

Proposal for monitoring Members' / M.P. enquiries in Social Services

The purpose of this paper is to outline a more effective and transparent system for dealing with and monitoring all M.P./Council Member enquiries plus complaints for the Social Services Department. Heads of Service need to be able to access and track such enquiries. Members and officers have expressed concern for clarity in relation to sharing confidential information and for ensuring enquiries are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Consideration is given to the objective of capturing all M.P./Members enquiries through the 'Respond' System. This is to enable regular reports to Member's on enquiries from their own constituents.

1. Management Process for Members Enquiries

Councillors and M.P.s contact via:

- § Letter
- § E-mail
- § Phone
- § In person

Contact may relate to:

- § Referring person to service
- § Enquiry about individual's service
- § Complaint made on behalf of service user/carer
- § General enquiry about service or policy
- § Consent for Social Services to share personal information (See Appendix 2 for example of pro forma)

Process for enquiries:

All enquiries to go to Head of Service/Head of Business Performance/Executive Director of Health and Social Care and logged:

a) Referrals:

- § Log
- § Acknowledge which team referred to(see appendix 3).
- § Pass to appropriate team.
- § No further action.

b) Enquiry about service for an individual:

- § Acknowledge and to whom passed(see appendix 3).
- § Head of Service to log.

ξ Check 'Consent to share personal information' form completed(see appendix 3).

If not:

ξ Letter to individual seeking consent to share information(see appendix 4).

① copy to enquirer with acknowledgement.

ξ Response written:

① Advise referrer if refused.

ξ Log off and file.

c) Complaints/compliments:

ξ Head of Service/Head of Business Performance/
Executive Director of Health and Social Care to
acknowledge.

ξ All complaints to Customer Care Team for complaint
procedure.

d) Service and Policy enquiries:

ξ Log

ξ Respond

ξ Log off

ξ File

Timescales:

ξ Acknowledge 3 working days
(with the exception of Social
Service complaints being an
acknowledgement within 24
hours).

ξ Respond 7 working days or advise
reason for delay and expected
time of response
(response timescales for
complaints will differ).

Please note: M.P./Members complaint timescales are governed by the relevant complaint procedure(see appendix 1).

System Support:

Current Heads of Service do not have access to 'Respond' system. Need to consider access to 'Respond' software support for Heads of Service/Head of Business Performance/Executive Director of Health and Social Care's P.A.s to:

ξ Log, chase, respond, file, report

- ξ Notify Heads of Service of imminent deadlines and outstanding enquiries.
- ξ Quarterly reports.

Standard letters/forms:

- ξ Acknowledgement(see appendix 3).
- ξ All letters to be marked 'confidential' on letter and envelope.
- ξ 'Consent to share personal information' form to be completed by Complainant(see appendix 2).

Phone/in person/email:

- ξ Record and then respond as above.

All M.P./Members enquiries are to be recorded on the 'Respond' system by the Departmental Management Team and Customer Care Section.

2. Reporting M.P.s/Members enquiries

A separate database is to be formed on the 'Respond' software exclusively to incorporate Members/M.P enquiries in order to track and report on them.

3. Financial Considerations

Access by Heads of Service to the 'Respond' system :

It is possible for the Head of Business Performance and Heads of Service P.A.s to have access to the 'Respond' system to see and track M.P./Members enquiries and viewing can be customised to reflect their particular service area. The resources required are :

Further licences for the 'Respond' Software. These can only be obtained in groups of 5 and should be accompanied by a one day training session for Heads of Service and a days consultation for the Customer Care Section, supplied by 'Respond':

Cost:

- ξ £5,900 for 5 licences
- ξ £2,400 two day consultation/training

Total cost - £8,300

Benefits:

Heads of Services will be able to view outstanding M.P./Members enquiries at a glance along with details of who is dealing with the complaint.

4. Overall Benefits

- ξ The Departmental Management Team will be able to record all M.P./Members enquiries on one system. Thus, all enquiries received can be tracked.
- ξ Heads of Service will be able to see and track their own service area enquiries.
- ξ The Members Officer and the Corporate Complaint Section will be able to provide reports to M.Ps./Members concerning their own particular Wards.

In summary:

It is possible to improve the current procedures for capturing M.P./Members enquiries by recording such enquiries on the 'Respond' system, under four new categories.

The objective is to capture all Members enquiries on the Corporate 'Respond' system in order for enquiries to be logged and chased and for reports to be made to Councillors/M.P.s.

It is proposed that this is to be piloted in Social Services and eventually rolled out corporately to other departments.

Customer Care Section
Feb 03

Please note: M.P.s do not have access to private and confidential council reports or some internal communications as they are not Members of the Council.

Appendix 1:

Social Services complaint procedure:

Stage 1 – Local solution

- ① Acknowledgement within 24hrs.
- ① Response within 10 working days.

Stage 2 – Formal investigation

- ① Acknowledgement within 3 days.
- ① Respond within 28days.

Stage 3 – Review Panel

- ① Acknowledgement within 3 days.
- ① Review Panel within 28 days

Corporate Complaint Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal stage

- ① Complaint response 'on-the-spot'

Stage 2 – Management investigation

- ① Acknowledgement within 7 days
- ① Line manager to investigate and respond within 28 days

Stage 3 – Formal investigation

- ① Acknowledgement within 7 days
- ① Response within 28 days

Appendix 2:

Consent to share personal information

I hereby give consent for my personal information held about me by the Social Services Dept., to be shared with the following as my representative:
(This does not include access to files)

Councillor:

Ward:

Address:

Contact no:

Declaration of Councillor:

I have satisfied myself as to the true identity of the applicant, and confirm that I am an elected member for the ward in which the applicant lives.

Signature of Councillor:

Date:

Details of Applicant:

Full name:

Address:

Contact no:

Declaration of applicant:

I consent to the disclosure of this information to my representative.

I understand that:

- some of the information held about me by Social Services may be of a sensitive nature.
- Social Services may not be able to share all of the personal information held about me.

Signature of Applicant:

Date:

Appendix 3:

Please note: the 'Respond' system has the ability to salutate letters. Thus the correct information for each individual case will automatically be inserted into the shaded areas of this letter

Example:

Name
Address
Address
Postcode

Ref: Reference
☎ 020 8227 XXXX
☎ 020 8227 XXXX
☎ 020 8227 2462
www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk
firstname.surname@lbbd.gov.uk

Date

Private and Confidential

Dear Councillor name/name M.P.,

Social Services Member Enquiry/Referral

Thank you for your letter/telephone call of Date outlining your enquiry/referral regarding name of service. This matter is now being dealt with by name of officer who will respond to you within 7 working days.

If you need to talk about the matter in more detail, please contact name of officer direct on telephone number phone no.

Should you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

First name Surname
Job Title

Appendix 4:

Name
Address
Address
Postcode

Ref: Reference

☎ 020 8227 XXXX

☎ 020 8227 XXXX

☎ 020 8227 2462

www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk

firstname.surname@lbbd.gov.uk

Date

Private and Confidential

Dear name of enquirer,

Social Services Member Enquiry/Referral

We have been contacted by Councillor name/name M.P. to look into matters raised by you, on your behalf. In order for us to deal with your enquiry, we require consent from yourself to share information with your Councillor/M.P. Therefore we enclose an 'Consent to share personal information form' for you to complete and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience. On return of your form, the matter will be dealt with promptly.

Thank you for your enquiry and we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

First name Surname
Job Title

Have you got something to say?

Please use this form to:

make a comment

make a suggestion

make a complaint

make a compliment

If you are filling in this form for somebody else, please fill in section A. If you are not filling this form for somebody else, please go straight to section B.

A

Your name Address Phone number	
Your relationship to the service user	
Does the person know you are acting on their behalf?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

B

Service user's name Address Phone number	
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Please carry on over the page.

Please give details here and say what you would like to see done.

Signature: Date:

Please return this form to:

**London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Customer Care Manager
Social Services Department
Freepost
Civic Centre
Dagenham
RM10 7BW.**

