

Example: Self-assessment against the requirements of the Code

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
1: Definition of a service request and complaint	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures.	Yes	<p>The Code gives councils the flexibility to define what constitutes a service request. Most of the “complaints” we receive are actually expressions of dissatisfaction embedded within service requests, which is why our complaints volume data may appear low compared to other local authorities.</p> <p>Each complaint received should be treated on it’s own merits and there may be occasions where the requested outcome constitutes a service request. These may be treated as such, so as to provide a more appropriate response, a faster resolution and/or generally a better experience for the complainant. We may wish to consider applying some wording to this effect on our website and we should consider whether our response to residents should specify whether their case is being treated as a complaint or a service request, with an explanation as to why.</p>

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2: Exclusions	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.	Yes*	<p>Our complaints policy does not specify any exclusions, which implies none exist. This remains compliant with the Code in principle, however it may be advisable to publish a list of exclusions on our website (such as parking appeals or legal matters).</p> <p>Our policy for dealing with unreasonable contact covers scenarios where complaints cannot be managed normally due to poor complainant behaviour and this is accessible via our website and EH intranet.</p>

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3: Accessibility and awareness	We provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and we can make reasonable adjustments where necessary	No	We are almost compliant, however the Code specifies “ <i>where an organisation asks for feedback about its services through a survey, it should provide details of how individuals can complain so they can pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.</i> ” Our Govmetric surveys for web, email and f2f do not currently feature a direct link to our complaints process or any information surrounding it.

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4: Complaint handling resources	We have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed as a core service and resourced accordingly.	No	We have 0.8 FTE dedicated to complaints management within customer services, in addition to the customer service manager role. All other services have nominated complaints champions who are primarily responsible for handling service specific complaints, however this list is not regularly kept up to date and is currently incorrect. Going forward, service managers will need to be accountable for ensuring the comms and customer service teams are kept informed of any changes to complaints ownership.
5: The complaint handling process	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.	Yes*	As mentioned above, we have a policy covering unreasonable contact which is displayed on our website and via the EH intranet. However, this should be reviewed as it has not been amended for the last 3 years - during which time customer behaviour has changed significantly

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6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	No	Under the code, S1 complaints should be acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to within 10 working days of acknowledgement , whereas our website currently states <i>“we will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. An officer from within the service to where the complaint has been directed will investigate and we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days.”</i> Content on the EH intranet support these timescales also.

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6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	No	<p>Under the code, S2 complaints should be acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to within 20 working days of acknowledgement, whereas our website currently offers no timescales whatsoever:</p> <p><i>If you are not satisfied with the response to a stage 1 complaint you can request, either in writing, email or via our on-line form that a further review is undertaken. This will usually be undertaken by a senior manager. In some cases this may be the manager of the officer who provided the stage 1 response or the relevant Head of Service or, in some instances, we may decide that the stage 2 investigation has to be undertaken by a senior manager from a different service area.</i></p> <p>Content on the EH intranet states S2 complaints use the same timescales as S1. It also specifies complainants have 14 days to appeal following</p>

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			<p>their S1 response, of which there is no mention on our website.</p> <p>It is worth noting we will not be impacted by the enforcement of a two-stage process however, as we already use this.</p>
7: Putting things right	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.	Yes*	EH intranet content and our complaints management system provide a letter template, which can be used by responding members of staff. This should be reviewed, with any likely remedial actions included within the template. All of which can be taken directly from the LGSCO code.
8: Performance reporting and self-assessment	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code.	Yes	The self-assessment form is to be reviewed by the customer service manager once every financial year, 24/25 being the first. Any necessary actions from this are to be communicated with Leadership Team, along with the annual performance report.

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9: Scrutiny & Oversight	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.	Yes*	Complaints performance data and insights are shared with HoS. Exec visibility of this could be improved however, with the addition of a complaints section on the monthly customer services dashboard (shared with HoS and Exec Member).