

“ The City of Heritage ”



**CUSTOMER CARE
AND COMPLAINTS POLICY
YEAR 2025/2026**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- (2) The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service identifies transforming service delivery as one of eight national transformation priorities. This involves achieving service excellence through delivering services professionally, and in a courteous, efficient and cogent manner, which ensures predictable and affordable services to all citizens, all the time.
- (3) As part of the vision to create a developmental citizen oriented public service that delivers services effectively and speedily, and municipalities in compliance with Chapter 4 section 17(2) (a) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 must maintain a reputation for aiming to deliver the highest quality of services. Municipal processes, systems and procedures must therefore allow for the establishment of mechanisms processes and procedures to enable local communities to Participate in the affairs of the municipality and for this purpose provide for the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodge by members of the local communities.
- (4) Citizens also need to be given an opportunity to compliment public servants when they have experienced outstanding service delivery so as to assist in the acknowledgement of outstanding performance and contribute to continuous improvement of services. Proper management of complaints will result in the right of redress being upheld and also improved service delivery processes and systems

- (5) Considering the above and in line with the Back to Basics (B2B) program introduced by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional affairs in 2014, the Batho Pele principles and other pieces of legislation and policies that advocate for service delivery excellence, these guidelines seek to provide a guide to municipalities in managing complaints.

2. DEFINITION

In this Policy, unless the context indicates otherwise:

“**Batho Pele**” means a policy framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies aimed at transforming the SA Public Service, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, as well as the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997, sets out 8 transformation priorities, which declared that the Public Service should be people-centric, and that people must come first in the delivery of services in order to ensure a better life for all citizens

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Municipalities must have an effective system in order to manage complaints in accordance with the following principles:

i. CUSTOMER FOCUS

- (a) Municipal establishments must be committed to effective complaint management and value the feedback received from users through these mechanisms.

ii. VISIBILITY

Information about how and where to complain must be well publicized to the community.

iii. ACCESSIBILITY

- (a) It must be made as easy as possible for users to lodge a complaint. The public should be encouraged to complain about the point of service.
- (b) All attempts should therefore be made to reduce potential barriers to access such as race, language, literacy, and attitude. An easy-to-understand complaint procedure is desirable because it is then likely to also be more accessible for vulnerable groups such as blind and deaf people and illiterate people, as well as being easier to use by those managing it.

iv. SPEED

- (a) The aim of complaints management systems is to resolve complaints/queries and provide feedback within the expected timeframe that must be communicated to clients through the Municipal Service Charter attached as Annexure A.
- (b) When a response cannot be provided within a stipulated timeframe, an explanation must be provided to clients and keep them informed of the progress and outcome.

v. FAIRNESS

- a) Complaints must be fairly and impartially handled without fear or favour.

vi. CONFIDENTIALITY

- (a) Complaint's right to confidentiality of all information pertaining to his or her complaint must always be respected in line with the POPI Act.
- (b) The Complaint's expressed consent is not needed if his or her personal information is required to investigate a complaint. However, care must be taken throughout the complaint management procedure to ensure that any information disclosed about the complainant is confined to that which is relevant to the investigation of the complaint and only disclosed to those people who have a demonstrable need to know it for the purpose of investigating the complaint.

vii. RESPONSIVENESS

- (a) Complaints are acknowledged promptly, addressed according to urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process. This can help prevent dissatisfaction growing or further complaints arising about delays. Where a delay is unavoidable, the complaints should be kept informed of progress and told when an outcome can be expected.

viii. REMEDY

- (a) The municipality must provide a remedy for the complainant in cases where the investigation report indicated that a remedy is required. Effective communication during the entire redress process is essential.

ix. ACCOUNTABILITY

(a) Accountabilities for complaint management are clearly established, and complaints and the responses to them are monitored and reported to management and other stakeholders.

x. REVIEW

(a) The complaint management system must offer opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the Municipality's response to the complaint. The complaint must be informed about this review and/or appeal mechanisms.

(b) The Municipality must establish a Complaints Management Committee to deal with complaints and feedback. Such complaints and feedback must be incorporated into the Municipal Complaints Register.

xi. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

a) Complaints should be a source to trigger improvement within the Municipality.

4. BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

(i) INFORMATION

All Communities are entitled to full and accurate information about services they receive.

(ii) CONSULTATION

(a) means the consultation of citizens about the level and quality of the public services they receive and where possible, given a choice about the services that are offered.

(iii) REDRESS

All communities should be offered an apology and solution when service standards are not met.

(iv) **VALUE FOR MONEY**

All services provided should offer the best possible value for money

(v) **OPENESS AND TRANSPARENCY**

Community should know how decisions are made and how national, Provincial and Local Government operates.

(vi) **ACCESS**

All communities should have equal access to service delivery

(vii) **COURTESY**

Means the polite, kind, thoughtful and professional service offered to all citizens.

(viii) **ENCOURAGING INNOVATION AND REWARDING EXCELLENCE**

Innovation can be new ways of providing better service, cutting costs, improving conditions, streamlining, and generally making changes which tie in with the spirit of Batho Pele. It is also about rewarding the staff who “go the extra mile” in making it all happen.

(ix) **CUSTOMER IMPACT**

Impact means looking at the benefits we have provided for our customers both internal and external – it’s how the nine principles link together to show how we have improved our overall service delivery and customer satisfaction. It is also about making sure that all our customers are aware of and exercising their rights in terms of the Batho Pele principles.

(x) **LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Good leadership is one of the most critical ingredients for successful organizations. Organizations who do well in serving their customers can demonstrate that they have leaders who lead, by example, who set the vision, and ensure that the strategy for achieving the vision is owned by all and properly deployed throughout the organization. They play an active role in the organization’s success.

(xi) **SERVICES STANDARDS**

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public service they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

“**Frontline service staff**” means officials who are the first point of contact for the Department.

5. CUSTOMER CARE COMMITMENT

The Municipality is committed to delivering quality services to its customers. Customers are encouraged to:

- Submit their suggestion about what needs to be done to improve its services,
- Bring to the attention of the Customer Services Desk personnel should a customer for any reason feel that a promise has not been kept,
- Report any instance of poor customer service experienced at any Customer Service Desk
- Report, comment, complaint, compliment regarding municipal services at any Customer Service Desk/Municipal premises.
- Report exceptionally good service so that the Municipality would recognize employees who go beyond the call of duty.

OUR VALUES

To achieve customer service excellence, it is necessary that Ulundi Municipal employees have a common set of values that will guide their interactions with customers. As an organization, Ulundi Municipality will remind employees that there must be a commitment to the following values that will guide our interactions with customers:

- **Integrity :**

In doing the right thing even if no one is looking.

- **Service :**

To provide a meaningful experience to the people we serve and support.

- **Transparency:**

To increase engagement and to be emotionally involved and committed to serving our community.

- **Responsibilities:**

To serve our customers with integrity

- **Reliable:**

To carefully manage the relationship, we develop with our customers.

- **Empathy:**

- To promote high commitment and cooperation.
- **Accountability:**
To take responsibility for honoring commitments we have made.

 - **Fairness:**
Through open communication using our web-based customer care management system (SIZA) which facilitates constructive conversations with our customers.

6. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the following prescripts:

- (a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- (b) The Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998);
- (c) The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000);
- (d) The Public Service Regulations, 2016;
- (e) The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);
- (f) The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act 3 of 2000);
- (g) The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act 4 of 2000);
- (h) The Protection of Personal Information Act, 2003 (Act No 4 of 2013);
- (i) The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995; and
- (j) The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997.

7. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE TO MANAGE COMPLAINTS

Ulundi Municipality must have a written Standard Operating Procedure for the management of complaints.

- (a) Types of complaints that citizens may lodge with the Municipality whether individual, area based, community or organizational related;
- (b) Procedure for lodging a complaint including telephonic complaints.
- (c) Procedure for acknowledgement of a complaint.
- (d) Procedure for investigating a complaint;
- (e) Risk rating procedure for determining the required action to be taken according

to the severity of the complaint.

- (f) Categorization procedure for identifying patterns in system failures.
- (g) Procedure for redress.
- (h) Timelines to be adhered to;
- (i) Procedure around recording of statistical data on complaints including the indicators for complaints.
- (j) Monitoring mechanisms and their response timelines;
- (h) Mechanism to ensure children's participation in the complaints process; and mechanism to ensure that vulnerable groups such as disabled people, the elderly, mentally ill people, illiterate people, and people speaking foreign languages can easily participate in the complaints process.

8. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS, VISIBILITY AND ACCESS

8.1 HOW AND WHERE TO COMPLAIN

- (1) All Municipal establishments must put in place mechanisms that enable the public to lodge complaints.
- (2) Complaints may be lodged through different mechanisms or platforms including:
 - (a) A complaints or suggestion box;
 - (b) A written letter or E-mail to the Municipality
 - (c) Social media sites managed by Corporate Communications in the Municipality;
 - (d) A direct walk into the Municipality;
 - (e) Through a war room or ward committee;
 - (f) Through a Presidential Hotline; or call 035 874 5100 OR info@ulundi.gov.za
 - (g) The results of the customer satisfaction survey; and
 - (h) Any other mechanism that is accessible to the complainant.
 - (i) Complaints and suggestions can be forwarded to BA 131 Corner of Princess Magogo and King Zwelithini Street at the Ulundi Municipal buildings to Customer Care Officer or can be addressed to Ulundi Local Municipality, Private Bag X17, Ulundi 3838, to the attention of the Municipality Manager or Director Corporate

Services. All complaints can also be forwarded to war rooms, Traditional Courts, and Municipal satellite Offices.

(3) In the absence of an automated or electronic system, all complaints received must be recorded on a Municipal Complaints Register and must indicate:-

- (a) The details of a complainant.
- (b) The nature of a complaint,
- (c) Date the complaint was logged,
- (d) Progress of complaint; and
- (e) When the complaint was resolved.

4. The handling of complaints must be done in accordance with the following stages although the stages may overlap or do not follow the same sequence:

(a) Stage 1 – receiving of complaints

- (i) Frontline service staff must receive records and refer the complaint to the relevant units within 24 hours.
- (ii) Units must acknowledge all received complaints within 3 working days with a reference number and contact details of the official dealing with the complaint. Municipalities with an automated complaints management system must acknowledge received complaints within 24 hours.
- (iii) All received complaints must be captured on the Municipal Complaints Register.
- (iv) All complaints received must be captured by the relevant Unit.

(b) Stage 2: - responding to complaints

- (i) All complaints received must be attended to within 2 working days.

- (ii) Written complaints received through the Presidential Hotline must be attended to within 3 working days.

9. DECLARATION

- (i) This policy shall be known as Ulundi Municipality's Customer Care Policy and shall come into operation once declaration is made in the Provincial Gazette. Copies of this Policy as well as copies of the Information Manual are obtainable from our Customer Care office at the Corner of Princess Magogo and King Zwelithini Streets on request, free of charge.

10. CONCLUSION

- We shall look at the benefits we have provided for our customers both internal and external and ensure that all our customers are aware of and are exercising their rights in terms of the Batho Pele principles.

11. POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE

In compliance with Sec. 24 of the MFMA, the effective date is 1 July each year until end of June the following year.