be within 24 – 48 hours