



# **PLATO TRAINING**

## **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**PLATO TRAINING UK LTD**  
**CUSTOMER CARE POLICY & PROCEDURE**

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## **VISION AND PRIORITIES**

Plato's 5-year vision is to provide services which are:

- the right quality
- good value
- effective
- efficiently managed
- capable of adapting to changing needs
- designed to meet the needs of all the people and diverse communities we serve
- customer-centred, involving listening to customers, complaints and comments, in a warm and friendly manner
- in line with statutory requirements
- in line with the Plato's resources

**Plato Training wishes to continually enhance its unique service and always aim to deliver a first-class service meeting the needs of our customers.**

## **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY**

To support the delivery of the provision at Plato our customer care policy is built around four key principles:

Customer Care will be provided in a professional manner across the team by well trained and knowledgeable staff;

Every employee will give priority to the consideration of the needs of the individual customer, their right to information, to equality of access, to privacy and dignity;

All of Plato's services will consistently seek to attain a defined and published standard of quality and our customers will be informed of their course of redress when these standards are not met;

The term "customer" will include colleagues in our own organisation and partner agencies, and we recognise that caring for our customers begins with caring for others who form part of a service chain within the organisation and its partners.

Every person employed by Plato Training can influence the quality of service, which a customer receives and consequently their perception of the organisation.

It is, therefore, vital to emphasise that the practices, which are set out in this policy, are relevant to everyone. They do not just apply to employees who have face-to-face contact with the public or to senior staff or to other teams providing direct services. Everyone can and must play their part with enthusiasm and commitment.

### **The organisation will play its part by:**

giving customer care a high corporate priority;

developing corporate values and practices on customer care which are shared across the organisation and communicated effectively;

setting out the good practice necessary to achieve those values in a way that supports a devolved management culture whilst, at the same time, recognising that we are perceived as one organisation by our customers;

encouraging all employees to optimise their use of existing resources in delivering services and customer care;

providing additional resources, where necessary, to supplement the resources provided by individual services in the development and delivery of customer care;

providing customer care training for all of its employees;

updating information to all its employees to add to their knowledge and awareness of customers and their care;

regularly monitoring its customer care strategy to ensure that the needs of all its customers – residents, visitors and in-house – are met successfully.

Providing a clear, accessible process for any customer to comment or complain about any aspect of the services

## **Values**

The customer care values that, as an organisation, we all share are:

Customers are the organisation's most important people. They are the purpose of our work. All customers, whether residents, visitors or colleagues, will be treated equally.

All our customers will have fair and equal access to all of Plato's services.

Every customer is entitled to:

- a standard of service which is known and agreed;
- be listened to when they comment or complain
- a sensitive response to their needs;
- a rapid response to their complaints;
- a courteous response to their enquiries;
- continuous attention by us to their satisfaction.

Our customers will be consulted to learn their views on the services they receive, and, on the way, they are treated as customers.

There is a clear and accessible complaints procedure in place for every member

Every Council employee will receive training in customer care.

## **AIMS OF POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Plato Training is a small organisation delivering a diverse range of services

throughout North Wales and England, it is committed to providing high standards of service – and has adopted this policy to: -

ensure that services are delivered in a caring and professional way;

act as a framework of reference for staff, Members, customers and partners

ensure that staff and Members are fully informed about their roles and responsibilities

promote good practice in customer service including service standards

ensure that performance is monitored, and that action is taken to address any problems

provide clear guidance on how to deal with customer

## **CUSTOMER CONTACT AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

Dealing with Customer Contacts

Plato has a Customer Contact procedure to help customers to comment on its services and give guidance to staff on how to deal with customer contacts. This includes customers: ·

- asking questions about a service or facility·
- making comments on a service or facility·
- passing compliments on a service or facility·
- making complaints about a service or facility.

Plato has adopted a procedure for dealing with each of these situations.

### **Access to the Procedure**

Plato's Customer Contact form is available to anyone seeking, receiving or affected by the services for which Plato is responsible, or to anyone acting on their behalf.

The customer contact form and other helpful advice will be available at our offices.

## **CUSTOMER CONTACT PROCEDURE**

### a. Questions

Every effort should be made to deal with questions from customers straightaway at the first point of contact.

If you are unable to deal with the question yourself, pass it to your Line Manager or other officer, who will be able to deal with it. Make every effort to deal with the customer's question there and then, it will avoid a telephone or written contact in the future.

If you cannot resolve the query straight away, ensure you telephone, email or write to the person with the appropriate answer to the question they raise.

However, a response should be given within 24 hours. The initial response is very likely to be automated and personalised. The follow up reply will follow the same timescale as written replies. If you need to respond in writing, ensure you meet the Customer Care Standard for replying to correspondence.

### b. Comments

Again, try to deal with comments at the first point of contact. Many comments will be statements or points of information and may not require a response. If they do require a response, ensure it is dealt with quickly within the Customer

Care Guidelines and normal service procedures. Remember to thank the customer for their comment, if it is appropriate. If, upon considering the comment, an action is agreed, ensure it is implemented and actioned quickly and, if possible, give appropriate credit.

## **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A COMPLAINT?**

Plato's formal definition is:

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation or its employees affecting an individual customer or group of customers”

A complaint does not include: -

- Requests for service
- Requests for information or explanation of our policy or practice
- Complaints about “third parties, who are not working on behalf of the council”

We want to make sure that our customers feel that they can complain whenever they are dissatisfied with our services – and that we will do all we can to deal with their complaint satisfactorily, openly and fairly.

If the complaint is to another agency, then you should try and guide the customer to the correct contact

If you are unsure whether an issue raised with you is a complaint, check the Complaints Procedure or ask your Line Manager.

Matters raised anonymously will be considered and appropriate action taken, although, these complaints are more difficult to deal with fairly. Therefore, any action taken will be outside this procedure



## **HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

### a. Twelve golden rules to remember

- Treat all complaints seriously, don't take the complaint or criticism personally
- Make your first response positive. Don't rush onto the defensive
- Try to resolve the complaint as your first objective
- Avoid using jargon that the customer might not understand
- If there has been a mistake – acknowledge it and apologise
- Be prepared to take responsibility for other people's mistakes - We are all "Plato Training"
- Take the initiative with suggestions to put things right and offer choices
- Try to make amends – but don't make promises we can't keep
- If the customer is wrong, don't embarrass them if you need to point it out.
- Be tactful
- Learn from mistakes
- Watch your body language, say you're sorry with your actions as well as your words.

### b. Customer Care Standards – replying in writing

Written replies to be completed and posted within 10 working days. Email should be acknowledged within 1 working day, with a full reply in 10 working days.

If a reply cannot be sent within that limit, an update letter/e-mail should be sent, within 5 working days, explaining the delay and indicating when a full reply will be received.

Please note it may also be possible to update the customer via telephone or email, if this is the case then it is imperative that a note be kept "on file" of the action(s) taken during the process with dates, times and initials.

### c. Where do you fit into this process

The first thing to remember is that you are already skilled in dealing with customers – you probably do it every day. Customer Care is not additional to your job; it is an integral part of it! Equally, we will never be able to satisfy all the people all of the time. What the Complaint's Procedure does is to provide a framework for handling complaints, to help us to learn and to improve how we do things when they go wrong.

#### Monitoring Customer Feedback, Complaints and Compliments

All verbal, electronic or written complaints, and their outcomes, must be recorded in an appropriate manner, so that records can be subsequently analysed. The information should be recorded following the procedure, so that comparable statistics can be collated centrally and reported as required. Records should enable the following information to be produced: -

- number and nature of complaints relating to each service
- dates of receipt and dates of responses
- number of complaints dealt with
- performance in meeting the timescale set out
- outcome of complaints at each stage, i.e. upheld, not upheld, unresolved
- level of customer satisfaction with the way the organisation has handled their complaint