

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	The Council distinguishes between service requests and complaints within its complaints policy, procedures and supporting guidance. Service requests are managed through operational service processes where a request has been made for a service to be delivered or an issue to be resolved. Expressions of dissatisfaction that meet the Council's definition of a complaint are recorded and managed through the formal complaints process. Guidance is available to officers through the Council's complaints procedures and case management system to support the consistent identification, categorisation and handling of complaints. Where appropriate, concerns initially received as service requests may be escalated into the complaints process if the resident remains dissatisfied.

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
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	The Council's Feedback Policy clearly sets out the circumstances in which complaints will not be considered under the corporate complaints process. These exclusions are limited to matters where an alternative statutory, legal or regulatory process exists, or where the issue falls outside the scope of the complaints process. Examples include matters subject to legal proceedings, statutory appeal routes, employment matters, complaints already determined by a court, tribunal or Ombudsman, data protection breaches and Freedom of Information requests. Where the Council determines that a complaint falls outside the scope of the policy, an explanation is provided to the resident. Complainants retain the right to challenge this decision through the relevant Ombudsman, who may direct the Council to accept the complaint where appropriate. The Council seeks to apply exclusions fairly and proportionately to ensure residents are not denied access to redress. Complaints relating to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are not excluded from consideration but are managed through separate statutory complaints procedures.

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	Yes	The Council provides a range of accessible routes through which residents can make a complaint, including online, by email, by telephone, in writing and in person through its Customer Service Centres. Information about how to make a complaint is published within the Council's Feedback Policy and on the Council's website. The Council is committed to ensuring that the complaints process is accessible to all residents. The Feedback Policy specifically recognises that some residents may require additional support when making a complaint and states that reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary. This includes support for residents with disabilities, vulnerabilities or language barriers to ensure equitable access to the complaints process. The Council accepts complaints from representatives, advocates and support persons acting on behalf of residents, subject to appropriate consent arrangements. Additional advocacy support is also signposted for children and young people using Children's Social Care services. The Council's complaints process is designed to ensure that residents do not need to use the word "complaint" for an expression of dissatisfaction to be recognised and considered. Residents who express dissatisfaction are offered the opportunity to have their concern handled through the formal
---------------------------------------	---	------------	---

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			complaints process, regardless of the channel used to contact the Council.

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.	Yes	The Council has a dedicated Feedback and Resolutions Team responsible for overseeing complaint handling across the organisation, supporting services with complaint investigations, providing guidance on complaint handling requirements, monitoring performance and ensuring organisational learning is identified and shared. Complaint handling is recognised as an important element of service delivery and is supported through established policies, procedures, governance arrangements and performance reporting. During 2025/26, the Council continued to strengthen complaint handling arrangements through the implementation of Infreemation, the introduction of enhanced reporting and dashboard functionality, expanded Feedback Forum sessions and strengthened governance arrangements. These improvements have provided greater oversight of complaint performance, Ombudsman outcomes and improvement actions across services. The Council recognises that increasing complaint volumes and performance challenges in some service areas have placed additional demands on complaint handling resources. To address this, targeted improvement activity has been undertaken, including additional temporary resource to support backlog reduction, enhanced monitoring of complaint performance and the introduction of both a Corporate Complaints
--	---	------------	---

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			Improvement Plan and a Housing Complaints Improvement Sub-Plan. The Council is also exploring opportunities to improve efficiency and consistency through enhanced use of technology, reporting tools and responsible AI-enabled solutions to support complaint administration, information management and organisational learning, while maintaining appropriate professional oversight and decision-making

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	The Council operates a single corporate Feedback Policy that sets out how complaints are managed and investigated. The policy adopts the Ombudsman's definition of a complaint and makes clear that a resident does not need to use the word "complaint" for an expression of dissatisfaction to be recognised as such. Residents who express dissatisfaction are given the opportunity to have their concerns considered through the formal complaints process. The Council operates a two-stage complaints procedure for complaints covered by the Code. Complaints are acknowledged, defined and recorded, with residents provided with a clear explanation of the Council's understanding of the complaint, the outcomes sought and any areas requiring clarification. Residents are not required to justify requests to escalate a complaint to Stage 2. Complaints progressing to Stage 2 are reviewed by an officer who was not involved in the original Stage 1 investigation, helping to ensure an appropriate level of independence and impartiality. The Council's policy makes clear that complaint responses should be issued when the Council's position is known, even where outstanding actions remain. Where actions are agreed as part of a complaint resolution, these are monitored and tracked through to completion. The introduction of Infreemation has further strengthened the
---	---	------------	--

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			Council's ability to monitor actions arising from complaints and ensure learning and service improvements are implemented. The Council recognises the importance of resolving concerns as early as possible and uses complaint insight, governance arrangements and organisational learning to help improve services and reduce recurring issues.

6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	Yes	The Council operates a single corporate Feedback Policy that sets out how complaints are managed and investigated. The policy adopts the Ombudsman's definition of a complaint and makes clear that a resident does not need to use the word "complaint" for an expression of dissatisfaction to be recognised as such. Residents who express dissatisfaction are given the opportunity to have their concerns considered through the formal complaints process. The Council operates a two-stage complaints procedure for complaints covered by the Code. Complaints are acknowledged, defined and recorded, with residents provided with a clear explanation of the Council's understanding of the complaint, the outcomes sought and any areas requiring clarification. Residents are not required to justify requests to escalate a complaint to Stage 2. Complaints progressing to Stage 2 are reviewed by an officer who was not involved in the original Stage 1 investigation, helping to ensure an appropriate level of independence and impartiality. The Council's policy makes clear that complaint responses should be issued when the Council's position is known, even where outstanding actions remain. Where actions are agreed as part of a complaint resolution, these are monitored and tracked through to completion. The introduction of Infreemation has further strengthened the
---	---	------------	--

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			Council's ability to monitor actions arising from complaints and ensure learning and service improvements are implemented. The Council recognises the importance of resolving concerns as early as possible and uses complaint insight, governance arrangements and organisational learning to help improve services and reduce recurring issues.

6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	Yes	The Council operates a clearly defined Stage 2 review process within its Feedback Policy. Where a resident remains dissatisfied following receipt of a Stage 1 response, they may request escalation to Stage 2. Residents are not required to justify their request for escalation, although the Council will make reasonable efforts to understand the reasons for ongoing dissatisfaction and the outcomes being sought. Stage 2 complaints are reviewed by an officer who was not involved in the original Stage 1 investigation, helping to ensure independence, objectivity and a fresh review of the issues raised. Complaints are acknowledged, defined and logged within five working days of receipt of the escalation request, and residents are provided with confirmation of the Council's understanding of the complaint and the issues under review. The Council's policy provides for a full written Stage 2 response to be issued within 20 working days of acknowledgement. Where additional time is required, the Council will explain the reason for the delay, provide updates to the complainant and signpost them to the relevant Ombudsman in accordance with the policy. The Council recognises that Stage 2 complaint handling performance during 2025/26 was not consistently at the standard expected across all service areas and that timeliness remains a key area for improvement. To address this, enhanced
--	---	------------	--

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			monitoring, strengthened governance arrangements, performance reporting, backlog reduction activity and the introduction of the Complaints Improvement Plan 2026-2028 have been implemented to improve responsiveness and the quality of complaint handling. Learning from Stage 2 complaints forms an important element of the Council's approach to organisational learning. Escalation trends, Ombudsman findings and learning themes are monitored through governance arrangements and are used to inform service improvement activity across the Council.

7: Putting things right	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.	Yes	The Council is committed to putting things right when complaints identify service failures or where residents have not received the standard of service they should reasonably expect. Complaint investigations focus not only on establishing what happened, but also on identifying appropriate remedies, learning and service improvements. Where complaints are upheld or partially upheld, the Council seeks to provide appropriate remedies based on the circumstances of the case. These may include apologies, explanations, corrective action, service improvements, reconsideration of decisions, practical resolutions or financial redress where appropriate. Complaint responses clearly explain the outcome of the investigation and any actions that will be taken to address identified issues. The Council's Feedback Policy makes clear that complaint responses should be issued when the Council's position is known, even where agreed actions remain outstanding. Actions arising from complaints are subsequently monitored and tracked to completion. The introduction of Infreemation has strengthened the Council's ability to record, assign and monitor actions arising from complaints, providing greater oversight of service improvements and organisational learning. Learning from complaints forms a key part of the Council's approach to service improvement. During 2025/26, complaint investigations identified
---------------------------------------	--	------------	---

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			learning relating to communication, service coordination, repairs processes, complaint handling and compliance with complaint procedures. These learning themes have informed service improvement activity, the Corporate Complaints Improvement Plan and the Housing Complaints Improvement Sub-Plan. The Council also monitors compliance with Ombudsman recommendations and agreed remedies. During 2025/26, the Council achieved 100% compliance with Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman recommendations and continued to strengthen oversight of Ombudsman orders, recommendations and learning actions through enhanced governance arrangements.

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 Council is committed to putting things right when complaints identify service failures or where residents have not received the standard of service they should reasonably expect. Complaint investigations focus not only on establishing what happened, but also on identifying appropriate remedies, learning and service improvements. Where complaints are upheld or partially upheld, the Council seeks to provide appropriate remedies based on the circumstances of the case. These may include apologies, explanations, corrective action, service improvements, reconsideration of decisions, practical resolutions or financial redress where appropriate. Complaint responses clearly explain the outcome of the investigation and any actions that will be taken to address identified issues. The Council's Feedback Policy makes clear that complaint responses should be issued when the Council's position is known, even where agreed actions remain outstanding. Actions arising from complaints are subsequently monitored and tracked to completion. The introduction of Infreemation has strengthened the Council's ability to record, assign and monitor actions arising from complaints, providing greater oversight of service improvements and organisational learning. Learning from complaints forms a key part of the Council's approach to service improvement. During 2025/26, complaint investigations identified
---	---	------------	---

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			learning relating to communication, service coordination, repairs processes, complaint handling and compliance with complaint procedures. These learning themes have informed service improvement activity, the Corporate Complaints Improvement Plan and the Housing Complaints Improvement Sub-Plan. The Council also monitors compliance with Ombudsman recommendations and agreed remedies. During 2025/26, the Council achieved 100% compliance with Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman recommendations and continued to strengthen oversight of Ombudsman orders, recommendations and learning actions through enhanced governance arrangements.

9: Scrutiny & Oversight	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.	Yes	The Council has established governance and oversight arrangements to ensure complaint handling performance receives appropriate senior management and political oversight. Complaint performance is monitored through regular reviews by service leadership teams, monthly Housing Services performance meetings, quarterly reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team and annual reporting to Cabinet. These arrangements provide oversight of complaint volumes, performance trends, Ombudsman outcomes, Complaint Handling Failure Orders, learning actions and progress against improvement plans. During 2025/26, the Council strengthened its governance arrangements to improve accountability, increase organisational oversight and ensure complaint performance receives sustained focus. Complaint handling performance, Ombudsman findings and organisational learning are now subject to enhanced monitoring and challenge through established governance forums. The Council's Annual Feedback and Resolutions Report provides Cabinet with an overview of complaint performance, Ombudsman activity, learning from complaints and service improvement activity. Following consideration by Cabinet, a Governing Body Response is published alongside the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment and associated improvement plans, ensuring transparency and accountability.
------------------------------------	--	------------	--

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
			The Council has also introduced a Complaints Improvement Plan 2026-2028 and a dedicated Housing Complaints Improvement Sub-Plan. Progress against these plans is monitored through governance arrangements and performance reporting, enabling senior leaders to oversee improvement activity and intervene where performance concerns are identified. Organisational learning forms a central part of the Council's oversight framework. Learning arising from complaints, complaint escalations and Ombudsman decisions is reviewed, shared and monitored to ensure service improvements are implemented and that complaint insight informs decision-making across the organisation.