

Self-Assessment against LGSCO Complaints Handling Code – 2026

Complaints Handling Code requirement	Whether met and any recommendations for change
Part 1 – Introduction Sets out benefits of good complaint handlings as part of building a positive relationship between an organisation and service users.	Met and no change required.
Part 2 1 – Definition of a service request and complaint	Proposed change to include definition of service request and confirming that a complaint can be raised even if a service request remains outstanding.
Part 3 2 – Exclusions Ensuring any exclusions are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress and requiring an explanation to be given if the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take this decision to the LGSCO.	Removed reference to service requests not being complaints as clarified in earlier section. Clarified wording on exclusions for SEND and homelessness to confirm this relates to matters where there is a statutory right of review / appeal. Clarified the wording on insurance and legal claims to confirm that the complaints process can be used prior to issue of proceedings in appropriate circumstances. Clarified that whilst policy decisions cannot be challenged by complaint, this does not prevent a complaint about application of a policy.
Part 4 3 – Accessibility and awareness	Policy confirms different methods that can be used and that a representative can make a complaint on behalf of an individual. Added in option to contact individual to clarify aspects of a complaint and give the complainant the option to clearly set out their position and raise any concerns about actual or perceived conflict in relation to who investigates a complaint and that this can happen before Stage 1 if it supports effective resolution.
Part 5 4 – Complaint handling resources	Corporate resources are allocated to complaints and the policy makes clear that feedback is welcomed. A new section on learning and improvement has been added to the policy.
Part 6 5 – The complaint handling process	The stages of the complaint process are set out. Additional detail has been added on the need to use clear and plain language and the

	information that should be set out in a Stage 2 response.
Part 7 6 – Complaints stages	The timelines comply with the Code and additional detail has been added as set out under Part 6.
Part 8 7 – Putting things right	A fuller list of potential remedies has been added, including emphasising the importance of acknowledging any failures. Clarity is provided on timeliness and that communication should be issued if the proposed remedy cannot be delivered. Whilst a financial remedy policy is recommended for Housing Ombudsman complaints, the LGSCO good practice guides are referenced for other complaints, due to the complexity and type of complaints that could be covered.
Part 9 8 – Performance reporting and self-assessment	Annual reporting has been taken to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and a self-assessment published. Reporting to LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman complaints is to be separated to take account of the different arrangements and need to involve tenants in housing management complaints reporting. A new section has been added on learning and improvement, emphasising the importance of annual reporting and that the Leader of the Council will take responsibility for complaints handling overall, with the Lead Member for Housing having responsibility for housing management complaints. This fits with the Leader's responsibility for overall governance.
Part 10 9 – Scrutiny and oversight: continuous learning and improvement	The Monitoring Officer will report on LGSCO complaints on an annual basis in accordance with the statutory functions of that role. This post holder will also regularly update the Leader on complaints reporting, alongside the corporate complaints team. The Council is in the process of updating its Officer Code of Conduct to emphasise the importance of openness and accountability and is intending to add the following: “You should ensure that service requests and complaints are handled fairly, consistently and without defensiveness and support an open culture of complaints and learning.”

