GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDELINES

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAC	Consumer Affairs Commission
GoJ	Government of Jamaica
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OC	Office of the Cabinet
OPD	Office of the Public Defender
PSMD	Public Sector Modernisation Division
SE	Service Excellence
SEP	Service Excellence Programme
SN	Special Needs
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

A. BACKGROUND

The need for public services to be more customer-focused has never been greater. Improving customer satisfaction and customer experience are at the heart of any Government's strategy for public services reform. These initiatives include the Citizens Charter Programme (1994), the Customer Service Competition (2002), the Customer Service Improvement Programme (2006) and more recently the Customer Service Monitoring and Evaluation System (2010). The Service Excellence Policy was approved by the Cabinet in March 2022 and identifies **the actual guiding principles or what is to be done**. The policy statements are designed to influence and determine decisions and actions within the scope of coverage. While there is some evidence that these initiatives have had some positive impact on individual public sector entities, there is a general perception, reinforced by reported customer experiences that the quality of customer service in the public sector needs significant improvement, therefore the Service Excellence policy now approved is anticipated guide best practices in Service Excellence. While there is ample evidence that service across government has evolved, continuous improvement needs to be a constant theme as citizens of Jamaica are more informed, connected, educated, and have higher expectations for the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of public services delivered.

The public sector is the country's largest service provider, and any improvement in service quality will have a positive impact on citizens, residents, members of the diaspora, and investors. As such, the redesign and improvement of services with customers in mind must be the way to go for the Government of Jamaica.

A.1 What is Service Excellence?
The GoJ defines SE as *"the delivery of services against established standards in a manner which effectively satisfies customers' needs and provides value for our citizens."*[1] This is the principal criteria for decisions and actions, and the primary basis for the design and management of organisational systems, policies, and practices.

A.2 What is the Service Excellence Vision?
The vision for SE is:
A Public Sector in which **the needs of our customers are satisfied through the delivery of integrated, responsive, and accessible services by capable, respect-worthy, and accountable professionals".**
This will be realised when:
- services are delivered promptly and respond to the time-bound needs of clients
- current and accurate information is accessible to all clients using all appropriate communication channels
- clients are engaged around the design of the services, and the quality of delivery, before, during and after service has been delivered
- clients are attended to by personnel who have the requisite technical expertise and knowledge to satisfy their needs
- services are designed to provide the best customer experience, are regularly reviewed, and changes are made based on client and staff feedback, market-trends or emerging technology
- staff are empowered and managed within organisations that actively promote and reinforce the core values, of accountability, inclusivity, integrity, innovation, and service excellence and

---

[1] Office of the Cabinet (2018). Service Excellence Framework p.6

- quality standards are defined and applied throughout all public-sector organisations and are the basis for organisational and individual performance management.

A.3 What are the Service Excellence Guiding Principles?

The SE minimum standards are guided by the following five core principles:

1. **Citizen-centred:** All public servants should constantly challenge themselves to design and deliver with the benefit of citizens in mind.
2. **Customer-focused:** The public servants empathise with the customer, request their input, and are receptive to their feedback.
3. **Integrity and Transparency:** All public servants are open, consistent, honest and responsible in the provision of all goods and services; being committed and accountable in their communications, processes, and operations.
4. **Respect for Human Rights:** All public servants recognise that service should be delivered in any way that affirms the rights and dignity of customers.
5. **Accountable and Committed Leadership:** The GoJ is committed to making service excellence a key performance indicator by strengthening institutional capacity and leadership and holding them accountable for the level of service provided to the public.

- Purpose of the Guideline
- The aim of this guideline is to assist Ministries, Departments and Agencies in creating a complaint management system within their public sector organisation. The main objective is to assist public sector entities to establish and operate a complaints management system with clear, documented processes for responding to complaints (Government of Jamaica Service Delivery Minimum Standards, 2024).

The Complaint Management System Guideline is to be used in association with the Government of Jamaica Complaints Policy Statement. The guideline document includes the complaints-handling framework and process used in addressing customer complaints. According to Section 5.1.5 Effective Service Recovery, (Government of Jamaica Service Excellence Policy, 2022), public sector entities are to design and implement systems that respond to customer feedback and concerns about available services. The Public Sector Modernization Division (PSMD) therefore has drafted these guidelines which the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) can adopt as required.

The guidelines provide a high-level overview of the organisation's approach to handling complaints and strategies for managing customer feedback. They provide a structured and effective process for managing and resolving complaints satisfactorily. It is intended to provide steps in improving customer satisfaction in the event of service failures whilst reducing the impact of negative repercussions from word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions.

A.4 Scope of document

- This guideline provides clear steps on the creation of a code of conduct, complaints handling, dispute resolution, monitoring and measuring of customer satisfaction within an organization and general guidance notes on implementing strategies for the complaints management system. The use of the references included the International Service Organisation (ISO) 10001,10002,10003 and 10004 standards. Therefore, this document will guide the creation of a complaints management system for a public sector entity and is recommended for use with the People Engagement guideline and GoJ Service Delivery Minimum Standards documents.
-

-
- Intended Users
- The main users of the document would be the Customer Care Manager within the Customer
- Service Unit/ Branch who by function, oversees the development of the CMS. The guidance focuses on providing strategies, methods, and examples as recommendations to aid the implementation for each component of the CMS. The guideline may also be used by other interested parties such as customer advocates or other Non-government organisations (NGOs).
-
-

Compatibility with other Service Excellence Guideline Documents

The Complaints Management System Guideline and other related guidelines outlined below were developed to support Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to embed a continuous service improvement culture. Including the Complaints Management Guideline, there are a total of three interrelated guideline documents:

- Minimum Standards - will provide general recommendations, outline processes and provide users with relevant templates to support service improvement in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).
- People Engagement - provides a framework for effective stakeholder engagement in government projects ensuring that the stakeholder is consulted, involved and informed throughout the project lifecycle

<u>Guideline Development Process</u>

The guidelines were developed by the Public Sector Modernization Division (PSMD) because of the directive of the SE Policy that states that all public sector entities "…will need to establish systems that allow for prompt and courteous resolution of service failures."[2]

The research was conducted on several jurisdictions such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Philippines, United Kingdom, USA, etc. The guideline document was drafted to reflect the local context of the Government entities in Jamaica whilst incorporating globally accepted best practices. The process of validation was achieved by inviting subject matter experts from public and non-government organisations and subsequent reviews were conducted by internal Teams that updated the draft through several iterations.

---

[2] Government of Jamaica Service Excellence Policy (2022, p.44)

STEPS TO CREATING A COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

What is a Complaints Management System?

- A Complaints Management System is the set of processes that are aimed at identifying and correcting various causes of customer dissatisfaction (Farnell & Westbrook, 1984). It also includes a policy, tools, resources, and people as critical parts of a complaints management system. It also includes the planning, conduct and monitoring of all measures taken by an organisation in connection with complaints to ultimately result in customer satisfaction. It defines the action plan used by an entity to troubleshoot and learn from the previous mistakes to restore customer confidence in an organisation's commitment to delivering service excellence.

-

- All public sector entities must establish and operate a complaints management system with clear, documented processes for responding to complaints[3]. The focus of a Complaints Management System is to resolve customer grievances, identify areas for improvement as customers provide feedback resulting in better products or services. The Complaints Management System is one of the ways in which public sector entities can be more customer-focused and responsive by incorporating a feedback loop to enable service improvements.

What is a complaint?

The JS ISO 10002:2014 defines a complaint as an "*expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.*"

A complaint may also include:

- a concern expressed about a conduct or service, which may relate to a service failure to provide information, conduct of staff, the unfairness or unreasonableness of a decision, and so on, or
- a request for a review of a decision on an earlier complaint.

A service failure may be defined as any one of the following: unjustified delays, failure to follow policies, rules or procedures, failure to communicate individual rights/entitlements of inaccurate or misleading advice, etc. The ISO 10004:2018 document notes that a complaint can be initiated by a customer or another complainant. Non-formal complaints are also accepted as a legitimate means of voicing customer dissatisfaction to an entity.

What is not a complaint?

The recipient within the public sector entity must assess whether the complaint falls within the scope of the entity's complaints-handling procedure by reviewing the definition of a complaint. If it is a not a matter that can be handled by the clearly outlined complaints process, the Complainant should be referred to the applicable government entity or a more appropriate body to which the described complaint can be handled.

If a Complainant uses personal abuse, inflammatory statements or intimidation when communicating their complaint to the entity, then it should have procedures in place for handling persons that demonstrate those behaviours. The following occasions may not be considered as complaint from a Customer:

---

[3] A standard under Quality and Reliability service dimension of the GoJ Service Delivery Minimum Standards(Q-8)

- Request for more information
- Request for a change in services or a request for a new service
- Provide feedback on the department's performance
- Report of an incident or a suggestion for improving the entity's services

Key Benefits of a Complaints Management System

An effective complaints management system provides key benefits to an organisation including the following:

     i.   Supports good decision-making

- A culture of effective decision making in the first occurrence of an issue.
- The organisation can learn from the data being gathered in a complaints management system.
- It saves an organisation time and money before complaints multiply and escalate to the point where external intervention may be sought.
-

     ii.   Cultivates good relations with the public

An effective complaints-handling process assures the public that they still have a voice, and someone is willing to listen to the issues that concern them. The entity should seek to ensure customer satisfaction and delight via end-end management of complaints from the following:

- o Their entry point
- o Risk assessment
- o Quality investigation and
- o Continuous improvement of the organisation.

When complaints are handled properly, it can improve the reputation of an organisation and strengthen public confidence in its administrative processes.
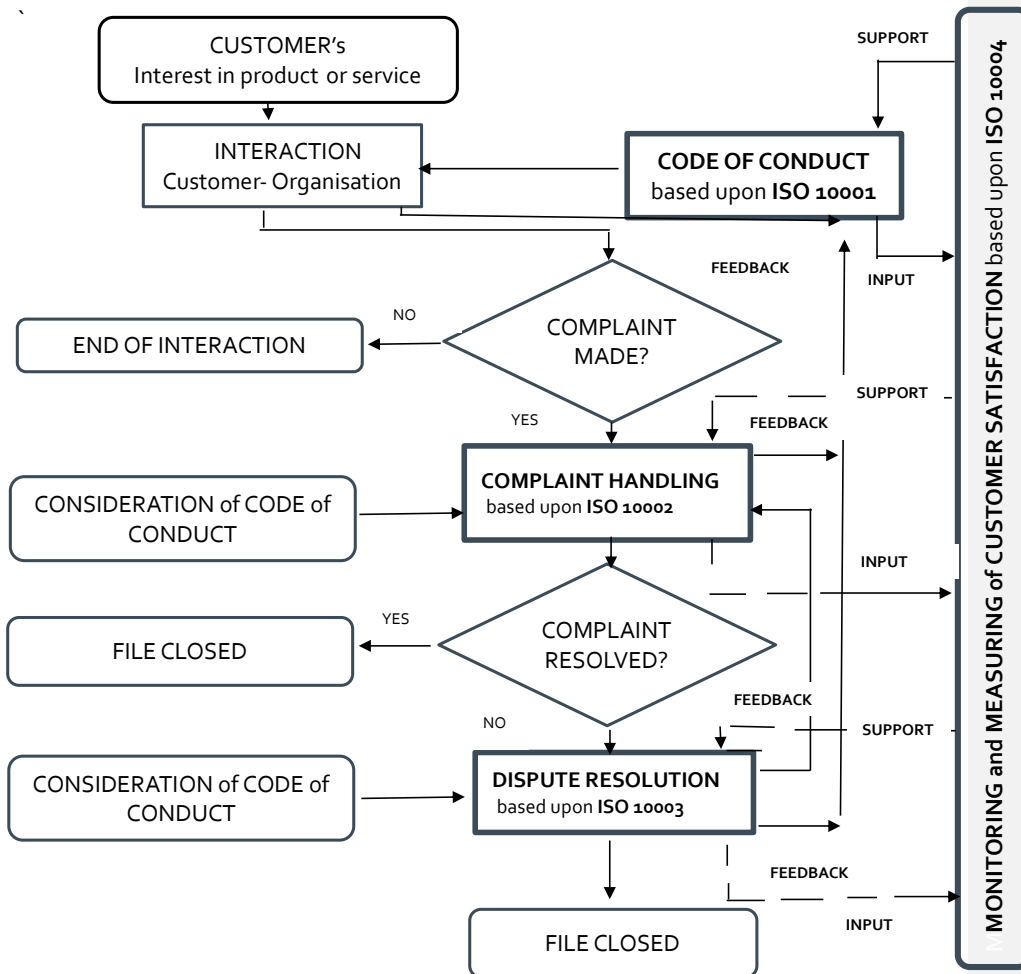
Figure 1 - Interrelationship of ISO 10001, ISO 10002, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

Step 1 – Establishing a Code of Conduct (ISO 10001)

A code of conduct is a set of rules, values, standards and guiding principles outlining what an organisation promises concerning how it delivers its services to its Customers. It is essential for establishing a sense of integrity and accountability within an entity. It serves as a framework to guide decision-making, promote ethical behaviour and create a productive work environment. All Government entities must have a Citizen's Charter which outlines the commitment and related service delivery standards of the organisation to its citizens in how it intends to deliver its services. The code of conduct is encompassed in a ministry's Citizen's Charter document. As the latter is a critical component of the complaints management system, it is important that the code of conduct developed by each entity is also embedded carefully in the Citizens Charter.

1.1 Determine code objectives

The entity can consider the objectives that the code of conduct will address in the interactions with its stakeholders including Customers and complainants. The entity should develop the code of conduct by setting the tone for all appropriate and ethical behaviours by an organisation. The objectives of the code are a reference point for employees to make ethical practices and decisions to the customers.

Examples of objectives include:
- Ensure fair treatment of customers
- Promote transparency and accountability
- Enhance customer satisfaction and trust
- Encourage continuous improvement
- Set boundaries of acceptable behaviour

Entities should also consider methods which can aid in the development of the code. For example,

- Internal analysis – The entity can use a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to determine the code objectives. This would help to identify internal and external factors that the code should adopt.
- Benchmarking – This can be used to analyse the code of conduct for leading organisations and better understand their objectives to adopt/improve upon the current operations
- Scenario analysis – this technique can be used to review past incidents/dilemmas that occurred within the industry/sector to better plan and to reduce the risks of potential future events

1.2 Stakeholder engagement

The entity should gather and assess information from all Stakeholders concerning the code and its use. This should include *employees*, management, customers, and relevant interested parties, external parties, consumer organisations, and interdependent government agencies. When engaging the stakeholders, the entity should have a fair grasp of its customer expectations and perceptions in the development of the code.[4]

---

[4] For further guidance on how to effectively engage your stakeholders, MDAs can consult the Government of Jamaica's People Engagement Guideline Document. This can be found at the following link…

1.3 Drafting the Code of Conduct

Based on the information gathered, entities should draft a wide-ranging code of conduct that incorporates principles such as fairness, transparency, responsiveness and accountability.

Additionally, it is useful to form a dedicated cross functional team with heavy leadership involvement. Members from various departments such as legal, HR, compliance, operations, and communications should be included, to provide diverse perspectives, with direction being provided by senior management.

The code of conduct should consider:
i. Incorporating the following documents:
    a. the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) Service Delivery Minimum Standards which are required to be adapted and adopted.
    b. Government of Jamaica Policy Statement on Complaints Management & Service Recovery (See Appendix 8).

1.4 Prepare performance indicators

The entity should develop indicators that are designed to support the evaluation of whether the code is effective in fulfilling its objectives. Indicators should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). An example of an indicator is the number and nature of complaints related to code violations. This can be tracked to determine the code's performance.

1.5 Review and approval

The organisation should review its code to ensure alignment with organisational objectives, legal requirements and industry best practices prior to approval. It should consider a review team comprising of appropriate positions   to ensure alignment with objectives. Furthermore, it is critical to obtain senior management buy-in and approval prior to finalization.

1.6 Determine resources needed

The entity should determine the resources required to fulfil the code commitment and to provide remedies in cases for non-fulfilment of the code *(e.g. customer re-imbursement)*. The organisation should determine the resources required including but not limited to personnel, training, procedures, documentation, specialist support, materials and equipment, facilities, computer hardware and software and funding support.

The code of conduct should achieve contactability in its communication to Customers via its various communication channels e.g. mail, electronic and social media, email, etc.

Step 2 – Establishing a Complaints Handling Process (ISO 10002)

Figure 2. Complaints framework with three-tier complaints-handing process

TEIR 3 – ADVICE PROVIDED FOR FUTHER RESOLUTION

TEIR 2

TEIR 1

TRACKING OF COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS' DATABASE

CLOSING COMPLAINTS

EXTERNAL REVIEW

(if necessary)

CLOSING COMPLAINTS

COMMUNICATING DECISION & FEEDBACK

FURTHER INVESTIGATION AFTER ESCALATION OF COMPLAINTS

INITIAL ASSESSMENT, RESOLUTION COMPLAINTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS

RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT/BRANCH

GoJ COMPLAINTS POLICY OF PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITY(MDA)

2.1 Establishing a Complaints Handling Process

Having developed a code of conduct for the entity, the next step to be developed is the complaints-handling process which is critical in resolving complaints satisfactorily.

Develop entity specific complaints handling policy document

The first requirement of the complaints-handling process is developing a complaints-handling policy for the entity, that outlines the provision of services against standards and how to effectively achieve customer satisfaction in the event of service failures. Appendix 8 outlines the GoJ Complaints Policy Statement which should be used as a guide or template and for input into the entity's own complaints handling policy. This policy is a brief, succinct outline of an organisation's position on how it intends to treat complaints from its customers given the Policy's emphasis on service recovery. The Complaints Handling Policy, is therefore in keeping with Section 5.1.5.2 of the Service Excellence Policy which states:

> *"Customer complaints are unavoidable in-service entities. As much as we do not want to deal with unhappy customers, it provides a chance for service provider to fix solutions and ensure that the customer has the best experience possible. Service Recovery involves adequately addressing the concerns of customers and implementing mechanisms to prevent future disruptions in service."*

In developing the complaints-handling policy, the following factors should be taken into consideration but are not necessarily exhaustive:
- Identification of any relevant statutory and governing requirements to include data protection, privacy and consumer rights;
- Identification of any financial, operational, and organisational requirements;
- The input of customers, personnel, and other relevant interested parties

2.2 Determine the objectives of the process

Determining the objectives of a complaints handling process involves several key considerations to ensure it aligns with the organisation's goals and customer expectations. Objectives should outline what the entity hopes to accomplish from the implementation of the process. For example, organisations should consider:

1. Customers Expectation and Satisfaction – to minimize customer dissatisfaction and increase customer goodwill
2. Quality Assurance – To incorporate customer feedback into the improvements of services
3. Roles, Responsibility and Accountability – Clearly define who is responsible for each step in the process, to ensure appropriate actions and decisions are being taken
4. Service Improvement – To make important improvements in the delivery of service
5. Timeliness and Resolution – To provide a satisfactory response to Complainants in a timely and cost-effective manner
6. Documentation of Complaints- Maintaining detailed records of all complaints and their resolutions
7. Feedback utilization – Incorporating a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints and to use the feedback for continuous improvement in the entity
8. Data Analysis – To identify trends from complaints and address the root causes of dissatisfaction
9. Reputation management – A complaint managed effectively can improve an entity's reputation and increases public confidence in its business operations

These objectives should be S-pecific, M-easurable, A-chievable, R-ealistic and T-imebound (SMART) and in keeping with the complaints-handling policy.

2.3 Identify and map Responsibilities and Authority for Managing Complaints

Entities should develop documentation that outline how authority is delegated within the complaints process. Employees should be empowered at various levels to respond to and make decisions around handling complaints received within their scope of authority. Identifying and mapping responsibilities and authority in a complaints-handling process, according to ISO 10002, involves clearly defining who within the organisation is responsible for various aspects of the complaints process and ensuring that they have the necessary authority to perform those duties assigned effectively. This step is crucial for ensuring accountability, clarity, and efficiency in handling complaints.

The varying levels of authority include:
o Senior management – approves the complaints-handling process and objectives within the organisation
o Middle management – authorized to ensure compliance and monitoring of the process to implement corrective and preventive actions
o Customer Service Unit/Branch/Division – Authorized to resolve certain levels of complaints autonomously which do not require intervention from management
o All employees – All employees should be empowered to respond to basic customer concerns and/or queries. The entity can consider regular sensitization and awareness of the overall complaints-handling process within the organisation and various roles and responsibilities. This can be done at staff / team meetings, etc

Complaints Management is a key front office function within the Customer Service Unit/Branch of the Government of Jamaica entities. If not already in place, a Customer Service Unit/Branch/Division should be implemented to support the execution of the complaints management function. For example, the Customer Care Manager along with the Customer Care Officers are the primary owners of the complaints handling process, from the initial logging of the complaint through to its satisfactory resolution.

2.4 Strategies for mapping responsibility and authority:

The following strategies for identifying and mapping responsibilities may be used:
 - **RACI Matrix:**
 • Uses the Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RACI) to clarify roles. Identify who is Responsible (R) for each task, who is Accountable (A), who needs to be Consulted (C), and who should be Informed (I). This matrix should be documented clearly and accessible to all relevant staff.
 - **DACI Matrix:**
An alternative method which may be used is DACI, with the roles outlined below.
 • **D -** Driver, the person handling the decision/initiative
 • **A -** Approver, the decision-maker who approves or disapproves
 • **C -** Consulted, individuals providing input or expertise
 • **I -** Informed, those who need to be kept informed of decisions

Review of Job Descriptions:

Reviewing the job descriptions, particularly for positions within the Customer Service Unit/Branch/Division are necessary for successful assignment of responsibilities. The job description for the responsible persons in the complaints handling process should be clear and concise in outlining the requirements, qualifications and necessary skills. The job descriptions should be carefully examined and updated to identify and include specific responsibilities related to complaints handling. This includes role clarity in ensuring each employee understands their role in the complaints process.

Organisational Chart

- **Visual Mapping:** Create a process flow that visually maps out the responsibilities and authority within the complaints process.
- **Hierarchical Clarity:** Ensure the chart highlights the hierarchy and lines of authority, making it clear who reports to whom.

2.5 Determine resources required

An effective complaints-handling process requires a mix of resources that are both tangible and intangible, to ensure that complaints are addressed and resolved promptly and comprehensively. The following key resources can be considered:

Human Resources:

- **Trained Personnel** – persons handling complaints should be skilled in customer service/service excellence principles, complaint-handling procedures, conflict resolution and problem-solving
- **Complaint Handling Team**: A dedicated staff trained to receive, assess, and address complaints.
- **Managers and Supervisors**: Managers should oversee the process and ensure compliance with documented policies

Technological Resources and Infrastructure:

- **Complaint Management Software:** The entity can consider a software to log, track, and manage complaints.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System:** Integrated with the Complaints Management System to provide a comprehensive view of customer interactions.
- **Equipment:** Computers, telephones and any other necessary office equipment to support the complaints-handling process
- **Secure Storage:** This is necessary to maintain confidential complaint records.
- **Phone Lines:** For direct communication with complainants, for e.g. toll-free number, i.e., (1-888- xxxx).
- **Email Accounts:** To receive and respond to written complaints within 48 hours.
- **Online Portals or standard Web Forms:** User-friendly interfaces for submitting complaints.
- **Office space:** Dedicated areas for the complaints-handling team

Procedural Resources:

- **Standard Operating Procedures:** Specific guidelines and instructions for staff to adhere to when addressing complaints
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Methods for collecting and analyzing customer feedback, levels of satisfaction in the complaints handling process

- **Self-audit checklist process:** The entity can ensure it is designing a fit-for -purpose system by using a complaints management self-audit checklist/template (See Appendix 3). This checklist consists of focus areas such as responsiveness, confidentiality, continuous improvement, etc, that will guide the appropriate design of the complaints management system

Financial Resources:
- **Budget Allocation**: Funds allocated for staff training, technology and any process improvements.
- **Costs for Investigation and Resolution**: Including any compensation or remedies provided.

Culture:
- **Organisational Culture**: A learning organisation that values customer feedback and views complaints as opportunities for improvement
- **Management buy-in:** Commitment from senior management to support and prioritize complaints-handling

2.6 Communicating the Complaints Handling Process

According to 10002:2018, the organisation is required to provide clear, succinct language concerning the complaints-handling process. These can include posters, brochures or electronic-based information (the organisation's website, social media pages etc.) being made readily available to customers and other relevant interested stakeholders/parties.

In communicating the complaints handling process, the following should be considered for inclusion:
- Where and how complaints can be made;
- Data to be provided by the complainant;
- The process for handling complaints;
- Time allocations for length of the complaints process;
- How the Complainant can obtain feedback on the status of the complaint

2.7 The Complaints Handling Process

1. Receipt - Entities should consider how complaints will be received by the organisation. This may require the following:

    i. Multi-channel accessibility – The entity must encourage the submission of complaints through multiple channels such as telephone, email, online forms and in-person visits
    ii. Standardized Forms -   A user-friendly standardized form for single users can be used in capturing the relevant data (For further guidance, see Appendices 1)

2.Tracking – The tracking of a complaint shows that the entity cares for the customer and is willing to put the necessary resources in place to achieve satisfactory resolution. The following elements are critical for tracking a complaint:

  i. **Complaint Management System** – The entity should implement a complaint management system that can track and manage complaints from receipt to satisfactory resolution. (Please see Appendix 2)

  ii. **Unique identifiers/reference numbers -** A reference number or unique identifier number should be assigned to each complaint for easy tracking through the system

  iii. **Status updates –** Ensure the system provides real-time status updates and notifications to both employees and Complainants

3. Acknowledgement – Several strategies can be employed in the acknowledgement of complaints:

     i. **Automated Responses** – Set up automated email response or SMS acknowledgements upon receipt of a complainant that their responses upon receipt of a complaint

     ii. **Personalized Communication** – Follow up with an acknowledgement to the Complainant that has a personal touch and includes the estimated timeline for resolution and contact information

4. **Initial assessment –** The entity should consider conducting the initial assessment by using several strategies:

     i. **Develop a classification system for complaints** - The assessment of the complaint should be prioritized in terms of standards such as severity, safety-implication, complexity, risk, impact, need, and possibility of urgent action, etc.

     ii**. Quick Assessment Protocols** - There should be a quick assessment protocol that considers the following factors in resolving the complaints:

- o A description of the complaint:
- o The level of response required
- o Whether the complaint may indicate a systemic problem
- o What risks the complaint raises for the organisation
- o The kind of resolution the complainant is seeking ?

     ▪ iii. **Assign responsibilities** – The complaint should be assigned to the appropriate individual or department based on the initial assessment

5. **Investigation** – The entity can consider the following methods in investigating its complaint

     i**. Investigation Procedures** – The entity can consider creating detailed standard operating procedures for investigating complaints, including the information-gathering process and interviewing the relevant parties

     ii. **Cross-functional Teams** – Use teams that are from different functions in the organisation for complex investigations

     iii. **Timeline Management** - Set good estimates of timelines for each stage of the investigation to ensure timely resolution. This may come from past experiences in treating with complaints. For example, for complaints requiring investigation or multiple levels of approval, customers should receive a detailed pathway to a satisfactory resolution within ten (10) working days.

6. **Response** - Complaints should be addressed swiftly in accordance with their urgency. The organisation should offer an appropriate response to correct the problem/issue and prevent it from recurring in the future. If no resolution can be achieved immediately, then it should be addressed in a manner that shows that it will be effectively resolved as urgently as possible. The following strategies may be employed in the response of a complaint:

     i. **Template Responses –** Common type of responses may be released as a template response to   Complainants to ensure consistency and efficiency

     ii. **Custom responses –** Each complaint should be addressed directly. The entity can pre-empt customized responses to the Complainant based on the specifics of the complaint.

     iii. **Resolution offers –** The entity should communicate the resolution and outline the steps the Complainant needs to take

- **Apology-**The Customer Care Manager/Officer should provide a sincere and meaningful apology quickly and courteously in the event of a service failure. An apology done right and immediately can go a long way in improving the individual's perception of the organisation. When done at the right time, it can help to deescalate anger, restore dignity and depicts a sense of good faith to the recipient in communicating that the organisation accepts responsibility for its actions and takes ownership of an issue or problem.

7. **Communicating the decision** - The entity should communicate the outcome or decision taken regarding the complaint which is relevant to the Complainant, or the personnel involved,

should be communicated as soon as the outcome is determined. The following strategies may be used:

    i. **Clear communication** – The entity should communicate its decisions to the Complainant in a clear, concise and respectful manner keeping in mind that respect for human rights is a critical guiding principle of Service Excellence.

    ii. **Feedback** – Allow the Complainant an opportunity to provide feedback on the decision made and let their voice be heard in the complaints handling process

    An example of publicizing the complaints process:
    https://www.cac.gov.jm/portal/index.php

8. **Close** – It is recommended that the entity documents the complaint when it is finalized or concluded. The following steps should taken to ensure closure:

-     i. **Confirm customer satisfaction –** The Complainant's feedback on the resolution should be sought prior to officially closing the complaint. The ideal is to confirm satisfaction and this should be actively sought by the entity as the Service Excellence Policy states according to Section 5.1.5.3, that

        "the *primary method of assessment is to confirm with customers that their issues were addressed within an acceptable period."*

-     ii**. Documentation -** It is necessary to store the records of the resolution process and outcome in the complaints management system that is kept confidentially.

-     iii**. Follow-up** – The entity can also consider a follow-up with the Complainant to ensure there are no further issues.

-     Only when the Complainant accepts the proposed decision, then the decision should be executed and recorded in the CMS' database as a closed complaint. If the Complainant rejects the proposed decision, then the complaint should remain open. As soon as this is recorded, the Complainant should be apprised of alternative forms of internal and external recourse which are available. This is when the complaint has become a dispute to be resolved.

9.**Storing/Record-keeping** - The performance of the complaint handling process should be recorded and managed whilst protecting any personal information and ensuring the confidentiality of Complainants (Data Protection Act, 2020). As more Government entities recruit the function of a Data Controller/Data Protection Officer, it is critical that the organisation specify steps for identifying, gathering, classifying, maintaining, storing and disposing of records. There should be documented outcomes of the complaint, including steps taken to address the complaint and follow-up items or actions to be taken to resolve the issues identified in the information. The utmost care must be taken to preserve items such as electronic files and any recording media as records in this media can be lost because of mismanagement or uselessness (Data Protection Act, 2020).

    i. **Data Analysis –** Analyze regularly all complaint data to detect trends, root causes and opportunities for improvement.

2.8 The three-tier model with response timeframes

An effective complaints management system is typically organized into three tiers: Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Table 1. Complaints framework with three-tier complaints-handing process

Tier		Response timeframe
Tier 1	Frontline staff who are trained to address complaints will endeavour to provide an immediate response such as an apology to the Complainant at this level.	Response timeframe = Immediately; Less than 24 hours
Tier 2	**Internal review** - This is where it may require the intervention of more senior staff. At this level, the review process will look at - the appropriateness of a complaint or - decision-making process - It will consider whether legislation, policies and procedures were followed in arriving at a decision and any other factors that might mean that the outcome was unfair and unjust. **Additional Internal review** - It may be necessary to assign a senior staff person to facilitate a discussion between the Tier 1 staff person and the person making the complaint. Alternatively, the matter might be referred to an external mediator to help the parties arrive at a solution. **Investigation** - Where it is apparent that a dispute resolution would not be successful, it may be necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint. The term "investigation" is being used to describe an objective fact-finding process, without bias or prejudice, which is aimed at establishing the truth.	Response timeframes: Acknowledgement of a formal complaint within three (3) working days. Full written reply within 10 working days
Tier 3	**External Review** - If complaints are not resolved satisfactorily through the organisation's internal review processes at the Tier 2 level, then the Customer Care Manager/Officer should provide information on external options to the Complainant. The entity should communicate the process for seeking review of a public body's decision is explained on the organisation's website, its publications, etc.	No later than 45 working days after first request received

Step 3 – Establishing a Dispute Resolution Process (ISO 10003)

Once Step 2 is developed, the dispute resolution process is a critical step in a complaints management system. A dispute is defined as a disagreement, arising from a complaint submitted to the dispute resolution provider (DRP). Additionally, a dispute could also arise in the first instance before interacting directly with (or filing a complaint to) the organisation. The dispute in this context is where the Customer is allowed to express dissatisfaction to a dispute resolution provider prior to logging a complaint with the entity.

In this instance, the expression of dissatisfaction becomes a complaint when sent to the entity for a response, and then later becomes a dispute. According to ISO 10003:2018, the organisation should maintain a customer-centric approach to dispute-resolution and should provide channels that are open to feedback and the voice of the Customer.

3.1   Developing a Dispute Resolution Policy

The next step for the entity is to develop a dispute-resolution (DR) policy that is clear and explicit which should be determined by top management. The organisation should consider the following factors in development of the Dispute Resolution policy:
- Identification of any applicable legal and regulatory requirements, financial, operational and organisational needs
- The policy's estimated impact on customer satisfaction
- The competitive environment
- Input of complainants, customers, personnel and other relevant parties, quality management processes, customers, personnel and other relevant interested parties,
    alternatives for resolving disputes, such as a court of law
- At all times, adequate information about the dispute-resolution process, the dispute resolution service provider, the status of the resolution should be made known to either complainants, organisation and/or the public via the agreed communication channels. The process should be easy to access and use.
- The entity should consider the various alternate dispute resolution(ADR) procedures, i.e., out of court settlements including mediation, arbitration, etc

3.2   Determine objectives of the Dispute Resolution Process

The entity should determine the desired results to be achieved by the dispute resolution process with scheduled reviews and updates provided as necessary. The entity can consider the guidance provided in steps 1 and 2. Examples of objectives include:
i)   Fairness and impartiality – ensure that the resolution process is fair and impartial
ii) Efficiency – Disputes should be resolved in a timely manner to avoid prolonged conflicts
iii) Cost-Effectiveness – Minimize the costs associated with resolving the dispute, making the process affordable for all parties
iv) Confidentiality – Maintain the privacy of parties involved in the details of the dispute especially in sensitive matters.
v)   Preservation of relationships – the entity takes steps to maintain and improve customer relationship between the customer and the organization

3.3   Design the DR process

The design of the dispute resolution process should be based on the findings of the complaints-handling process in association with the dispute-resolution policy, activities and available resources. The following factors can be taken in consideration:

-    Build procedures that emphasize shared interests
-    Ensure interested parties/stakeholders have provided feedback in the dispute resolution process of the organisation
-    Assess the satisfaction levels of the Customers

A well-designed dispute resolution process promotes collaboration, minimizes costs and fosters positive relationships within the organisation. The following elements should be documented as part of the process:

-    Profile of disputes to be resolved
-    Possible remedies that will be considered
-    Types of dispute-resolution methods to be offered (Please see Appendix 7)
-    The organisation's commitment in participating in dispute resolution
-    Qualifications of dispute resolvers
-    How parties will participate

3.4   An example of managing the dispute resolution process

A recommended framework for a dispute resolution process is outlined below and can be communicated to Complainants should they not be satisfied the outcome of the complaints-handling process that was outlined in step 2:

Complaint referral – The entity should develop a procedure for all complaint referrals. This includes a pre-assessment of the Customer's options for achieving redress

Receipt of dispute notice – The entity may receive a dispute notice that will be sent by the independent body notifying it of a dispute from a Complainant.

Formulation of organisation's response – The entity should take the necessary steps to evaluate the dispute. The development of an initial position should be arrived at and communicated to the Complainant. The system should allow for the provision of one or more remedies that can be provided and communicated to the Complainant (Appendix 7)

Resolution of dispute – The dispute may be resolved by the facilitative, advisory or determinative methods (Please see Appendix 7)

Implementation of resolution – The entity should implement the steps in a way that is in keeping with the settlement, recommendation of the resolved dispute.

Communicating the outcome of the review - Once the review is complete, it is recommended that the Complainant be advised of the following:

- ▪ The outcome of the complaint
- ▪ The reasons for any decisions that have been made
- ▪ Information about any other remedy that might be available, such as to seek a review or appeal, or complain to the Consumer Affairs Commission and the Office of the Public Defender as the office with responsibility for complaints against public sector bodies.

Closing the file - The entity may close its file on the dispute after the resolution has been satisfactorily resolved and implemented or if the process ends without resolution. The appropriate personnel within the organisation should be informed of the conclusion and the records maintained in keeping with the organisation's record information management policy.

3.5 Additional Considerations for the DR Process

Test the Dispute Resolution process – After the dispute resolution process is designed, the DR process should be piloted on a small group of Complainants prior to its implementation to the wider public. The findings of the test should be carefully analysed and enhancements applied to any design feature so that the organisation's objectives can be optimally achieved.

3.6 Determine the resources needed -

External resources

The entity can identify external dispute resolution bodies, such as

- Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC),
- Revenue Protection Department,
- Industrial Dispute Tribunal
- Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) and
- Office of the Public Defender.

Internal resources

The organisation should assign the appropriate personnel to act as a liaison between the dispute resolution provider and the Complainant. The following key internal resources may be necessary to support a dispute resolution process:

Human Resources

Mediators/Arbitrators – Trained professionals who can facilitate dispute resolution through mediation/arbitration

Legal Advisors –It is recommended that the in-house legal team or external legal consultants provide legal advice

HR Specialists – Human Resources personnel trained in aspects of dispute resolution and employee relations e.g. Employee Relations Officer

Information and Knowledge Resources

Knowledge Base: A database of past disputes, resolutions, method of resolution, dispute resolution provider, best practices and lessons learned

Legal and regulatory guidelines: Relevant laws and regulations that are easily accessible and up to date

Case studies and examples: The examples of past disputes and how they were resolved can be considered as guidance to the current processes

3.7 Establish partnerships

Establish partnerships or agreements with selected external dispute resolution bodies to facilitate the referral and resolution of complaints. These should be well-structured partnership agreements that should outline the roles, responsibilities and dispute resolution mechanisms for further collaboration. The partnership agreement should be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes that would have evolved over time.

3.8 Evaluate the DR Providers

The entity should evaluate the performance of the DR Resolvers in carrying out the dispute resolution process. It should consider factors such as potential types of disputes, volume and urgency. It is recommended that due diligence be exercised in researching available providers. A Dispute Resolution Provider should be selected based on the most suitable approach of the organisation's context.

Step 4 – Monitoring and Measuring of the Complaints management system
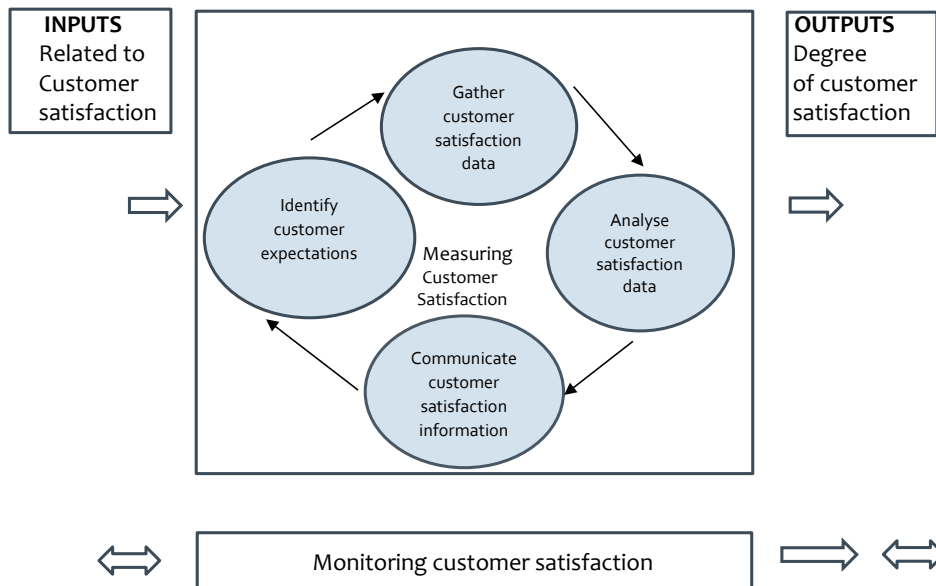
Figure 3 – Monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction

Even if the complaint is resolved satisfactorily at step 2 and does not have to escalate to Step 3: dispute resolution process, it is recommended that the entity monitors and measures the complaints management system by way of the measuring the customer satisfaction via specific activities and relationships. Monitoring and measuring a complaints management system involves several key steps to ensure effectiveness and continuous improvement. Here are the main steps:

4.1   Implement a Ticketing System:
- **Record and Categorize:** Log every complaint, classifying each defined by type, severity and assign priority levels

- **Monitor Progress:** Monitor the system by checking the status of each complaint from receipt to resolution. The tracking of complaints are optimally done from a database.

4.2   Set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
Key performance indicators are critical in the monitoring and measuring of an effective complaints management system. The following indicators are examples of measuring the performance of the system that informs the overall customer satisfaction.

- **Average Resolution Time:** Measure the time taken to resolve complaints.

- ○ **Customer Satisfaction:** Use surveys to gauge customer satisfaction post-resolution.

- ○ **Complaint Volume:** Track the frequency of complaints received over time and repeat complaints which is indicative of root causes in the operations of the organization.

4.3 Regular Reporting and Analysis:
- ○ **Trend Analysis:** Identify recurring issues and patterns in complaints.

- ○ **Root Cause Analysis:** Detect and investigate the underlying causes of frequent complaints to prevent recurrence.

4.4 Feedback and Continuous Improvement:
- ○ **Customer Feedback:** Customer feedback is critical to the confirmation of satisfaction. Therefore, this should be scheduled to collect feedback from customers on the complaint resolution process.

- ○ **Internal Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of the complaints handling process to identify gaps and areas for improvement. All staff should be sensitized in this area as complaints are a valuable source of information for continuous improvement. The senior management is encouraged to participate in these meetings to ensure that there is buy-in towards improving the customer satisfaction.

4.5 Training and Development:
- ○ **Staff Training:** Ensure that staff are well-trained in handling complaints effectively.

- ○ **Process Updates:** Regularly review and update the complaints handling procedures based on customer feedback and analysis. The customer-centric approach promotes and objective evaluation of the complaint processes, aiding both the organization and its valued customers.

4.6 Compliance and Documentation:
- ○ **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure that the complaints handling process complies with relevant regulations and standards.

- ○ **Documentation:** It is essential to maintain detailed records of all complaints and their resolutions for accountability and upcoming occurrences

4.7 Communicating the information:
- ○ **Communication:** Share information on customer satisfaction scores at various fora so that customers are always kept informed and exercise goodwill towards the complaints management system of the organization.

General Guidance on implementing strategies for the CMS

The following notes comprise of general guidance for implementing an effective complaints management system. Steps 1 – 4 form the code of conduct, complaints handling and dispute resolution processes and the monitoring and measuring of complaints management system. Here are some general recommendations that can be adapted for the implementation of the complaints management system:

- **Leadership Commitment and Support**
  - After the complaints management system is developed, it is recommended that awareness-building and support is gained from senior leadership within the entity to prioritise the establishment of the complaints management system.
- **Highlight Benefits**
  - **Strategic Goals:** Ensure that complaints management is included as a key objective in the organisation's strategic goals and performance indicators.
  - **KPIs:** Include complaints management-related KPIs in leadership performance evaluations to reinforce its importance and accountability.
  - **Recognition and Rewards:** Establish recognition and reward programs for leaders who effectively promote and improve complaints management within their areas of responsibility.
- **Ensure senior management buy-in**: It is recommended that the top management communicates and incorporates the importance of an effective complaints management system in achieving organisational objectives and meeting stakeholder needs.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Establish a cross-functional team or working group to oversee the development and implementation of the complaints management system. It is advised that the entity can gain the benefits of a cross-functional team in the development and implementation of the complaints management system
- **Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis:** Conduct a thorough needs assessment and gap analysis to identify existing processes, resources, and systems related to complaints management that will lead to actions that will improve the system.
- **Determine areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)**: This can be used to inform the development of the complaints management system.
  - Engage key stakeholders, including employees, management, customers, external partners and interested parties, throughout the implementation process.
  - Solicit feedback, input, and buy-in from stakeholders to ensure that the complaints management system meets their needs and expectations.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
  - The entity can consider pilot testing and iterative implementation of the complaints management system
  - Conduct a pilot test of the complaints management system in a controlled environment or selected department to evaluate its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This can assist in revealing errors, gaps, etc, in the complaints management system prior to its full implementation
  - Gather feedback from users and stakeholders during the pilot phase and use it to refine and enhance the system before full-scale implementation.
- **Communication and Change Management**
  - Develop a clear and comprehensive communication plan to inform employees, stakeholders, and the public about the implementation of the complaints management system.
  - Provide regular updates, progress reports, and opportunities for feedback to maintain transparency and engagement throughout the process.

- Anticipate and address potential resistance to change through proactive change management strategies, such as stakeholder consultations, training, and leadership support.
- **Integration with Existing Systems and Processes**
  - Ensure seamless integration of the complaints management system with existing systems, processes, and workflows within the entity.
  - Collaborate with IT and other relevant departments to customise and configure the system to meet specific requirements and compatibility with other systems.

Communication Strategy

The entity should plan for the effective communication of the complaints management system to all its stakeholders. By doing this, it ensures that they are aware of the process and feel a greater degree of confidence that their concerns will be addressed. Some key steps for communicating a complaints management system are outlined below:

1. **Clarity and Transparency**
   a. Purpose – The entity should clearly state the reason for the complaints management system underscoring its commitment to addressing concerns and improving services. Relevant aspects of the complaints management system such as the code of conduct should be communicated to Customers via its various communication channels e.g. mail, electronic and social media, email etc.

2. **Easy-to-access information**
   Entities can ensure that the complaints management system is available via multiple channels such as the entity's website, social media handles, help desks and printed materials, e.g., brochures, etc. The public sector is required to report its service performance to the public via publishing its findings accrues to accountability and transparency.

3. **Detailed instructions**
   How to file a complaint – The entity is encouraged to offer detailed instructions on how to file a complaint, including contact information. The entity can consider to respond to the Complainant within three (3) business days

   Expectation of Complainant – A detailed explanation of what Complainants can expect after submitting a complaint including the entity's timelines for responses and feedback

4. **Visual Aids**
   The use of flowcharts and infographics should be used as necessary to illustrate the steps in complaints process, helping the Customer to understand easily the guideline being provided

5. **Awareness campaigns**
   The entity can consider making the public aware of the complaints management system by hosting information session by radio, television, social media, email, e-newsletters, JIS, etc

6. **Feedback Loop**
   It is encouraged that the entity invites feedback on the complaints management system by employing an effective people engagement strategy[5]. This will enable the entity to further identify areas for improvement

7. **Contact Information**
   Support and Feedback channels – All available channels that are dedicated to the communication of complaints should be listed, e.g. phone lines, email addresses and physical addresses. Feedback channels should be acknowledged, and follow-up actioned in a timely manner. The Complainant should be informed that their issue is being addressed promptly.

---

[5] The GoJ People Engagement guideline is scheduled to be disseminated to the public sector by Q3 2024.

Example of information on support and feedback channel
Website section:
 Title: "Our Commitment to addressing your concerns"
Introduction: "We value your feedback, and we are committed to addressing any concerns you may have. Our complaints management system is designed with you in mind and will ensure that your voice is heard. We will aim to resolve your issues in a prompt and effective manner."

How to File a Complaint
The entity should determine how the complaint should be submitted. The GoJ Service Excellence Policy states that there must be three ways in which the entity responds to Customer
- Use of an online form to capture the relevant data on the complaint (See Appendix 1)
- Email address dedicated to complaints e.g. complaints@ [name of entity].com
- Phone: Call us at 1-888-[xxx-xxxx] between 9am - 5pm each day of the week for emergency calls
- In-person: Visit our Help Desk at the Customer Care Branch, [Physical Address of entity]

Examples of statements to communicate to the Customer of **What to expect**:
 Acknowledgement – We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 24 hours
 Investigation – The complaint will be investigated thoroughly with the highest level of professionalism
 Response – A response will be returned within five (5) business days, detailing the outcome and any actions taken

Training Strategy

In developing a complaints management system, training is a critical component that must be infused for the system's success. Below are features of training for the complaints management system:

- **Regular training** – The assigned persons who will treat with complaints handling should be exposed to training on a regular basis. The organisation should determine the resources required including but not limited to personnel, training, procedures, documentation, specialist support, materials and equipment, facilities, computer hardware and software and funding support. The lessons learnt from the different aspects of the complaints management system should be included into the regular training. Also, the sensitization and training sessions may be designed for the staff by using the focus areas of the complaints management self-audit checklist/template (Appendix 3)
- **Empower trained personnel** – Relevant personnel should feel empowered to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact when possible
- **Incorporate a system of review** - It is therefore important to incorporate a system of review, that is, any systemic issues, serious risks, or areas for improved practices can then be identified by senior management for appropriate action.

  -
  - The following are methods of training which can be used upskill staff assigned to function in the complaints-handling process:
  - Workshops and seminars – interactive face-face sessions where employees can learn and practice
  - Online courses and webinars – Flexible online course that persons can learn remotely
  - Role play and scenario planning – Practical dramatizations and real-life case studies delivered for discussion and analysis

- Mentorship and Coaching – Individualized guidance and support from experienced staff
- Regular Refresher Courses - Ongoing training to refresh skills and update knowledge. This may be accessed through videos of sessions already delivered and stored on a learning portal /intranet of the organisation
-

Continuous Improvement

- Entities can consider developing strategies for ongoing review and enhancement of the complaints management system based on ISO standards, feedback and lessons learned, etc. The following steps can be considered as a part of continuous improvement of the complaints management system:

Evaluate regularly the different parts of the CMS. The organisation is responsible for regularly and systematically evaluate the performance and satisfaction with the code. This can be addressed by administering random surveys of customers and other fact-finding techniques that can then inform how well the system is performing. An increase the number of complaints after the introduction or enhancement of the complaints-handling process can reflect its effectiveness.

Enquiries and complaints about the code or its use should be documented and analysed to identify and analyse recurring and instances of trends that are underlying causes of complaints about the code. The code should be regularly reviewed checked for the following factors:
- maintenance of the suitability, adequacy, effectiveness, and efficiency
- address significant cases of non-fulfilment of the code promises

Design a system to benchmark against industry best practices
- **Benchmark the organisation's CMS against industry/private sector best practices,** standards, feedback and lessons learned, including ISO standards 10001 through to 10004
- **Identify leading organisations** with exemplary complaints management systems and learn from their approaches, strategies and success stories
- **Leverage technology and automation tools** such as complaint management software and customer relationship management (CRM) systems, data analytics platforms to streamline complaints handling processes and enhance efficiency. These should have features that facilitate real-time monitoring, analysis and reporting of complaints data that can provide meaningful information and add value to the continuous improvement process.

Implement Continuous improvement Measures:
- o Develop action plans to prevent recurrence of complaints
- o Schedule business process reviews and implement changes as necessary
- o Foster a growth mindset that continuously invests in learning from complaints
-

Develop an Auditing Framework

Developing an effective audit framework for a CMS involves using a clear approach to evaluate efficiency, effectiveness and compliance of the system. The framework should be so robust in checking that all aspects of the complaints management system are monitored, assessed and improved continuously. An effective audit framework can consider the following:

1. **Clear Objectives -**The main objectives for the audit of a CMS should be defined including the evaluation of its compliance with the documented policies, opportunities for improvement, adherence to timely resolution of complaints and evaluating it against the overall customer satisfaction.
2. **Scope** – the extent to which the specific components is to be audited e.g., intake process, response time, resolution time, etc

3. **Audit Criteria** – The standards, policies, regulations and guidelines, etc, should be listed to check for adherence and compliance
4. **Develop Audit Plan**
   i. Audit Schedule – The audit schedule should be established for conducting timely audits. This should be shared with all personnel involved and it is recommended that it be done quarterly, annually, biennially, etc
   ii. Audit Team – A team of qualified auditors with the knowledge of the complaints management system and auditing expertise.
   iii. Resources – The necessary resources should be allocated including personnel and tools, to conduct the audit activity
5. **Audit Process**:
   i. Preparation for Audit process:
      a. Review of documentation – Compile and review documentation, including complaint logs, resolution information, policies and historical audit reports
      b. Define metrics – Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) such as response times, resolution times, customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores and compliance rates
   ii. Data collection:
      a. Interviews – It is critical to interview the personnel involved in the complaints handling to better understand their roles and responsibilities
      b. Surveys – These should be administered to the Customers to garner feedback on their experiences
      c. Observation – Review carefully the complaints handling process in real-time to identify potential issues and inefficiencies
      d. Document review – Review the complaints records, emails and other correspondences to assess conformance and performance
   iii. Analysis:
      a. Performance Assessment – Evaluate the effectiveness of the CMS against defined KPIs
      b. Gap Analysis – The Auditors should seek to identify gaps between current performance and desired standards / best practices
6. **Reporting**
   i. Audit Report – The detailed findings, strengths, deficiencies and opportunities for improvement should be tabled.
   ii. Recommendations – A clear action plan including recommendations to address identified issues and to improve the complaints management system
   iii. Presentation of report – The audit report including its recommendations should be presented to all relevant stakeholders including the top management and staff involved in the complaints handling process
7. **Follow-up and Monitoring –** The progress of the action plan should be followed-up and monitored with a review of the pace of the implementation of the corrective actions.
   i. Planned re-audits – Conduct follow-up audit activities to determine the efficacy of the changes in the system
8. **Continuous Improvement:**
   i. Quality Loop - Establish a feedback loop to include learnings derived from each audit into the complaints management system
   ii. System Updates - The CMS should be regularly updated based on the audit results, customer feedback and emerging best practice
   iii. Engage in external audit assessments – It is recommended that the entity participate in external audits, assessments, or certifications related to complaints management, such as ISO 10001

certification or customer service excellence awards, to validate the effectiveness of the complaints management system.

Recommended Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for auditing a CMS:

- *Response Time* - Time taken to acknowledge a complaint
- *Resolution Time* – Time taken to resolve satisfactorily a complaint. Achieving faster resolution times show a higher satisfaction amongst customers
- *First-*Contact Resolution Rate – Measure the percentage of complaints resolved satisfactorily during the first contact with the customer. A high percentage indicates an efficient and effective complaints-handling process
- *Customer satisfaction -* Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) scores from Complainants. This measure shows customer satisfaction with the complaints resolution process. Usually done in post-interaction surveys where customers rate their experience.
- *Repeat complaints* – The number of repeat complaints from the same Customers

REFERENCES

1. Brewer, Brian (2007). *Citizen or customer? Complaints handling in the public sector.* Vol.73(4)549-556 International Review of Administrative Services SAGE Publications.
2. Consumer Protection Act (amended 2013) Jamaica Retrieved from https://moj.gov.jm/laws/consumer-protection-act
3. Complaint management. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.compliancequest.com/complaint-management-system/
4. Data Protection Act (2020) Jamaica Retrieved from https://japarliament.gov.jm/attachments/article/339/The%20Data%20Protection%20Act,%202020.pdf
5. Disabilities Act (2014) Jamaica Retrieved from https://japarliament.gov.jm/attachments/341_The%20Disabilities%20bill%202014%20No.13.pdf
6. Hocutt et al (2006). The art of service recovery: fact or fiction?. Journal of Services Marketing. Emerald Group Publishing Limited[ISSN 0887-6045] Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235280526_The_art_of_service_recovery_Fact_or_fiction
7. JS ISO 10002:2014(E) Quality *management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations* ICS. 03. 120.10
8. Mantaring, Allan V., Espinoza, Ma. Angela P. & Gabriel, Arneil G. (2019). Complaint Management in the Public Sector Organisation in the Philippines, Public Policy and Administration Research ISSN 2224-5731(Paper) ISSN 2225-0972(Online) DOI: 10.7176/PPAR Vol.9, No.2. Retrieved from https://www.iiste.org
9. Nasr, Osman & Alkhider, Enayat. "Online Complaint Management System" Vol. 2, Issue 6 Pp 305-306, International Journal of Science and Research(IJSR), June 2015.
10. Neave, Colin. (2014). Complaint management by government agencies An investigation into the management by government agencies by commonwealth and act government Report 02/2014 Retrieved from https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/420/complaint_management_by_government_agencies_oct_2014.pdf
11. Ombudsperson British Colombia Special Report No. 46 | December 2020 to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia *Complaint Handling Guide: Setting up Effective Complaint Resolution Systems in Public Organisations* Retrieved from *https://bcombudsperson.ca/*
12. Ombudsman New South Wales (2021). Managing unreasonable conduct by complainants Retrieved from https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au › assets › pdf_
13. Ombudsman Western Australia, Revised September 2020 Serving Parliament – Serving Western Australians Guidelines on Complaint Handling. Retrieved from https://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/

The sample form (for internal use only) contains the principal information which can help the organisation in following up on a complaint.

Details of complaint receipt

Date of complaint   _____

Time of complaint   _____

Name of recipient   _____

Medium of complaint Telephone ☐ Email ☐ Website ☐ Personal ☐ Postal Mail ☐

Other _____

Ticket #/Identifier Code e.g. #C103

1. **Details of Complainant**

   See form for complainant

   Reference number of complaint (See Appendix 1/# 2)

   Related data on complaint

   Complaint referred by: _____

2. **Problem encountered/Issue**
   Date of problem ____/____/_____

   Recurrent problem   Yes☐   No ☐
   Problem category: Please indicate by a √ for the relevant issue/problem encountered

   Service not provided   ☐   Service incomplete ☐ Poor Service ☐   Incorrect information ☐

   Additional details on complaint
   _____
   _____

3. **Complaint assessment**
   {Evaluate the scope and severity, complexity and impact of the actual and potential effects of the complaint using the ranking order 1 – Least to 5-Most }
   Severity ☐
   Description of Complaint
   _____

_____

Complexity ☐

_____

_____

Impact ☐

_____

_____

4. Complaint resolution {*The entity may add additional actions as applicable.*}

Remedy requested   Yes ☐   No ☐

Action to be taken

☐ Delivery of the product/service   ☐   Correction of information

☐ Price rebate in the amount of: $_____   Other corrective action:_____

5. Complaint tracking {*Capture relevant data on the Complaint handling process here*}

Ticket #	Name of Customer Care Manager/ Officer	Date	Complaint acknowledged to Complainant	Complaint assessment	Investigation of Complaint	Resolution/ correction of complaint	Correction/resolution verified
e.g.C103							

Table 1 showing the Complaint tracking within an organisation

Date Complaint closed: _____

Name: _____

APPENDIX 2: Overview of Online Customer Complaints Steps (Informative)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Contact the Ministry and make the Complaint directly to them.	Find out who can handle your complaint.	Prepare your complaint.	Start your complaint on the online page for complaints-handling.	The Ministry will assess the Customer complaint.	The Ministry will send a confirmation email with the copy of the complaint.
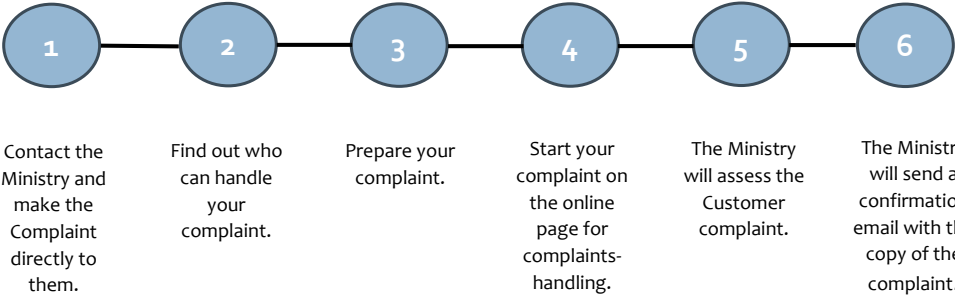
{*The entity should provide these guidelines for the Customer to make complaints online*}

Step 1. Contact the Ministry and make the Complaint directly to them

Step 2. Find out who can handle your complaint.

Step 3. Prepare your complaint.

Step 4. Start your complaint on the online page for complaints-handling

Step 5. The Ministry will assess the Customer complaint.

Step 6. The Ministry will send a confirmation email with the copy of the complaint

APPENDIX 3: Complaints Management Self-Audit Checklist/template process (Informative)

- The following checklist assists public sector entities to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of their existing complaints management and acts as a template that sets out ten good practice principles for complaint handling. When using the checklist, consider the type of system that will meet your organisation's needs. Not all components of the checklist will apply to your organisation. They are prompts to guide your decision making in designing the right type of system for your organisation. Some aspects of the principles may be more relevant to your organisation than others and different agencies may be able to meet the complaint handling principles in different ways. Also, note that several sensitization and training sessions may be designed for your staff using these focus areas.

Customer focus
Good practice principle: The organisation is committed to effective complaint handling and values feedback from complaints.
- ☐ Do you have customer service standards and a complaints process that is valued, supported and followed by management?
- ☐ Is your organisation open to feedback from clients, including through complaints?
- ☐ Are the benefits of complaints and the complaints process communicated to staff, including new staff at their induction?
  - ▪

Visibility
Good practice principle: Information about how and where to complain is well publicized to clients, staff and other interested parties.
- ☐ Is information about how to make a complaint and how it will be handled readily available, for example on your website and at your reception or front counter?
- ☐ Are the contact details for making complaints prominently displayed, for example in leaflets, on your website or on posters?
- ☐ Are front line staff aware of the complaints process and the contact details for your Manager, Customer Care?
- ☐ Does your complaints process identify alternative external parties the complainant can go to with a complaint?

Accessibility
Good practice principle: The complaints process is easy for complainants to access and understand.
- ☐ Are complaints handled at no charge to the complainant and is this information clear in publications about how to make a complaint?
- ☐ Can complaints be made in several different ways, verbally and in writing using different methods of communication?
- ☐ Is the process for making a complaint accessible and easy to use by people from different cultural backgrounds, children and young people, and people with disabilities?

Responsiveness
Good practice principle: Complaints are acknowledged in a timely manner, addressed promptly and according to order of urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.

- □ Do you provide guidelines for staff on how to respond to and prioritize complaints, which cover:
  - who will be responsible for handling complaints;
  - how to assess complaints to decide what can be resolved easily and what requires review;
  - how and when the complainant will be kept informed during the process?
- □ Is each complaint acknowledged promptly and is the complainant kept informed throughout the process?
- □ Are complaints addressed promptly and in order of urgency and do you have performance targets which set out the timeframe for resolving complaints?
- □ Are front line staff empowered to resolve certain complaints at the earliest point of contact with the complainant?

Objectivity and fairness

Good practice principle: Complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner, and the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable. Unreasonable complainant conduct is not allowed to become a burden.

- □ Do you ensure that your staff are aware of, and given guidance on, conflict of interest requirements and how to make declarations where required?
- □ Are relevant staff given guidance or training in:
  - complaint resolution;
  - evidence based investigation techniques;
  - managing unreasonable complainant conduct?
- □ Is the complainant (and any person who is the subject of the complaint) given:
  - sufficient opportunity to present their position;
  - the opportunity to comment on any adverse findings
  - reasons for the decisions made about the complaint
- □ Where appropriate, is there a process in place for a "*second person check*" or approval of the outcome of the complaint?

Confidentiality

Good practice principle: Personal information relating to complaints is kept confidential.

- □ Do you advise staff about confidentiality requirements when handling or involved in complaints?
- □ Are the personal details of the complainant kept confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint?
- □ Are the personal details of any people who are the subject of the complaint kept confidential and only used for the purposes of addressing the complaint and any follow-up actions?

Remedy

Good practice principle: If a complaint is upheld, the organisation can provide an appropriate remedy.

- □ Do you support and give guidance to staff on providing remedies when complaints are upheld?
- □ Are responsibilities for providing remedies clearly defined and at the appropriate level in the organisation, for example are front line staff empowered to provide appropriate remedies?

- □ Do you give guidance to staff on the appropriate use of remedies?
- □ Are the reasons for decisions relating to remedies provided to the complainant?
- □ Feedback questionnaires to be sent out randomly to complaints the same day the matter is resolved
- □ Process to identify a particular office/department/staff member where complaints are frequent and address it by training or other intervention.
- □ Introduce a Quality Assurance mark for Institutions based on their best performance
- □ Learn from every compliant

Review
Good practice principle: There are opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the organisation's response to the complaint, and complainants are informed about these avenues.
- □ Do you provide complainants with access to an independent internal review of the handling of their complaint by someone who was not involved in dealing with the complaint?
- □ Do you provide the complainant with information about external review or appeal options, such as the Office of the Public Defender/Consumer Affairs Commission, at the conclusion of the complaints process?
  - ▪

Accountability
Good practice principle: Accountability for complaint handling is clearly established, and complaints and responses to them are monitored and reported to management and stakeholders.
- □ Are staff aware of their responsibilities for handling complaints and the responsibilities of specific nominated Director/Manager, Customer Care?
- □ Are reasons for complaint decisions and remedies recorded?
- □ Are any remedial actions and proposed practice improvements acted on, followed up and reported to senior management?
- □ Do you have a "*fit for purpose*" information system for recording and tracking complaints?
- □ Do you ensure that all correspondence relating to feedback and complaints is managed in accordance with the organisation's record keeping policies and procedures?
- □ Is standardized and consistent data from complaints reported to senior management along with proposed or actual improvements to your organisation's practices?
- □ Is the effectiveness of complaint handling monitored through appropriate quality assurance and reported to senior management along with any recommended improvements to the complaints process?

Continuous improvement
Good practice principle: Complaints are a source of improvement for the organisation.
- □ Do you analyze feedback and complaints data to identify:
  - recurring themes that may highlight systemic issues;
  - service, process and information inadequacies;
  - opportunities for improvement?
- □ Is the analysis of feedback and complaints data reported to senior management and used to identify and implement practice improvements?

APPENDIX 4: Complaint Handling Process
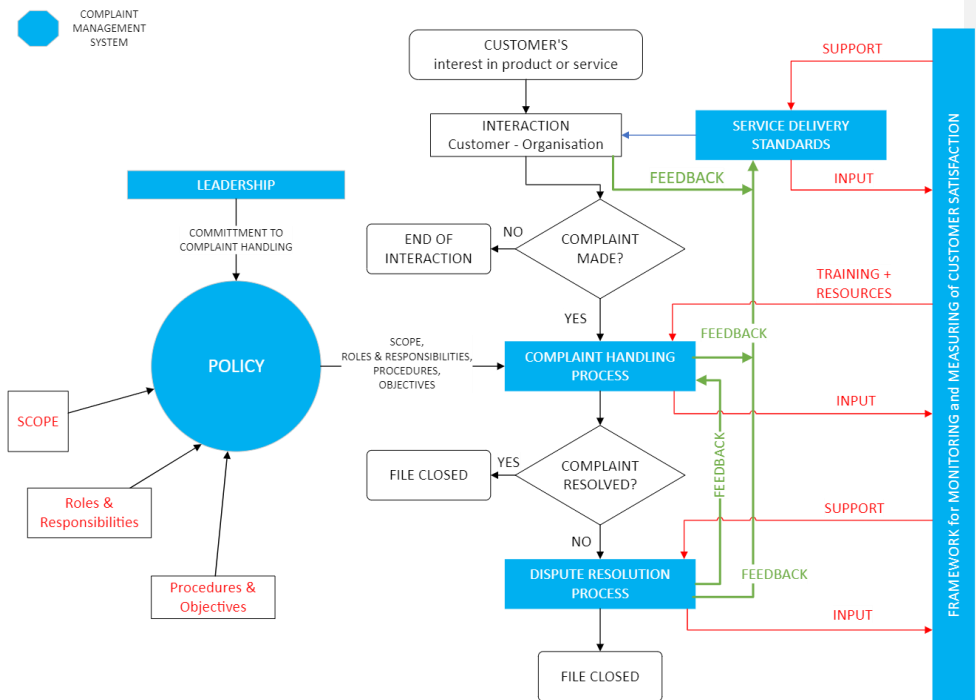

Figure 5.1: Complaints-Handling Process Flowchart illustrates the organisation's processes related to the GoJ Service Excellence Policy, complaint handling done against service delivery standards, leadership of the organisation, external dispute resolution and customer satisfaction monitoring and measuring including feedback loops, etc.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

APPENDIX 5: GLOSSARY OF TERMS (Informative)

ADR: (Alternate Dispute Resolution) refers to the different ways people can resolve disputes without a trial

Checklist: List of items required, things to be done, or points to be considered, used as a reminder

Complaint: Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its product or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected complaint[6].

Complainant: A person, group, or company that makes a complaint, as in a legal action or proceeding

Complaints database: A database kept electronically or manually on closed Customer complaints filed against the entity and has achieved resolution

Complaints handling: the process of attending to and resolving complaints including ongoing interaction with complainants. It is expected that this process meets certain minimum standards.

Complaints Management System: A system that allows customers to register their dissatisfaction with the organisation. It allows organisations to obtain feedback on how to improve their services and to decrease the likelihood of problems with the customer base

Complaints Policy: A document that specifies the organisation's overall direction and objectives concerning its treatment of complaints done by its Customers.

Contactability: Able to communicate with, especially by email, mobile number, home number, office number etc.

Controllable: Capable of being controlled or kept within safe limits. If something is controllable you can control or influence it.

Customer: Person or organisation that could or does receive a product or a service that is intended for or required by this person or organisation (ISO 9000:2015).

Customer Care Manager: Person tasked with managing the operations of the Customer Care, specifically, Complaints Management, Help Desk Services, Access to Information, etc

Customer Care Officer: Person reports immediately to Customer Care Manager is also tasked with the Customer Care function within the GoJ entity

Customer Satisfaction: Customer's perception of the degree to which the customer's expectations have been fulfilled (ISO 9000:2015).

Customer Service Unit/Branch: Structure within the Ministry which primary responsibility is to provide support and assistance to Customers before, during and after a transaction. The Branch's role includes resolving customer complaints and inquiries with the support of Customer service representatives who are trained to handle customer complaints and inquiries.

Customer satisfaction code of conduct code: the promises made to commitment by an organisation concerning its service delivery, behaviour, that are aimed at enhanced customer satisfaction and related provisions

Dispute: disagreement, arising from a complaint submitted to the DRP-provider

Dispute resolver: individual person assigned by a DRP-provider to assist the parties in resolving a dispute

DRP-provider: dispute resolution process (DRP) provider is a person of organisation that supplies and operates an external dispute resolution process

Note: a DRP-provider is a legal entity, separate from the organisation or person as induvial as the Complainant. A separate unit may be established within the organisation to handle unresolved complaints. The attributes of fairness and independence are critical here.

---

[6] ISO 90001:2015

Emergency Call: A telephone request or text message request for service which requires immediate action to prevent loss of life, reduce bodily injury, prevent, or reduce loss of property and respond to other emergency situations determined by local policy.

Feedback: Opinions, comments and expressions of interest in a product, a service or a service

Formal Complaints: A complaint made by an employee, representative of employees, or relative of an employee who has provided their written signature for the complaint.

Infrastructure: System of facilities, equipment and services needed for the operation of an organisation (ISO 9000:2015).

Interested party: Person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity. Examples include Customers, owners, people in an organisation, providers, bankers, regulators, unions, partners or society that can include Competitors or opposing pressure groups.

Non-formal Complaints: Complaints made anonymously, by former employees, or by individuals who did not provide their written signature for the complaint.

Organisation: Person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Performance Monitoring: the measurement of performance over time against indicators of performance or key performance indicators

Performance Planning: The process of identifying the goals of an individual or organisation and planning the best ways to achieve them. It focuses on underpinning the growth of employees and helping their career development.

Procedure: Specified way to carry out an activity or a process (ISO 9000:2015).

Quality: Degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfills requirements (ISO 9000:2015).

Quality Control: is a procedure or set of procedures intended to ensure that a manufactured product or performed service adheres to a defined set of quality criteria or meets the requirements of the client or customer. Quality Control is related, but not identical with, quality assurance (QA).

Quality Manual: Specification for the quality management system of an organisation (ISO 9000:2015).

Record keeping: The activity or occupation of keeping records or accounts

Service: Output of an organisation with at least one activity necessarily performed between the organisation and the customer (ISO 9000:2015).

Service Failure: An unplanned failure and interruption to the provision of the services against the standards of the organisation, reduction in the quality of the provision of the services or event which could affect the provision of the services in the future.

Service Recovery: An organisation's resolution of problems from dissatisfied customers to a state of satisfaction with an organisation/service.

Service Standards: Benchmarks for the delivery of service by the organisation to help to define what a customer can expect from a service provider, e.g. in terms of quality, process, timeliness, cost, accuracy and suitability

Stakeholder: Person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself, to be affected by a decision or activity (ISO 9000:2015).

1. **Clear and concise performance standards/procedures** are documented and communicated for complaint resolution, including response times.
2. **Capture the complaints and determine the level of the complaint and how soon it will be dealt via** several ways, such as in person, over the phone, by letter, website, social media, Instagram, Whatsapp, Fbook, etc or email. These are the details that should be captured/logged manually or by a computerized system:
   a. Contact details of the person making the complaint
   b. Issues raised in the complaint, including a clear description of the service deficiency identified by the person raising the complaint by date/time
   c. Complaint informally any additional support the person making the complaint may need, such as access to a Supervisor, etc.
   d. The complaints, whether formal or non-formal , should be assigned to a Customer Care Manager/Officer
3. **Staff are skilled and empowered to welcome complaints and to remedy problems quickly**. Staff must be empowered and encouraged to resolve complaints at the first instance they are received, as this increases the likelihood to obtain resolution and prevent escalation of the complaint to higher levels in the organisation, saving significant staff time and resources. [Policy]
4. **Staff are required to receive training related to active listening**, problem solving and conflict resolution
5. **All customer complaints via emails/website should be acknowledged initially by a return email or telephone call** within 24 hours or one (1) business day
6. **All customer complaints via written correspondence should be acknowledged by five (5) working days** and a minimum standard is that Customer complaints should be resolved within 10-15 working days as the likelihood is that the matter must be escalated and investigated prior satisfactory resolution and closure is achieved.
7. **A reference number should be assigned to the complaint** and used for tracking same complaint until its fully resolved
8. **There should be a dedicated telephone number,** e.g., Whatsapp or email, to receive and monitor complaints
9. **The organisation's complaints policy should be clearly outlined** and the types of complaints that are to be addressed within each tier
10. **Make special considerations for persons with Special Needs/disabilities and train staff specifically in the treatment of such persons. Here are some considerations**
11. **Service recovery is best executed by** swift handling from a courteous and caring employee as research[7] has proven that this is when customer satisfaction is maximized.
12. Ensure offices are accessible to wheelchairs and to people with mobility impairment.
13. Provide a text telephone service for people with a hearing impairment.
14. Make websites accessible to people using screen readers and, if necessary, make publications and correspondence available in Braille, large print or audio formats for people with sight impairment.

---

[7] Hocutt et al (2006). The art of service recovery: fact or fiction? Journal of Services Marketing

15. Ask people if they have any special requirements for access or communications.
16. Help complainants with reading or writing difficulties to formulate and lodge complaints.
17. Accept complaints on behalf of people with intellectual impairment from representatives.
18. Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), as they provide a public service, usually receive complaints whether fairly or not. It is typical that some may regard them as unwelcoming and unnecessary, or view complaints as only negative criticism of the organisation's acts or actions that they must defend.
    ▪
    ▪ According to the Section 21 of the Data Protection Act 2020(Jamaica),
    ▪ "1)It shall be the duty of a data controller to comply with the data protection standards in relation to all personal data with respect to which that data controller is the data controller.
    ▪ 2) A data controller who processes personal data in contravention of any of the data protection standards or any of the provisions of this Part, or fails to make a report or notification required under subsection (3) or (5), commits an offence and shall be liable upon
    ▪ Summary conviction in Parish Court to a fine not exceeding two million dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
    ▪ Conviction on indictment in a Circuit Court, to a fine, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years."

When organisations receive numerous complaints, it is typically a sign of a systemic problem that requires attention and action by the organisation. The purpose of keeping good records is to assist organisations to monitor trends and analyze in reviewing the subject matter and subsequent outcome of complaints they receive so that the entity can then make improvements to their systems, services and procedures.

A. Addressing vulnerable and at-risk groups

Under the People Engagement pillar, the vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups require segmentation and targeting to cater to the needs of this special group. This group will have varying needs, attitudes and motivations. Customer segmentation includes defining the requirements of the customer and then meeting and exceeding their needs with the resources available. The vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups may include:
- Older people
- Business or people based overseas
- People with mental health or substance abuse issues
- People who are ill, injured or highly dependent on medical care
- Victims of violence or abuse
- Humanitarian entrants / refugees
- Mature-aged workers
- Illiterate or semi-literate persons
- Youth or children
- Technologically excluded or under-served
- Persons with disabilities
- Suicide ideation tendencies
- HIV Seropositives

- LGBTQ++

B. Example: information for the public about an organisation's complaints process:

Have a query or complaint?
- While we always try to get it right sometimes this is not the case. So, if you have questions or a complaint about the service you have received, you can contact us. We will investigate your concerns and get back to you.

What should I do first?
- As a first step, contact the staff member you have been dealing with and explain your concerns. That staff member will try to resolve the matter straight away. If they can't, they may refer your concerns to our complaints team to consider. You can also contact our complaints team yourself.

What do I do if I have a question?
- If you have a query, you can contact us and we will discuss this with you.

How do I send a complaint?
- You can write to us with the details of your complaint, email, or contact our complaints team to discuss your concerns. Contact us:
  By post: *[insert postal address]*
  By email: *[insert email address]*
  By phone: *[insert telephone number]*
- Please also provide a short, clear description of the reasons for your complaint together with any relevant supporting documents.
-

Next steps
- If you have sent us a complaint and given us an email address, we will send acknowledge you via email within 1-3 business days to confirm we have received your complaint. Otherwise, we will write to you acknowledging your complaint.

- We will investigate your complaint and contact you to work through the issue. You should expect a response to the resolution from us within 10 – 15 business days. If we need to take longer because, for example, we need to get additional information or it is a detailed matter, we will let you know. Your feedback is valuable to us, so let us hear from you.

What should I do if I am not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint?
[insert details of, or reference to, any rights of review or appeal that may be available]
You have the right to raise your concerns with the Consumer Affairs Commission:
  Consumer Affairs Commission
  Switchboard: 876-906-5425
  info@cac.gov.jm
  34 Trafalgar Road
  Kingston.

The Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) can consider complaints about the administrative acts and decisions of ministries, departments, and agencies. The CAC will ask you if you have first tried to resolve the matter with us directly and will also consider whether you have any other remedy available. The CAC may investigate your complaint and make a recommendation to us regarding the concern you have raised.

The Office of the Public Defender will in agreement with the principles of natural justice and the Jamaican Constitution investigate brought by any member of the public against the state seeking redress Constitutional and Administrative justice and provide where necessary and possible the attorney's fees needed to pursue Constitutional remedies in court.

<Finally, you may refer the matter to the Office of the Public Defender. They can be contacted at the addresses listed below:
Office of the Public Defender
78 Harbour Street
Kingston
Tel: (876) 922—7089
Fax: (876) 922—9830

Please note, however, that the Public Defender would have expected you to have gone through all the channels in the grievance process before accepting complaints to their respective offices.>

Conducting a fair review process
- Any review that is undertaken must be fair. To ensure a fair process, the Customer Care Manager/Officer should:
- Address complaints on their merits;
- Act independently and have an open mind;
- Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest;
- Consider all information and evidence carefully;
- Ensure confidentiality with the complainant information as far as possible, with the complaint considered in private and information only disclosed if necessary to properly review the matter of concern and
- Act regularly and with immediacy
-
- The Complainant, and if applicable, any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:
- Present their position on the matter
- Be advised and comment as early as possible of any adverse findings against them;
- Check if the organisation has the correct facts; and
- Identify any major issues that may be of concern to the person and which they may seek to challenge later if they are not carefully addressed.

Facilitative method (adopted from ISO 10003:2018)

In the facilitative method, after the organisation communicates its initial position, the organisation should be prepared to receive an offer or counter-offer to settle the matter. The organisation can receive such offers either directly from the complainant or through the efforts of the dispute resolver. If the organisation receives a proposal for settlement, it should inform appropriate personnel of the complainant's position. The organisation can conduct additional evaluation and obtain additional input regarding the proposed settlement. The organisation should inform the complainant and/or the dispute resolver in a manner that is consistent with the provider's procedures. If accepted, the organisation should refer the matter to appropriate personnel, such as a legal advisor and those involved with carrying out the resolution.

If a resolution is not agreed upon at this stage, the organisation should determine what further dispute-resolution methods, if any, are appropriate and applicable to the dispute, and inform the provided of its understanding in this respect.

Advisory and determinative methods (adopted from ISO 10003:2018)
If an advisory or determinative method is to be used, the organisation should schedule and prepare for its participation in the process in an effective and efficient manner. Examples of steps it should take include:
- Assigning a case administrator
- Determining the preferred manner of participation consistent with the dispute-resolution procedures (e.g. In-person , via telephone, written material, etc)
- Conducting further investigation, if needed
- Compiling and organizing the evidence
- Identifying potential witnesses and documentary evidence
- Identifying a range of resolutions to the dispute that are acceptable to the organisation
- Determining who has settlement authority in the matter
- Developing an oral and /or written presentation, as appropriate
- Assessing the potential for reaching a settlement before the process concludes
- Participating in the process

- Characteristics/Attributes of Customer Care Managers/Officers:
- Always act sensitively and be impartial
- Facilitate training for staff to receive and address complaints about the organisation.
- Facilitate access to staff at all levels of the organisation so that complaints can be resolved promptly
- Designate levels of authority to act to resolve a complaint or to refer the matter to the appropriate authority levels
- Always strive to be competent, objective and efficient

Table 3.1 – Comparison of survey methods (adopted from ISO 10004:2018)

Method	Advantages	Limitations

Face-to-face interview	- Contact and personal attention - Possibility of complex and directed questions - Flexibility in conducting interview - Immediate availability of information -Ability to verify information	- Takes more time, therefore slower - More costly, especially if interviewees are geo graphically dispersed - Risk of possible distortion introduced by interviewer
Telephone interview	- Lower cost than face-to-face interview - Flexibility - Ability to verify information - Greater speed of execution - Immediate availability of information	- Non-verbal responses be observed (no visual contact) - Risk of distortion by the interviewer - Information limited by relatively short duration of interview - Customer reluctance to participate
Discussion group	- Lower cost than individual interviews - Partially structured questions -Spontaneous responses resulting from group interaction	- Requires experienced facilitator and related equipment - Outcome depends on participant's familiarity with technique - Difficult if customers are dispersed over wide region
Mail survey	- Low cost - Can reach a widely dispersed geographic group - No distortion by the interviewer - High level of standardization/comparativeness - Fast execution - Easy evaluation	- Low response rate - Self-selection of respondents might result in skewed sample that does not reflect the population -Possible difficulty with unclear questions - Lack of behaviour
Online survey (Internet)	-Low cost - Previously prepared questions - No distortion by interviewer - High level of standardization/comparativeness - Fast execution - Fast evaluation	- Low response rate - Lack of behaviour control in answers - Delay in availability of data - High probability of interruption in case of unclear questions -Assumes customer has the equipment and is familiar with the technology

Note: If the data-gathering activity is being conducted by the organisation the assumptions may hold true.

Resolving complaints satisfactorily

- Action to resolve a complaint may be required where it has been identified that:
- There was an unreasonable delay
- Inadequate advice, explanation or reasons were provided
- Organisation policies or procedures were not followed correctly
- There was an inadequate or unfair process followed
- There was a factual or legal error
- There was unprofessional behaviour or misconduct by an official
- In resolving a complaint, any remedy should be fair and reasonable, and should aim, as far as possible, to restore the complainant to their original position.
-

Concerns about legal liability

- In some cases, a complainant may have a legal entitlement to redress. There may be concerns about legal liability in this situation. If so, the organisation should still offer a

resolution where possible, as that may remove the need for the complainant to pursue their legal remedies.

- Agencies have a duty to rectify problems for which they are responsible. However, where necessary a resolution can be offered with an explicit statement that there is no admission of liability.
- In such a case, legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded should be obtained. According to Section 35 of the Consumer Protection Act (amended in 2013), *"upon conviction of a provider* of an *offence the Court may order that provider*

a) to make to the consumer, restitution of any deposit made by the consumer
b) to pay to the consumer a sum representing the costs incurred by that consumer as a result of the offence and
c) to pay to the Commission such sum as represents the costs incurred in relation to the prosecution of the offence"

-

Reporting on the review

A review of how a complaint was handled may be necessary for the following factors:
- - The review should follow the action plan that has been prepared.
- - Customer satisfaction data should be monitored by the organisation at scheduled intervals and by the appropriate management level.
- - Gather all relevant information and evidence and assess all the matters of concern including the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's services, processes, practices or personnel
- - The most appropriate action should be taken after a thorough assessment is conducted including monitoring the execution of actions undertaken, as well as the outcome of actions on customer response related to specific features or on the overall measure of customer satisfaction
- - The status of the complaint should be tracked throughout the complaints-handling process as this aids timely resolution.
- The review of complaints detect trends and the identification of patterns/issues that help in revealing root causes and ultimately the change required to result in improvements in services and/or processes.
- - Customer feedback should be encouraged and monitored. Actions that are taken to improve the service delivery should be monitored for the improvement of customer satisfaction in subsequent feedback.
- - The action being taken should be assessed for effectiveness. For example, if customer satisfaction is showing a positive trend, it should be reflected in related business indicators, such as increased customer traffic, increased revenues, increased customer traffic accessing flexible options for service, additional opening hours for business, etc.
- - The organisation should conduct scheduled audit checks on its processes for monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction that yields information that is current, appropriate and valuable
- - Ensuring that the process for capturing customer expectations is current and thorough in scope and includes authentication where possible with the customer
- - Ensuring that methods and processes for direct measurement of satisfaction reflect changing customer circumstances and business objectives
- - Reviewing complaints ensure that the organisation remains compliant with relevant regulations.
- - The organisation should prepare a report for submission to the management team and any

other relevant bodies that require the information. The report should include the following:

- - Actions in the report that can be taken to resolve the complaint if it has been identified that something has "*gone wrong*"
- - Provide a remedy for the complainant
- Review changes to policies, procedures or practices as necessary
- Review the risks and opportunities related to customer satisfaction measuring and monitoring
- Highlight success stories and lessons learned from complaints that were resolved satisfactorily
- Determine the most optimal process for communication of customer satisfaction information to relevant functions is functioning and successful
- Reviewing complaints in a CMS is necessary for maintaining customer satisfaction, enhancing internal processes, and guaranteeing regulatory compliance.
-

Roles of Government Advocates such as the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) and the Office of the Public Defender

The Consumer Affairs Commission was established to inform, educate and empower consumers to protect themselves in the marketplace. The CAC supports Consumers in making informed decisions within a market driven economy and to be their main advocate if there is a report of service failure.

The CAC seeks to resolve disputes between customers and private institutions regarding their provision of consumer goods and services. The Public Defender has the specific function of protecting and enforcing the rights of citizens against state institutions and is a supervisory body of the executive branch. The Office of the Public Defender is not a government organisation or department but is a Commission of Parliament and as such, the Office is independent of the government or any of its Ministries.

It reports directly to Parliament to maintain a straight line of impartiality and accountability in any action it takes against government administration which it oversees. In conclusion, the Public Defender was established, under the Public Defender (Interim) Act, to address the complaints against inefficient services provided by state institutions and the CAC does not have the jurisdiction within the Commission of Parliament to do so.

APPENDIX 7: CONSULTATIONS CONDUCTED WITH THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES

15th SEPTEMBER, 2021	
#	ORGANISATION
1	National Housing Trust
2	Consumer Affairs Commission
3	Ministry of Labour Social Security
4	Ministry of Justice
5	Jamaica School of Etiquette/Symposium Events

Government of Jamaica (GoJ) Policy Statement on Complaints Management & Service Recovery (INFORMATIVE)

Introduction

The Government of Jamaica (GoJ) recognizes the importance of effective complaints management and service recovery to ensuring customer satisfaction. This Policy Statement on complaints management and service recovery, aligned to the Service Excellence (SE) Policy, reinforces the commitment of the GoJ to achieving service excellence.

GoJ Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy Statement

The Jamaican Public Sector remains committed to consistently delivering reliable services that meet the needs of our customers. However, despite our best efforts, service failures may occur. Such service failures have the potential to negatively impact our customers' experiences and, in some instances, their well-being and that of their families. It is, therefore, the responsibility of all public sector entities to address and rectify with efficiency and care all customer complaints and service failures that come to their attention.

Acknowledging this, the senior leadership of all public sector entities will implement mechanisms to facilitate customers in communicating service failures and ensure that such failures are effectively resolved to the satisfaction of their customers. However, even as they ensure effective service recovery, public sector entities will continue to proactively identify and mitigate potential service issues before they adversely affect their customers.

In keeping with the GoJ Service Excellence Policy, the GoJ Service Delivery Minimum Standards, and our collective commitment to effective service recovery, all public sector entities will establish and effectively manage the implementation of an entity-specific Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy. This policy will establish clear roles, responsibilities, and authority for operating an organisation-wide complaints management and service recovery system.

This GoJ Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy Statement, along with the guidelines which follow, must be used by senior leaders in public sector entities to support them in developing their own entity-specific complaints management and service recovery systems. Such systems will reflect the public sector's commitment to service excellence and provide a transparent and structured approach to capturing customer complaints and addressing those complaints with efficiency and care.

Policy Principles

In developing and managing their entity-specific Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy, each public sector entity commits to:

- Using clear and simple language in all communications related to complaints management, making processes understandable and accessible to everyone.

- Maximising the use of digital platforms and mobile applications to streamline the complaints management process, enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and transparency.

- Regularly reviewing service delivery processes to identify and rectify potential service failures before they impact customers, demonstrating a proactive commitment to service quality.

- Encouraging all forms of customer feedback, positive and negative, and this feedback to identify strengths and best practices within their services.

- Fostering a constructive and positive approach to service delivery challenges and cultivating an organisational culture that understands and responds to complaints as opportunities for learning and improvement.

Public Sector Entities Commitment to Complaints Management and Service Recovery

The way the public sector responds to service failures can have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, even as we work towards the seamless delivery of our services, all public sector entities will design and operate a complaints management and service recovery system in which:

- Customers are facilitated to provide feedback on service failure and this feedback is used to identify the root causes of service failures, whether they stem from process inadequacies or service design flaws.

- Customer complaints are acknowledged as soon as they are received.

- Customers are advised on how the complaint will be addressed.

- The name and contact information of the officer responsible for addressing their complaint is shared with customers.

- Customers are engaged in the resolution process and are provided with clear, timely information on the steps being taken to resolve their complaint.

- Complaints are addressed as quickly, respectfully, and efficiently as possible, making every attempt to minimize customer inconvenience.

- Customer satisfaction with the provided resolution is actively verified, with customers asked to confirm whether the recovery efforts have effectively addressed their concerns.

- Complaints are used to provide insights into needed systemic changes, going beyond the resolution of specific issues and addressing organisational processes and service design issues, to enhance service quality and address the potential for future occurrences.

To ensure a standardised approach to complaints management across the public sector, Complaints Management and Service Recovery Guidelines follow this policy statement. Underscoring the

government's commitment to international best practices, the guidelines have been aligned with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 10002:2014 complaints handling process.

Implementation

All Ministries must ensure that the public sector entities within their portfolio develop and implement entity-specific complaints management and service recovery policies and processes that embody the principles and guidelines outlined in this document.

In keeping with the institutional framework established under the Service Excellence Policy:

- The Management Institute for National Development (MIND) will ensure that training for complaints management and effective service recovery is available public sector wide.
- Each Ministry will establish processes for monitoring and reporting on the entities within their portfolio against the requirements of this Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy Statement and guidelines.

Accountability

Each public sector entity must report to their respective Permanent Secretary on the administration of their complaints management and service recovery systems. The Ministry with responsibility for public sector modernisation will hold each Permanent Secretary accountable for ensuring the establishment and effectiveness of the systems of complaints management and service recovery established across the entities under their portfolio.

Recourse

Where customers remain dissatisfied with the quality-of-service recovery efforts, or where public sector entities do not fulfil their responsibilities to establish and sustain an effective complaints management and service recovery system, customers will be facilitated to submit a report to the Permanent Secretary of the responsible Ministry. Where, after escalation to the responsible Permanent Secretary, the matter remains unresolved, customers will be further facilitated to bring the matter to the attention of the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry with responsibility for public sector modernisation, who will be responsible for escalating the matter to resolution.

Conclusion

The GoJ Service Excellence Policy commits all public sector leaders to enhancing public confidence and satisfaction with Jamaica's public sector services. The adoption of this Complaints Management and Service Recovery Policy Statement reinforces the dedication of the Jamaican public sector to achieving service excellence. By treating complaints not merely as challenges to be managed, but as valuable inputs for continuous improvement, public sector entities are encouraged to adopt a constructive, transparent and proactive approach in addressing and learning from service failures.

Enquiries

Any submissions, comments or enquiries regarding this Document should be directed to the following:

Postal Address:
Public Sector Modernisation Division
The Ministry of Finance & Public Service
c/o Office of the Cabinet
1 Devon Road
Kingston 10

Telephone: (876) 929-8880-5

Email: psmdcommunications@mof.gov.jm