

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE
CUSTOMER CARE AND COMPLIMENTS,
COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS (CCC POLICIES)

1. STRATEGY

West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) is committed to providing customer care in all its dealings with its internal and external customers. One aspect of good customer care is to provide an avenue for receiving and dealing with compliments, comments or complaints from outside sources.

WMFS expects its employees to deliver its services with courtesy and care to the highest standards, no matter who they are dealing with. The way in which WMFS is regarded by both its external and internal customers is entirely dependent on the attitude of staff. Customer care is based upon providing the best service possible and can be summed up by saying "it is treating people in a way that you would expect to be treated yourself."

All of our customers must be given the same amount of care and consideration:

- regardless of the nature of the service being provided, whether they are internal or external customers, or whether it is of an emergency or non-emergency nature; and
- regardless of the circumstances of the individual requiring our services. No judgement must be made on the social, personal or professional standing of individuals to decide the level of courtesy and care they should receive.

The service which WMFS provides to the communities of the West Midlands may result in members of the public wishing to compliment, comment or complain. It is important that they are given every opportunity to do this. This enables us to get a clearer picture of the effectiveness, or otherwise, of our service and learn from these experiences and to effect change.

The procedure outlined in this standing order has been designed to make it easier for Service personnel at any location to deal with the receipt of a compliment, comment or complaint and to ensure it is dealt with in an appropriate manner at the most suitable level.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 Introduction to the compliment, comment and complaints (CCC) procedure

WMFS has a very positive attitude towards all such calls and/or letters and sees any CCC as a possible opportunity for the improvement or amendment of our overall service – just because a complaint is received doesn't necessarily mean something is wrong, but if it is, we want to put it right.

The procedure has a central information gathering element which enables a Service wide view to be taken, the statistics to be gathered and also makes it easier to identify trends. With this information, the Corporate Board can decide what, if any, strategic action or changes are required. Consequently, all such communications must be reported, whether apparently positive or negative in nature.

It is important that all staff understand that the public do not have to submit CCCs in writing to the Chief Fire Officer, or confirm one in writing.

2.2 Courtesy

WMFS personnel must always be courteous to callers and should give their name when answering a call. It may not always be immediately apparent what the nature of a call is and it could require patience to establish if it is a compliment, comment or complaint.

Being courteous does not mean accepting abuse. People who feel aggrieved often feel agitated or angry. The recipient should try and defuse the situation. If this is unsuccessful, then follow the appropriate guidance given in Appendix 1. All members of the WMFS should familiarise themselves with this procedure.

2.3 Completing an electronic CCC

In the event of any CCC being received an electronic CCC only must be raised - no paper forms are to be used.

The electronic CCC may be found by logging onto the WMFS intranet going into the 'customer care' site and then selecting the 'raise a CCC' option on the menu screen.

When logging onto the customer care site selecting the 'help' option will give some useful tips and guidance on how to complete the form.

On selecting the appropriate icon for raising either a compliment, comment or complaint you will be taken into a further menu screen with a series of sections to be completed (all of those marked with * are mandatory fields and must be completed)

The electronic CCC can only be completed by WMFS personnel.

A contact phone number or address should be taken immediately from the caller. If the point of receipt is a fire station or fire control, the caller should be informed that an emergency call may necessitate the rapid termination of the conversation.

It is imperative that as much detail as possible is taken from callers. When you have all the details, read back to them what you have written and ask them to confirm it is accurate.

If the compliment, comment or complaint received is a letter, an electronic CCC must still be completed.

2.4 Criteria for dealing with complaints at point of receipt

Dealing with complaints at point of receipt usually entails being able to give a satisfactory answer to a caller there and then. Most often, these are local issues which can be resolved by a conversation.

It is impossible to list every type of call which could be dealt with at the point of receipt, but if you are unsure, or the call may entail a financial claim, then refer it on to your Borough or Station Commander or department head, after entering all of the details onto the computer.

The Secretariat section should also be notified immediately in writing of any insurance claim that may be made against the service and copied into any communication that may result.

2.5 When the electronic CCC has been completed

The Public Relations section is automatically notified of any CCC entered onto the system.

The following action is to be taken upon the completion of the electronic CCC

The CCC should either be forwarded to the Public Relations Section for further action or referred to the appropriate Borough or Station Commander or departmental head for further investigation and response to the CCC as may be appropriate.

For compliments and comments, the individual who has logged the information onto the system may at their discretion choose to send a thank you letter.

All complaints must be acknowledged within three days of receipt by the individual logging the information or referred to the Borough or Station Commander or department head.

Borough or Station Commanders or department heads should complete their investigations of complaints within ten days of the date of initial contact and then update the computer system with the investigation and outcome of the initial complaint.

The Secretariat section should also be notified immediately in writing of any insurance claim that may be made against the service and copied into any communication that may result.

The Public Relations section will contact the Borough or Station Commander or department head if a response has not been received within 16 days of the initial contact.

2.6 Advice for Borough or Station Commanders or department heads

Compliments, comments or complaints received which relate to another Borough, Station or department should be sent to that Borough or Station Commander or department for action.

Most complaints which reach you can be investigated directly. However, if the complaint is about:

- you personally;
- a more senior officer;
- a member of the Fire Authority; or
- a politically sensitive issue;

you should forward the complaint to the Public Relations section, who will deal with it appropriately.

Occasionally, you may have started an investigation before it becomes apparent that it involves one or more of the above criteria and that it should therefore be investigated centrally. Stop the investigation and send all information to the Public Relations section.

2.7 Legal claim

The Secretariat section should be informed immediately by phone on 0121 380 6891 and then in writing, of any complaint which could result in legal action or a compensatory claim against WMFS.

2.8 Investigations

Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, an investigation into a complaint should always include the investigating officer speaking to the complainant, as well as the person or persons to whom the complaint is directed. Investigating officers should endeavour to ensure that they do not adopt a 'defensive attitude' and remember that the complainant has a right to complain and may well be justified.

2.9 Correspondence and visits to complainants

Borough or Station Commanders and department heads should (except when a legal claim is involved) write to complainants, informing them of the outcome of the investigations and may also, if appropriate, visit complainants to further aid explanations. The person or persons to whom the complaint was directed should always be advised of the outcome. Copies of all correspondence and information concerning any such visits should be forwarded to the Public Relations section, Fire Service Headquarters clearly stating the CCC number allocated by the computer.

2.10 Further advice

If you require help and advice regarding any aspect of this procedure or to request assistance in translation, interpretation then please contact the Public Relations section at Fire Service Headquarters on phone numbers 0121 380 6102/6103/4.

3. CROSS REFERENCES

Race Equality Scheme

4. KEY CONSULTEES

Minor changes only have been made to this order and consultation was not necessary.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Initial Equality Impact Assessment raised no issues.

6. OWNERSHIP

This Standing Order did not require Corporate Board or Authority approval.

7. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW/AMENDMENT DETAILS

7.1 Responsible Director/Department

The responsible director is Director Corporate Planning and Support and the responsible department is Public Relations.

7.2 Created/fully reviewed/amended

This standing order was fully revised by the Public Relations Manager in January 2007.

ABUSIVE CALLERS

1. **Abusive phone callers**

The action to be taken when receiving an abusive phone call is as follows:

If a phone caller is abusive, then you should calmly inform them that if they continue to be abusive, you will terminate the phone call.

If they continue to be abusive, terminate the call.

Fill in as much detail as possible on the electronic CCC form including that you terminated the call and why.

Refer to your Station or Borough Commander or department head or, contact the Public Relations section at Fire Service Headquarters.

2. **Abusive personal callers**

The procedure to be used when dealing with an abusive personal call is as follows:

If a personal caller is abusive, calmly inform them that if they continue to be abusive, you will ask them to leave the premises.

If they continue to be abusive, calmly ask them to leave.

If they still continue to be abusive and refuse to leave, inform them if they do not leave you will call the Police.

If their behaviour continues, call the Police and ask for assistance.

When the situation allows, fill in as much information as possible on the electronic CCC including your actions, then refer to your Station or Borough Commander or department head or, contact the Public Relations section, Fire Service Headquarters.

APPENDIX 2

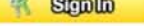
Customer Care

Customer Care is an application on the brigade intranet site. It allows you to record the Compliments, Comments & Complaints you receive from the public on a Corporate Relations database.

- Open the intranet page by double-clicking the Internet Explorer icon on your desktop.

Signing On

In order to access all the applications you must sign on. Once you have signed on to the intranet you will not have to log onto any other application that usually requires a password as they will draw your details from the intranet.

- Click  in the top right hand corner of the screen.

You are not Signed In

Please Sign In to use Intranet Services!

Username:

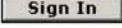
Password:

Remember my Username for Future Sign In
Do not check this if you share a Windows Logon For example a Station logon such as Sheldon.Blue

- Direct access to Quick-Order
- Automatic login to GTC
- TEXT Messaging service
- Personal Task List
- Customised Home Page
- Your Links & Reports
- ...and much more!

The Sign In screen will appear.

- Click into the **Username** box and enter your roll number preceded by the letter U, e.g. U1234.
- Click into the **Password** box and enter your password.

- Finally using your mouse click on Sign In  below.

Note: If you do not share your pc with anybody else you can tick the Remember my Username for future Sign In. Do not check this if you share a Windows Logon For example a Station logon such as Sheldon.Blue

Opening Customer Care

- Using the mouse click on the [Customer Care](#) link (blue underlined text) in the QuickLinks box on the home page.

Customer Care Home Page

Title Banner

Customer Care Menu



Customer Care Menu

- Customer Care Menu
- Compliments
- My CCC's
- My Referrals
- Exit

Liaison

Caring for our Customers

The West Midlands Fire Service aims to be a caring organisation, wanting to meet the needs of both its staff and the public we all serve.

This site is intended as a guide and sets out customer care standards for all members of the brigade. A lot of the advice available from this site will not be new to you. If you deal regularly with the public in your job, you already have a lot of knowledge of how to put the customer first. Like all skills, dealing with people effectively comes with application and experience. It is one of the most important skills a member of the brigade can have because it is our business to serve the public. The more effective and positive you are, the more satisfying your work can be.

All members of staff have a responsibility to the community and to each other, and we can all improve our working environment by the quality of our interaction.

Customer Care Hotline
0121 380 7404

Downloaded by WMPFS 127

Customer Care Menu box

This contains direct links to the various screens in Customer Care. The menu box will remain in the top left hand corner of all screens.

- To select an option in the **Customer Care Menu** links box, move your mouse over the required link (blue underlined text) and click the left mouse button. The required page will be displayed.

Customer Care	Click to return to the Customer Care homepage at any time.
Portfolio	Allows you to view the Customer care portfolio in the library.
Compliments	Allows the user to view Compliments.
Raise a CCC	Allows the user to raise a Compliment, Comment or Complaint.
My CCC's	Allows the user to view Compliments, Comments and Complaints that they have raised..
My Referrals	Allows the user to view Compliments, Comments and Complaints referred to them.
Exit	This will close Customer Care and return you to the main intranet page.

Scroll Bar

Some of the Customer care screens are larger than the computer screen.

- In order to view information above or below the screen boundary, simply click on the up and down arrows on the vertical scroll bar accordingly.
- Likewise to view information further to the right or left, click the left and right arrows on the horizontal scroll bar at the base of the screen.



Buttons

There are additional buttons that appear where appropriate to help you move around the screen.

Go Back

- Having navigated your way through several pages using the various links you may need to go back a page. Clicking [Go back](#) at the top of the page will move you back a page.

Top

- Clicking [Top](#) at the bottom of the screen will jump you back to the top of the page quickly.

Raising a Compliment, Comment or Complaint

Customer Care allows you to enter compliments, comments and complaints received from the public.

- Click on the [Raise a CCC](#) link (Blue underlined text) in the **Customer Care Menu** box.

Liaison

Raise a CCC

Select an option...

CCC Options

Compliment Comment Complaint

The **Raise a CCC** screen will appear allowing you to create a compliment, comment or complaint.

Raising A Compliment



➤ Click on the **Compliment** picture on the screen. The Raise a Compliment form will appear.

➤ Enter the details in fields supplied.

Received

- Click on the drop down arrows to select the day, month and year.
- Using the mouse click into the time boxes and enter the time the compliment was taken.
- Using the mouse, click the method by which the compliment was taken.

Customer



- Fill in the customer's details in this section pressing the **Tab** key to move between the boxes.

Preferred Method

- Using the mouse, click the method by which the customer would like to be contacted.

Details

- In the details box, enter the specific details of the compliment.

➤ When the form is complete click on the **Create** button  to save the information or click on **Cancel**  to cancel out and return to the Raise a CCC screen.

Raising A Comment



➤ Click on the **Comment** picture on the screen. The Raise a Comment screen will appear.

➤ Enter the details in fields supplied.

Received

- Click on the drop down arrows to select the day, month and year.
- Using the mouse click into the time boxes and enter the time the comment was taken.
- Using the mouse, click the method by which the comment was taken.

Customer

- Fill in the customer's details in this section pressing the **Tab** key to move between the boxes.

Preferred Method

- Using the mouse, click the method by which the customer would like to be contacted.

Comment

- Using the mouse tick the subject box/es about which the comment has been made.
- Click on the **Relating To** drop down arrow and click on the station/directorate the comment has been made about.

Details

- In the details box, enter the specific details of the comment.



Your Action

- Using the mouse select **Yes** or **No** as appropriate from the drop down list.
- If you choose **Yes**, enter the details of your actions in the box below.


Status



- Using the mouse click on the **Status** drop down arrow and select **Resolved**, **Refer to Station Commander/Manager** or **Forward to Corporate Relations** as appropriate.

➤ If you chose **Refer to Station Commander/Manager** click on the drop down below and click on the relevant person.

➤ When the form is complete click on the **Create** button  to save the information or click on **Cancel**  to cancel out and return to the Raise a CCC screen.

Raising A Complaint

- Click on the **Complaint**  picture on the screen. The Raise a Complaint screen will appear.
- Enter the details in fields supplied.

- If you chose **Refer to Station Commander/Manager** click on the drop down below and click on the relevant person.
- When the form is complete click on the **Create** button  to save the information or click on **Cancel**  to cancel out and return to the Raise a CCC screen.

Received

- Click on the drop down arrows to select the day, month and year.
- Using the mouse click into the time boxes and enter the time the complaint was taken.
- Using the mouse, click the method by which the complaint was taken.

Customer

- Fill in the customer's details in this section pressing the **Tab** key to move between the boxes.

Preferred Method

- Using the mouse, click the method by which the customer would like to be contacted.

Comment

- Using the mouse tick the subject box/es about which the complaint has been made.
- Click on the **Relating To** drop down arrow and click on the station/directorate the comment has been made about.

Details

- In the details box, enter the specific details of the complaint.

Your Action

- Using the mouse select **Yes** or **No** as appropriate from the drop down list.
- If you choose **Yes**, enter the details of your actions in the box below.

Status

- Using the mouse click on the **Status** drop down arrow and select **Resolved**, **Refer to Station Commander/Manager** or **Forward to Corporate Relations** as appropriate.

Customer Care Portfolio


- Click the **Portfolio** link ([blue underlined text](#)) in the Customer Care Menu box. The Customer Care portfolio in the library will be displayed on the screen.
- To view the portfolio document click on the **Customer Care Portfolio** link ([blue underlined text](#)) in the right hand section of the screen and the document will be displayed.



A page symbol on the left hand side means that when you click on it the relevant information will be displayed on the right. A page and a plus sign + means there are sub sections to the title.

- On the left hand side of the screen click the plus sign to the left of the appropriate title.

The sub-sections within that title will be displayed below it on the list and the plus sign + will change to a minus sign -.

- To retract an expanded list, click the minus sign - and the branch will contract again. As you select the various options on the left hand side of the screen, the right hand section of the screen will display the text attached to your selection.
- To return to the Customer Care screen, click on **Close**  in the bottom right hand corner of the window.

Viewing Compliments

- Click the [Compliments](#) link (blue underlined text) in the Customer Care Menu box. The Compliments screen will appear, displaying the all brigade compliments raised.



- To view a Compliments details, click on the appropriate compliment link ([blue underlined text](#)).

The Compliment details will be displayed for you.

- Click [Go Back](#) at the top of the page to return to the Compliments screen.

My CCC's

- Click the [My CCC's](#) link (blue underlined text) in the Customer Care Menu box. The My CCC'S screen will appear, displaying the compliments, comments and complaints you have raised and their status.



- To view a CCC, click on the appropriate compliment, comment or complaint link ([blue underlined text](#)).

The CCC details will be displayed for you.

- Click [Go Back](#) at the top of the page to return to My CCC's.

My Referrals (For Line Managers/Station Commanders)

- Click the [My Referrals](#) link (blue underlined text) in the Customer Care Menu box. The My Referrals screen will appear, displaying the comments & complaints referred to you.



- To view a referral's details, click on the appropriate referral link ([blue underlined text](#)).

The Referral details will be displayed for you.

- Enter the manager's actions as necessary and click [Update](#) to save your changes and update the Corporate Relations database, or click on [Cancel](#) to cancel out and return to the previous screen.

Printing Within Customer Care

Some of the Customer Care pages may contain information that you would like to print.

- Ensure you have the information you want to print displayed on the screen.
- Click [Print](#) in the top right hand corner of the screen and a standard print dialogue box will appear.
- Adjust the print settings as necessary and click [OK](#).

Note: If there is no [Print](#) option then it is not possible to print that particular piece of information.

Exiting Customer Care

- Using the mouse, click on [Exit](#) in the Customer Care Menu box at the top of the screen and you will be returned to the Intranet.

Tips for Completing CCCs

Compliments

- **Remember**, if the compliment is received by telephone or in person, you can use the CCC prompt form to help you gather the correct information. This will save time as you can enter the details on the Intranet when convenient to you.
- Complete the online CCC form using the quick reference guide on the Intranet.
- If the compliment is in the form of a letter, please fax or send a copy of the letter to the Public Relations Section as soon as possible after you have completed the Compliments form on the Customer Care database noting the allocated CCC number. The letter will then be copied and entered on the database.

Comments

- **Remember**, if the comment is received by telephone or in person, you can use the CCC prompt form to help you gather the correct information. This will save time as you can then enter the comment on the Intranet when convenient to you.
- Complete the online CCC form using the quick reference guide on the Intranet.
- If the comment is in the form of a letter, please fax or send a copy of the letter to the Public Relations Section or the relevant Borough/Station Commander/Line Manager as soon as possible after you have completed the Comments form on the Customer Care database noting the allocated CCC number. The letter will then be copied and entered on the database.

Complaints

- **Remember**, if the complaint is received by telephone or in person, you can use the CCC prompt form to help you gather the correct information. Resolved complaints can then be entered on the Intranet when convenient to you.
- Complete the online CCC form using the quick reference guide on the Intranet.
- If the complaint requires further investigation please ensure that you enter the Complaint on the Customer Care database and refer to the relevant Borough/Station Commander/ Line Manager as soon as possible as complaints need be acknowledged ***within three days of receipt*** and ***investigations complete fourteen working days after acknowledgement***.
- If the complaint is in the form of a letter, please fax or send a copy of the letter to the Public Relations Section (***if resolved***) or the relevant Borough/Station Commander/Line Manager (***for investigation***) as soon as possible after you have completed the Complaint form on the Customer Care database.

If you need any advice about CCCs please ring Alison Newis on 0121 380 6102, Justine Eustace on 0121 380 6103 or Samantha Turnbull on 0121 380 6104.

Advice for Borough/Station Commanders/Line Managers

Advice for Borough/Station Commanders/Line Managers

Investigation of Complaints

- Please remember to regularly check your CCC referrals on the 'My Referrals' screen of the Customer Care application on the Brigade Intranet.
- Most complaints, which reach you, can be investigated directly. However, if the complaint is about you personally, a more senior officer, a member of the Authority or a politically sensitive issue, please forward the complaint to the Public Relations Section who will deal with it appropriately.
- Please ensure that you contact the complainant to acknowledge the complaint within three working days of receipt.
- **Legal claims** – Secretariat should be informed immediately by telephone **on 0121 380 6891** and then informed in writing of any complaint which could result in legal action or a compensatory claim being made against the Service.
- Investigations into a complaint should always include speaking to the complainant as well as the person/persons to whom the complaint is directed. Investigating officers may where possible visit complainants to ascertain or explain the situation.
- During an investigation, Investigating Officers should try to ensure that they do not adopt a defensive attitude and remember that the customer has a right to complain and may well be justified.
- Investigations should be **completed 10 working days** after the initial acknowledgement at which point the Investigating Officer should inform the complainant of the outcome in writing. If the investigation is going to take longer please let the complainant know when to expect further information.
- If you find that the complaint can not be resolved please contact the Public Relations Section who will advise on further action.
- The 'My Referrals' screen should be updated once the investigations are complete and any supporting paperwork should be sent to the Public Relations Section.
- If you require any advice on the investigation of complaints please ring the Public Relations Section on 0121 380 6102/6103/6104.