

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

Director Area: Resources

Job Ref Number: 04336

Service Area: Business Support

Grade: 12

Job Title: Customer Relations Manager

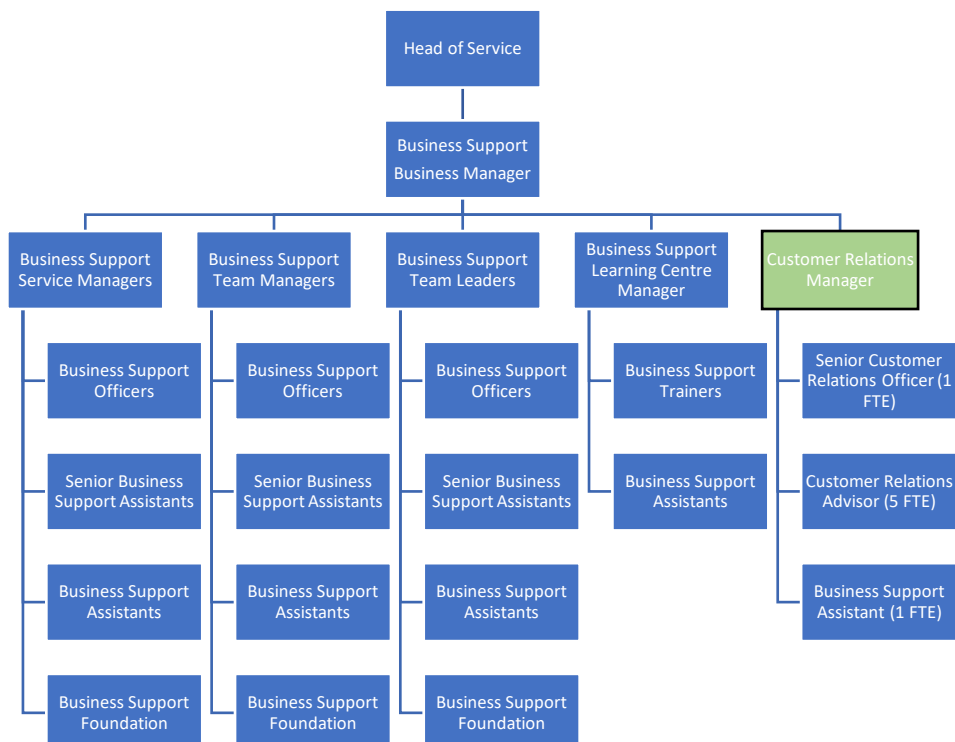
PURPOSE OF JOB:

To lead and deliver a comprehensive, responsive and sensitive corporate complaints and customer relations service for all Council service areas, ensuring concerns are investigated, managed and resolved promptly and fairly through effective engagement with complainants and close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

To fulfil the statutory role of Complaints Manager for the authority, ensuring the Council meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities in the handling of statutory and corporate complaints (including MP, Ofsted and representations processes) and maintains compliance with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaint Handling Code, relevant statutory timescales and associated guidance.

To promote complaint resolution and continuous improvement by using insight from complaints, compliments and customer feedback to identify learning, address recurring issues, improve customer experience and support the Council to maintain effective governance, reporting and scrutiny arrangements, including the production of the annual complaints report for publication.

STRUCTURE CHART:



MAIN DUTIES:	
1	Lead the Council's complaints system. Oversee corporate complaints, MP enquiries, Ofsted-related complaints and representations, and all statutory complaints (children's and adult social care), ensuring policies and practice meet current legislation and the LGSCO Code of Practice.
2	Resolve problems early and well. Set up proportionate, person-centered handling so issues are triaged quickly, given a clear single point of contact, and resolved at the earliest stage wherever possible, with accessible information and reasonable adjustments.
3	Build strong working relationships across the Council. Work closely with CLT, elected Members, senior and service managers, Legal Services and others to unblock issues fast, spot emerging risks early and prevent escalation; promote a learning culture.
4	Provide a high-quality, inclusive customer service. Ensure complainants are contacted promptly, understand the process, and get support where needed (including advocacy in children's complaints). Offer face-to-face meetings and, with service colleagues, home visits where this supports understanding or vulnerable people.
5	Run the processes to agreed standards and timescales. For corporate complaints, ensure acknowledgements and responses meet the Code's timescales; manage Stage 2 reviews within time, applying 'comply or explain' only in exceptional cases and keeping residents informed.
6	Lead the statutory children's complaints procedure (Stages 1–3). Commission and quality-assure independent Investigating Officers and the Independent Person; convene Stage 3 Review Panels within required timescales; support all parties at hearings; record and share outcomes and learning.
7	Oversee adult social care complaints Oversee adult social care complaints in line with policy and the 2009 Regulations, operating a single stage process to ensure that complainants do not have to navigate complex complaint processes.
8	Quality-assure investigations and responses and lead a high-performing team. Set clear standards, coach, mentor and supervise casework; run case clinics/reflective practice; manage workloads and wellbeing; and foster a customer-focused culture that resolves complaints effectively and works with services to secure high-quality, evidence-based responses.
9	Manage relationships with the LGSCO and Legal Services. Coordinate swift, accurate submissions for Ombudsman enquiries, apply LGSCO good practice and remedies, and advise senior leaders when similar remedies should be used locally.
10	Handle Ofsted-related and school's complaints appropriately. Lead liaison on Ofsted complaints about children's social care services and, for school complaints in the Authority's remit, work with Ofsted/ESFA as required, recognising Ofsted's focus on systemic issues and the need to complete the school's own procedures first.
11	Ensure MP correspondence is handled well. Oversee timely, accurate, clear and accessible replies to MPs and other elected representatives, in line with recognised correspondence-handling standards.
12	Monitor performance and deliver insight. Oversee the Civica i-Casework system to align with Council structures and workflows, keeping categories and ownership up to date and maintaining reliable data. Generate KPIs and statutory reports, ensure data quality, set user access and roles, and provide basic training for accurate reporting. Extract and analyze data on volumes, timeliness, upheld rates, trends, and equality impacts. Pinpoint root causes and service failures, identify cross-cutting trends, and coordinate action plans with relevant teams.
13	Report regularly and transparently.

	Provide monthly KPIs and quarterly and ad hoc themed reports to services and Directorates; present trends, risks and recommendations to CLT, Scrutiny and Audit; supply data to Portfolio Holders and Members; and produce the annual complaints report (with Code self-assessment) for publication.
14	Drive continuous improvement. Benchmark against other councils, adopt good practice and develop better methods, including digital tools and AI where appropriate, to simplify processes, improve customer experience and reduce repeat complaints. Represent LCC at regional (e.g. East Midlands complaints managers forum) and national networks and working groups to benchmark performance, share data and learning, and bring back improvements to implement locally.
15	Embed learning, governance and policy ownership. Embed learning, governance and policy ownership. Make sure lessons learned lead to changes in policies, processes, guidance or staff behaviours; track completion of actions and evidencing of outcomes; and maintain and own the Council's single corporate complaints policy (with clear definitions of service requests vs complaints). Keep the policy clear, accessible and aligned to the LGSCO Complaint Handling Code and relevant statutory procedures; review and update it at least annually (and sooner when legislation, guidance or learning requires); ensure it promotes high-quality, timely resolution; and complete the Code self-assessment with actions published and tracked to completion.
16	Manage complaints about contracted and commissioned services. Ensure providers meet the Council's standards, that complaints data and learning are captured and reviewed, and that residents experience a joined-up process.
17	Set and deliver training. Design and run 'Complaints Made Easy' and other complaint-handling/customer service courses for officers, Members and appropriate external parties; keep guidance current with Code expectations and Ombudsman good practice.
18	Manage unreasonable, persistent or vexatious complainant behaviour. Apply the Council's policy fairly and lawfully; set clear contact arrangements where needed; record decisions and reviews; protect staff welfare; and preserve reasonable access to the complaints process.
19	Run the central inbox and triage. Manage the corporate customer relations mailbox, log and allocate new cases, and escalate promptly to senior officers when serious safeguarding or urgent risks are identified.
20	Own the customer satisfaction dashboard. Develop and maintain a corporate dashboard tracking satisfaction, accessibility and engagement, and use insights to target improvements.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Requirements	Where identified*	Essential	Desirable
Post Graduate degree in Business Administration or Customer Relationship/Strategic Customer Management or a recognised qualification at Level 6 or above with 3 years post qualification experience	A	ü	
Accredited mediator with a Diploma in Mediation/Level 3/NCFE Certificate with 2 years post qualification experience	A	ü	
Substantial experience in the handling of highly complex and contentious complaints and representations, dispute resolution and or mediation.	A	ü	
An ability to provide and receive highly complex information and disseminate to various stakeholders and employees	A,I	ü	
High level interpersonal skills with experience of dealing with sensitive customer focused issues and difficult situations	A, T, I	ü	
Experience of working or supporting services to Adults/Children,	A	ü	
Ability to be comfortable and interpret a large set of complex facts and draw conclusions and make recommendations from them	A, T, I	ü	
Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines	A	ü	
Ability to communicate confidentially and effectively to a wide range of colleagues, stakeholders and maintain positive working relationships.	T, I	ü	
Willingness to work outside of normal hours if required and visit people in their own homes where appropriate	A, I	ü	
Clear understanding of the statutory and legal requirements. Adult Care FRG (Adult Social Care) SEND Tribunal (Knowledge of which areas should be referred to appeal) PCN Appeals (Government claims process) Highways Claims Process (Legal Services) Individual Rights Requests (DPO) LGO Remedies Guidance (Live document and guidance via LGO) Identify Court/Legal involvement (Section 7 & 37 Children's Act, CoP) LGSCO Complaint Handling Code	A, T, I		ü
Knowledge of current issues relating to the effective management of complaints	A, T, I		ü
Possession of a valid driving license or ability to travel to fully meet the geographical area required.	A		ü

*A = Application form T = Test/Assessment I = Interview P = Presentation

GENERAL

The postholder is required to take personal responsibility for contributing to organisational transformation and changes in ways of working, maximising the benefits and efficiencies for both internal and external customers, including the promotion and use of self-service to achieve maximum cost effectiveness.

The postholder is expected to work to the Lincolnshire County Council Core Values and Behaviours and to carry out the duties in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council policies.

Other Duties - The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exhaustive. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties within the general scope of the post. Any such duties should not substantially change the general character of the post. Duties and responsibilities outside of the general scope of this grade of post will be with the consent of the post holder.

Safeguarding -. All employees need to be aware of the possible abuse of children and vulnerable adults and if you are concerned you need to follow the Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding Policy. In addition, employees working with children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults during the course of their work.