



**CHRIS HANI**  
**DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**  
SUSTAINING GROWTH  
THROUGH OUR PEOPLE

# **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY AND SERVICE CHARTER 2017-2022**

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**PART ONE**  
**CUSTOMER CARE POLICY**

**1. Preamble**

The Chris Hani District Municipality's vision is to become: A people-centred developmental rural district municipality. In order to achieve this, a customer care policy has to be developed and adopted to ensure that in our dealing with customers we uphold a high level customer service. This policy is based upon the National Batho Pele principles which has been translated into putting "People First" and the Back to Basics Approach putting emphasis on the values of the "Customer First". Customer care unit is a primary customer contact point set for efficient and quality delivery of services to customers.

The guiding framework is section 152 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 *WHEREIN the Constitution provides* that one of the objects of local government is to ensure that the provision of services to communities occurs in a sustainable manner;

AND WHEREAS section 195 (1) of the Constitution provides that the public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including-

- The promotion of the efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- The provision of services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; and
- The fact that people's needs must be responded to.

AND WHEREAS section 4 (1)(c) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 provides that members of the local community have the right to have access to municipal services which the municipality provides, where applicable and subject to the policy for indigent debtors, pay promptly for services fees, surcharges on fees, other taxes, levies and duties imposed by the municipality;

AND WHEREAS section 6 (2) (c), (e) and (f) of the Municipal Systems Act provides that the administration of a municipality must take measures to prevent corruption; give members of a local community full and accurate information about the level and standard of municipal services that they are entitled to receive; and inform the local

community about how the municipality is managed, of the costs involved and the persons in charge;

AND WHEREAS Chapter 9, sections 95, 96, 97, 98, 99 and 100, of the Systems Act provides for Customer Care Management, Debt Collection responsibility of the municipality, contents of the Policy, Bylaws that give effect to the Policy, Supervisory authority and Implementing authority.

Promotion of Access to Information Act, the Batho Pele Principles and the government Back to Basics Approach. Chris Hani DM has specific powers and functions expected to honour, amongst others these include: Water Services Provision & Authority, Municipal Health Services, Disaster Management, Fire Services, Local Economic Development, coordination of the Presidential Hotline queries, and facilitate access to information through various platforms.

## **1.1 Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will apply and any word or expressions to which a meaning has been assigned in any relevant Act or legislation shall bear the same meaning in this Policy, unless the context indicates otherwise.

**Act:** means the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), as amended from time to time.

**Billing:** means proper formal notification on an account to persons liable for payment of amounts levied for assessment rates and other taxes by the municipality and the charges of the fees for municipal services and indicating the net accumulated balance of the account.

**Council:** the municipal council of the Chris Hani District Municipality.

**Credit control and debt collection:** means the functions relating to the collection of all money that is due and payable to the municipality.

**Customer:** refers to someone who buy/purchase municipal products and/or services. It also refers to those who are temporarily subsidised by government as per the indigent policy and/or in rural areas.

**Client:** refers to customers who buy/purchase our products and/or services with a minimum of R10 000 in order to meet their monthly demands.

**Partner:** refers to clients who are in the public service and/or the development arena. In essence, its government departments, parastatals, donors etc.

**Customer management:** means a dedicated focus on the needs of customers, clients and partners in a responsive and reciprocal relationship between persons liable for these payments and the municipality, and when applicable, a service provider, thereby limiting the need for enforcement.

**Defaulter:** means a customer owing the municipality money in respect of taxes and/or municipal service charges not paid on the due date for payment.

**Technician:** means a person in charge of the civil engineering duties of the municipality,

**Interest:** constitutes a levy equal in legal priority to service levies and is equivalent to the prime banking rate applicable from time to time.

**Municipal account:** shall include levies or charges in respect of the following services:

- water consumption
- sewerage services
- interest, and municipal health related

**Municipal manager:** means the person appointed by the Municipal Council as the Municipal Manager of the municipality in terms of section 82 of the Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and includes any person

- acting in such position, and
- to whom the municipal manager has delegated a power, function or duty in respect of such delegated power, function or duty.

**Municipal services:** those services, rates and taxes reflected on the municipal account for which payment is required by the municipality,

**Chief Financial Officer:** means a person appointed by the Council to manage the Council's financial administration.

## 1.2 Our Values

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

- **Commitment** to serve the customers at all times
- **Humanity** is a standard approach in tackling the plight of the customers
- **Respect** the customers all times
- **Integrity** in serving the customers
- **Sincerity** through our actions
- **Honest** in serving our customers
- **Accountability** to affirm our obligations
- **Nurturing** hope and encouragement to those in need
- **Innovation** drives our imagination for the good of our customers

## 1.3 The Batho Pele Principles

The name Batho Pele means “People First” and the eight principles set out in it are the Government institutions and the public. Batho Pele commits CHDM employees to serving people and to find ways to improve service delivery. This recognises the public need to hold the municipality accountable for the quality of service provided.

- **Consultation-** customers should be consulted about the level and quality of municipal services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.
- **Service Standards-** customers should be told what level and quality of municipal services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.
- **Access-** all customers should have equitable access to the services to which they are entitled.
- **Courtesy-** customers should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
- **Information-** customers should be given full, accurate information about municipal services they are entitled to receive.

- **Openness and Transparency-** customers should be told how the clusters and service units of the municipality are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.
- **Redress-** if the promised standard of service is not delivered, customers should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
- **Value for Money-** public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

#### 1.4 The Back To Basic Approach

CHDM recognises the need to do things differently in order to get different solutions. “We cannot solve today’s problems with the same level of thinking that created the problems in the first place” (Albert Einstein). The situation needs a change of paradigm that focuses on serving the people. This is the essence of the ‘back to basics’ approach CHDM is committed to achieve. At the most basic level, CHDM is committed to:

- Putting customers and their concerns first and ensure constant contact with community structures through effective **public participation/engagement** platforms.
- Creating conditions for decent living by consistently delivering municipal **services to the right quality and standard.**
- Being well **governed** and demonstrate good governance and administration- cut wastage, spend public funds prudently, hire competent staff, ensure transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring sound **financial management** and accounting, and prudently manage resources so as to sustainably deliver services and bring development to communities.
- Building and maintain sound **institutional and administrative capabilities** administered and managed by dedicated and skilled personnel at all levels.

## **1.5 Who are the Customers?**

In many cases customers are loosely referred to as Ratepayers or Consumers. This create an unequal balance as customers are seen either as taxpayers or as people who consume essential services that we, as the CHDM provide. Our aim is to change this mind-set and remind ourselves at all times that we are dealing with Customers. Thus, the need to create a mutual relationship. In other words, our customers are individuals, and/or household members and entities who buy/utilise our products and/or services. This also refers to those who are temporarily registered as indigent and subsidised by government as per the indigent policy and/or in rural areas. We have further categorised our customers into clients and partners to refine our approach to communication and building mutual relationships. Such that our clients are those customers who are buying/purchasing our products and/or services up to a maximum of R10 000 in order to meet their monthly water and sanitation needs. Then partners refers to those clients who are in the public service who buy/purchase our services in order to fulfil government wide developmental mandate.

## **1.6 What is Customer Care and Why it is Important?**

Customer care is treating customers courteously, promptly and fairly whenever municipal employees are in contact with them. It is important for CHDM to ensure that customers receive a clear response to any service request, enquiry and complaint within a stated period of time as defined in the Customer Service Charter. Whilst customer service has been defined as a set of behaviours that an organisation undertakes in its interaction with its customers; customer care is the phrase that is used to describe the taking care of our customers to their absolute convenience. We see good Customer Care as:

- Treating customers with courtesy, dignity and respect
- Treating customers the way they would like to be treated
- Treating customers in their language of preference in accordance with the CHDM Language Policy.
- Seeing things according to the customer's point of view
- Providing a good quality service in a friendly, efficient and helpful manner.
- Giving people the information they need and providing an explanation if the service is not available.

- Keeping the customer informed of progress in addressing their complaints/requests or enquiries.
- Providing clients quality services, privileges, acknowledgements
- Providing partners quality services and privileges
- Instigate communication with customers listed as defaulters to avoid recurring interests and non-payment of municipal account

### **1.7 What are Customer Care Satellite Offices?**

To bring services closer to the people, CHDM has established customer care satellite offices in all local municipalities. This is to put into practice the Batho Pele principles and Back to Basics Approach in dealing with our customers. It is a mobile service providing a basket of services that contains all the elements of the Customer Services.

The CHDM is committed to upholding the principles of developmental local government and providing equitable access to government services to all its customers. These principles are at the heart of the CHDM Integrated Development Plan.

### **1.8 How will we Measure Our Success?**

The CHDM will back up the Customer Care Policy by specific Customer Service Charter and make it realistic by implementing the Customer Care Strategy for each service delivery department which will be our promise of delivery to customers. We will ask all our staff members to sign a Pledge in which they commit themselves to upholding these standards. We will continuously monitoring our performance through benchmarking ourselves against other municipalities and being subject to regular performance audits. We will develop methods of receiving customer feedback to find out whether customers are satisfied with the standard of service they have received. These will be through:

- Requesting customers to complete a customer satisfaction questionnaire and/or telephone follow-up of a sample of returns to continuously evaluate customer perceptions of our service.
- Organizing annual focus group sessions and/or customer satisfaction surveys to measure and understand the perception gap between what customer's perceptions of our service delivery are and what we think we are achieving.

- Actively advertise in all our offices CHDM 24/7 toll-free Customer Call Centre where customers can report complaints, poor service and misuse of municipal properties. .

These monitoring methods will assist us to develop programmes to address any shortcomings in the standard of our service. Comments, compliments and complaints from our customers are an important part of the process that will help us to build a “Customer Focused Municipality”.

### **1.9 Customer Care Standards and Management Controls**

At the centre of the CHDM Customer Care Policy is the principle of putting the ‘Customer First’ in every task and process undertaken. This forces the Municipality to continuously evaluate its processes and how it serves its people. Compliance with and/or adherence to the Customer Service Standards as reflected in the Customer Service Charter must be reflected as a Key Performance Indicator for each service delivery directorate.

The municipality must build continuous training and/or awareness programmes to capacitate staff to realize the importance of customer care. The municipality must ensure that it establish uniform customer care standards across the municipality by adopting common Customer Service Charter to be implemented in line with this customer care policy.

In addition, the municipality must continuously inform customers what standards of customer care they can expect whenever they engage with any employee of the CHDM. These standards are carefully constructed in the Customer Service Charter attached to this Customer Care Policy. Failure to uphold and abide by the adopted Customer Service Charter is considered a serious breach of service standards and therefore, relevant consequence management processes may be effected against that employee.

## PART TWO

### CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

#### 2. PLEDGE

We, the council of Chris Hani District Municipality representing the institution and all its employees:

**Affirm** our commitment to upholding the values and principles of public administration enshrined in Section 195 of the Constitution and other laws, policies and frameworks.

**Express** that Chris Hani District Municipality is changing gear, towards creating an environment that will ensure adherence and enforcement of internal controls, high ethical standards in executing our responsibilities and commitment to serve our people.

**Uphold** the vision, mission and values of Chris Hani District Municipality clearly articulated in the rules of order of council in delivering services to the citizenry.

**Note** the continued efforts of coordinating all spheres of government in building better communities inclined towards addressing the needs of CHDM citizens and visitors.

**Equally** concerned about the manifestation of corruption in the local sphere of government and the negative impact it has on the socioeconomic and political landscape of the country.

**Believe** in the rich liberation history of our democratic dispensation which entrenches values and principles of human rights, social, economic and political rights.

**Motivated** by the proven value of collaboration in building a new South Africa, and encouraged by the willingness of all the parties and structures in working towards a common goal of finding mutually-beneficial solutions to our common challenges.

**Acknowledge** service delivery challenges and backlogs within the district municipality.

**Promote** a non-racial South Africa

**Commit** ourselves to upholding all 9 articles of the Local Government Service Charter as adopted by parties in the South African Local Government Bargaining Council 9 June 2016.

Adopted : Ordinary Council Meeting – 24 May 2017

## **2.1 Purpose**

The Customer Care Charter seeks to ensure that communities are aware that Chris Hani District Municipality is committed to render quality services related to the following core areas; water and sanitation, municipal health, disaster management and fire services. Including support departments such as budget and treasury, corporate services and integrated planning and economic development.

To ensure that customers have access to CHDM, for purposes of reporting complaints/enquiries and receiving responses to those complaints in a coordinated manner.

## **2.2 Vision**

This Customer Service Charter is aimed at ensuring complete customer care through providing efficient, affordable, equitable and sustainable services to all, through the partnership with our customers, the local municipalities and the community based organizations that represents a portion of our customers. Upholding service standards that will enhance effective service delivery within CHDM.

## **3. COMPLAINTS/DISPUTES/ENQUIRY PROCEDURE**

### **3.1 Complaints Registration**

- All CHDM customer complaints/disputes/enquiries shall be registered with the customer care unit. Customers may contact the call centre 0800 100 100 or and/or email [customercare@chrishanidm.gov.za](mailto:customercare@chrishanidm.gov.za).
- Walk-in complaints/disputes/enquiries shall be registered with customer care satellite offices. Recorded either in the complaints register book and complaints system. This means every employee should take reasonable steps to take complaints/disputes/enquiries from customers and redirect it to the customer care unit.
- Customer care satellite offices situated in all local municipalities must have access to the system at all times in order to register walk-in complaints and other complaints.

- Every complaint/dispute/enquiry must be recorded, a reference number generated and an acknowledgement of receipt given to the complainant.

### **3.2 Assigning a Complaint**

Communication quoting the complaint reference number must be given to the relevant technician/officer/plumber who will carry out the work required to address the complaint. A job card must be issued and marked with the reference number. Depending on the complexity of the matter coupled with the availability of resources, a complaint shall be attended according to the time lines as per customer service charter stipulated as follows:

### **3.3 Water and Sanitation Samples**

- Take drinking water samples monthly in accordance with SANS 241 standards to all designated sampling points in the CHDM water supply schemes.
- Take waste water samples monthly from the final sample point of all waste water treatment works in CHDM in accordance with General and Special Standards Regulation 991 of 1984 governing the Requirements for the Purification of Waste Water or Effluent and the Amended General Authorisations in terms of Section 39 of National Water Act 36 of 1998.
- Monitor quarterly water sources which do not belong to CHDM water supply schemes e.g. Clinics, prisons, boarding schools etc.

### **3.4 Reported Health Outbreaks**

- Respond and attend to all reported outbreaks of any nature within 24 Hours.
- Analyse water samples in the laboratory for water Bacteriological analysis within 24 hours, Chemical analysis within 6 hours, and Physical analysis within 1 hour.
- Instigate communication to alert the community whenever there is noncompliance of drinking water samples, raise awareness to the community on alternative treatment options of water and protection of water resources

### **3.5 Account Disputes**

- Attend and respond to formal queries and/or disputes within 14 days as per the Credit Control Policy and section 95 read in conjunction with 102 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act.

### **3.6 Meter Reading**

- Conduct monthly readings from the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month. In instances where it is not possible to read the meter due to weather, locked gates, obstructions etc., the account will be billed on the average of the past three months measured consumption.

### **3.7 Account Statements**

- Conduct billing monthly between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> and print all statements by 7<sup>th</sup> of every month.
- Accounts are due by 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Interest is chargeable on all amounts not paid by the due date.

### **3.8 Injuries on Municipal Assets**

- The health and safety unit must ensure that anyone reported to have fallen and/or injured him/herself in an open council sewer manhole is taken to clinic, hospital and/or general practitioner depending on the nature of their injury.
- The victim must be sent to a health facility within 30 minutes of the matter being reported.

### **3.9 Interruptions to Water Supply**

In any case of interruptions to water supply and in accordance with the norms and standards for water service provisions, water supply interruptions must be reported to the Municipal Manager's Office and/or customer care unit 7 (seven) days before closure. In instances where water supply is interrupted for a period of more than 24 hours, customers must have access to alternative water supply comprising:

- At least 25 litres of potable water per person, per day; and
- Sanitation services sufficient to protect health.

Where interruptions are **planned**, customers shall be informed within **12 hours** of planned interruption. The customers shall be informed through relevant and effective communication platforms such as; notices, loudhailers or local radio stations, sms etc.

In case where there are **unplanned** interruptions like bursts in water pipelines, CHDM will not be able to warn customers in advance that their water supply will be off. However, CHDM shall respond within **12 hours**. The customer shall be informed

through notices, loudhailers or local radio stations. The customers may as well call 0800 100 100 for an update on the problem.

### **3.10 Water and/or Sewerage Flooding**

- **Internal Flooding into the customer's property/house:** if water and/or sewage from council pipes enters a customer's property, CHDM will endeavour to respond within 2 hrs and offer immediate help. CHDM must ensure that after attending to the problem, the area is left clean and safe.
- **External Flooding into the customer's property/house:** if water and/or sewage from council sewer floods a customer's property externally CHDM endeavours to respond within 4 (five) hours and offer immediate help. CHDM must ensure that after attending to the problem, the area is left clean, healthy and safe.
- **Water Quality:** if a customer complains about health aspects regarding the quality of their water supply, arrangements will be made to respond within 6 hours of the initial contact or by arrangement with the customer. An alternative supply of water for drinking should be provided. Should it be necessary to sample then customers will be informed of the outcome within 5 (five) working days depending on the nature of the tests being carried out. CHDM must endeavour to test and treat water at least once every month.

### **3.11 Areas with no Water Infrastructure**

- CHDM shall ensure that the areas currently not served with water receive alternative source of water supply of at least 25 litres of clean potable water per person per day.
- Areas with seasonal drying of water sources: CHDM shall ensure that the areas with problem of dry water source receive alternative source of water supply of at least 25 litres of clean potable water per person per day.

### **3.12 Unresolved Complaints/Disputes/Enquiries**

- All complaints/disputes/enquiries not resolved within stipulated time frames and/or not to the satisfaction of the customer shall be referred to the Mayoral Committee. The customer may as well write a letter of appeal directly to the Mayor. The Customer Care Unit must submit a report pertaining all

complaints/disputes/enquiries to the Mayoral Committee for further investigation and intervention. The Mayoral Committee's decision is final and binding. There shall be no further investigation with the complaint.

### **3.13 TELEPHONE ETIQUETTES**

We want to create first impression in our switchboard, customer call centre and work stations. To achieve this, the following principles will apply:

- Telephone should be answered within 4 rings or less.
- Each call should be answered using the same greeting. For example, "Thank you for calling Chris Hani District Municipality, Name and Surname speaking, how may I assist you?"
- If applicable, calls transferred from other departments should be answered with your location and name and surname. For example, "Disaster Management Centre, this is (name and surname), how may I assist you?"
- If you must put a caller on hold, you will need to ask them permission to do so. Say "May I please place you on hold?" or "Can you hold a moment please?" If the answer is no, then apologize to the guest and ask if you can get a phone number to call them back when you are not so busy. If that is not acceptable to the guest, then you must finish assisting them.
- When you place a guest/caller on hold, do not allow them to hold for longer than 30 seconds. If this is not possible, inform the guest you might be a few minutes, and ask if they prefer you call them back. If so, obtain the phone number and repeat the number to avoid errors. Additionally, always thank the guest for holding. For example, "Thank you so much for holding, how may I assist you?"
- Personal phone calls should be limited to lunch and break times. If a personal call must be made, it is not permitted to do so in the presence of a guest; any personal calls must be terminated upon the arrival of a guest.
- If you receive a phone call for a manager, please ask the caller's name and what the call is regarding. Next, call the manager's office and brief the manager about the call. Then transfer the call to the office.

### **3.14 Municipal Responsibility**

- Ensure sustainability of water and sanitation services at all times
- Ensure proper management and reliability of water resources
- Build customer satisfaction and an enabling environment for the development of meaningful relationships with all stakeholders
- Build community awareness, knowledge and other skills transfer through active participation and engagement with community structures e.g. CSPs, OP, Ratepayers, business etc.
- Establish fair and just tariff structure that ensures all residents have access to basic water and sanitation
- Ensure the implementation of best management practices in the provision of our services
- Employees must ensure compliance to the complaints management system/procedure
- Employees must always wear the identity tag whenever dealing with customers
- Ensure customers receive accurate monthly accounts and billing information.
- Provide alternative IT solutions for customers to receive communication, accounts and billing information in their preferential platforms.
- Provide free water and sanitation services to indigent households as prescribed by the CHDM indigent policy
- Register, attend to and resolve all complaints within a reasonable time as per the adopted customer service charter
- Resolve accounts and billing related queries within one month of the billing circle
- Minimize the impact on the environment by ensuring efficient operation of our wastewater treatment works.
- Promote the use of alternative water sources for growth and development
- Provide a schedule of days for meter reading per area

- Provide continuous education and awareness on water conservation and usage of our services
- Develop, Review and Enforce bylaws and charge for any contravening

### **3.15 Customers' Responsibility**

- Adhere to all relevant regulations, municipal ordinances, bylaws and water restriction notices
- Be water conservation conscious “save water save money each drop counts”
- Not to dispose foreign objects on the pit latrines (toilet sit)
- Not to flush foreign objects, used oil and materials into the sewer system
- Not to discharge rain / surface water to the sewer system
- Not to dispose foreign objects onto manholes
- To do away with illegal connections-no one is to temper with municipal infrastructure
- Pay for services over and above any free allocation if any.
- To report by-law contravention to the CHDM 24 hour call centre
- Ensure that the water meter and sewer boundary chamber are always accessible

**Please direct all complaints, enquiries, disputes and report a blocked sewer, a burst water main, a leaking pipe etc. to the any of our customer care satellite offices, CHDM 24 hour call centre on 0800 100 100 alternatively email [customercare@chrishanidm.gov.za](mailto:customercare@chrishanidm.gov.za)**