

Appendix B – Self Assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord’s governing body annually. Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory ‘must’ requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

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Section 1 – Definition of a complaint

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents'	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy applies this definition.
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy references that 'customers do not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.
1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy paragraph 5 states that, 'if someone wants to make a complaint, it should always be dealt with as a complaint'.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	<p>The Council's Complaint Policy references that complaints will be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so and makes clear the representations that cannot be accepted and the reasons for this, including for example complaints about legal claims. Full details can be found in the Council's Complaint policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service requests • Claims for damages/compensation • Complaints that are more than 12 months old • Appeals to Tribunals

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous Appeals • Complaints that have already been investigated • Complaints about council staff • Personnel Matters • Housing Association or Registered Social Landlord complaints • Tenancy Management Organisation • Penalty Charge Notices • Initial reports of noise and neighbourhood nuisance • Legal Disrepair Claims • Data Protection and Freedom of Information • Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy (January 2021) • Children and Adult Social Care Statutory respective complaints procedure • Complaints about Councillors • Educational establishments
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy (as referenced at 1.7 above).
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	This information is set out in the Council's Complaint Policy as referenced at point 6.

Best practice 'should' requirement

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a service request, where a resident may be unhappy with a situation that they wish to have rectified, and a complaint about the service they have/have not received.	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy sets out examples of a service request and how these differentiate from a complaint. The policy also details how to submit a service request online or by telephone.
1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	A feedback survey link is provided on all stage 1 responses provided by the housing feedback service, the information from which is shared with operational staff.

Section 2 – Accessibility and awareness

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	The Council's Complaint Policy advises that complaints can be made online, in person, by email or by letter.
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding	Yes	Accessibility pages and statement website Accessibility Complaints will be accepted in any format and/or language.
2.4	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	There is a dedicated online link to the complaints process which includes the council's complaints policy.
2.5	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets	Yes	The Council is committed to ensuring that its services are relevant to the needs of all sections of the community and that everyone has access to services, irrespective of race, heritage, gender, religious or non-religious belief, nationality, family background, age, disability, sex, and sexuality. The council's complaint policy makes specific

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.		reference to Equality and Diversity considerations.
2.6	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	The council has a complaints page on its website. There are links to the Ombudsman Service on the complaint website and details of the Ombudsman is included in any relevant correspondence.
2.7	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	Links to the Ombudsman are available online and all written correspondence provide contact details for the Ombudsman which includes website details and telephone contact number.
2.8	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	Reference is made to the Housing Ombudsman at the stage 2 acknowledgment stage and contact details are set out in the council's complaint policy.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	The council's complaints policy sets out how complaints should be handled where a complaint is received by social media and how confidentiality will be maintained.

Section 3 – Complaint handling personnel

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	The council's complaints process allows for stage 1 complaints to be dealt with by the relevant service's customer service advisor and all stage 2 complaints are co-ordinated and investigated by principal complaint officers in the Corporate Central Complaints Team (CCCT).
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	Council employees who investigate complaints will have experience in complaint handling and responses. Officers undertake a range of training, including attending LGSCO and HO training when availability exists. There is an expectation that complaint officers' investigations and subsequent responses are fair and evidenced-based. The stage 2 complaint officers will have no previous involvement in a complaint allocated to them.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	<p>Complaint handlers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be able to act sensitively and fairly• Be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents• Have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints• Have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.	Yes	The council has significant number of very experienced and skilled officers.

Section 4 – Complaint handling principles

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure within five days of receipt.	Yes	The council's complaint policy reflects the Housing Ombudsman guidelines of a 2-stage approach prior to escalation to the Housing Ombudsman. The council's complaint policy specifies that 'Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this.'
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	In progress	As part of a robust plan to improve our response to complaints, we are in the process of reviewing and improving our acknowledgement letters to ensure they are fully compliant. Stage 2 letters comply. Stage 1 letters in progress, however it is usual practice to telephone the complainant following receipt of a complaint to confirm understanding of complaint issues.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	See 3.2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.7	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with complaints on their merits • act independently and have an open mind • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest • consider all information and evidence carefully • keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter. 	Yes	<p>All staff responsible for housing complaints handling have completed the Housing Ombudsman's two online training modules.</p> <p>These modules have been added to the online induction training for all new H&N staff, regardless of whether or not they are directly responsible for handling complaints. Stage 2 complaints officers will not of had any involvement in the complaint they are investigating.</p>
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	Where the resident has specified a preferred method of communication, this will be factored in as part of any communications during the investigation.
4.12	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out their position • comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made. 	Yes	Both stages of the council's complaint process allow for the resident to set out their position irrespective of the reporting medium they access. As a natural part of the process, where adverse findings may exist these would, wherever possible, be discussed prior to the final response being completed.
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	Yes	The Council's Complaints Policy states that requests for escalation of a complaint from stage 1 to stage 2 must be made within one month of the date of the stage 1 response. It acknowledges however that there may be extenuating circumstances such as an illness, hospitalisation, or travel outside the country that prevent a complainant from asking

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			for their complaint to be escalated within the one-month period. These extenuating circumstances will be taken into account by the council and the timescales extended accordingly to ensure complainants are treated fairly.
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	All complaints are accepted and investigated unless they fall under any of the special exemption categories specified in the council's complaint policy. An escalation from stage 1 to stage 2 will seek to establish which aspects of the complaint the resident is dissatisfied with and any additional supporting evidence. The reasons for not accepting a complaint are set out at 3.1 of the complaint policy.
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared	Yes	At both stage 1 and stage 2 an electronic file is created which includes the original complaint, and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.
4.18	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint	Yes	The Council's Unreasonable Behaviour Complainant Policy complies with this aspect of the code.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.3	Landlords should manage residents' expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic	Yes	Stage 1 and 2 responses set out at the parameters of the investigation within the scope of the complaints policy.
4.4	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	The council's complaint policy references the importance of resolving any complaint early and where there is opportunity to do so before a formal procedure is initiated, this is encouraged.
4.5	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	Complaints are accepted where an individual has a representative.
4.8	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	Consultation with the council's legal department, together with policies and procedures pertaining to legislation and good practice guidance inform stage 1 and stage 2 investigations and subsequent responses, which will, if appropriate make reference to the sources of information that have informed a response.
4.9	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	Standard practice is that reference to staff would be in the context of their roles and responsibilities only, although on occasions, staff are known to the resident either through regular contact or dialogue and reference to the name, gives clarity

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
			to the complaint response.
4.10	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	Acknowledgment of a stage 1 complaint is sent to the customer within 5 days and 3 calendar days for the stage 2 process. Where there is a delay we will write to the resident with an explanation and a clear timeframe for when the response will be received.
4.16	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Partial	<p>The council's Housing Feedback Team provides a feedback link when the stage 1 response is provided.</p> <p>Stage 2 - in the process of developing a feedback mechanism as part of the Council's complaint handling improvement plan.</p>
4.17	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained	Yes	<p>Learning from complaints is shared in several ways across the council and includes self-identified learning by service, determination findings, including maladministration and service failure. A revised learning from complaints template will form part of the quarterly complaint performance data report and the cross-council complaint leads group provides another forum of sharing learning and good practice.</p> <p>Learning from complaints also informs policy changes and/or policy clarifications.</p>
4.19	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the	Yes	The Council's Unreasonable Behaviour Complainant Policy complies with this aspect of the code.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	provisions of the Equality Act 2010.		

Section 5 – Complaint stages

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	The council's complaints policy clearly states our target response times and are aligned with the Complaint Handling Code. Stage 1 responses consistently achieve in excess of 95% timeliness. Stage 2 responses consistently achieve in excess of 95% timeliness.
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Where outstanding actions are identified these will be diarised for tracking and relevant service advised as part of the stage 1 and stage 2 response content.
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	All points are addressed and where part of the complaint is exempt from the complaints process, this will be explained and where appropriate a hyperlink or email contact provided. Policies, information handbooks or similar resources will be attached as part of the response. Where reference to legislation is relevant, this will also be included.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.8	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint stage • The decision on the complaint • The reasons for any decisions made • The details of any remedy offered to put things right • Details of any outstanding action • Details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer 	Yes	Each of these aspects are set out in stage 1 responses.

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	<p>If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.</p>	Yes	<p>All complaints are accepted and investigated unless they fall under any of the special exemption categories specified in the council's complaint policy. An escalation from stage 1 to a stage 2 will be accepted and will seek to establish which aspects of the complaint the resident is dissatisfied with and any additional supporting evidence. The reasons for not accepting a complaint are set out at 3.1 of the complaint policy.</p>
5.10	<p>On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for</p>	Yes	<p>Council's complaint policy requests the resident sets out the reasons for escalation together with reason of dissatisfaction at stage 1 and any additional supporting evidence and/or documentation.</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.		
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	The complaints policy is clear on our 2-stage process and when a resident can request an escalation.
5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	The CCCT who undertakes stage 2 complaints operate across all directorates across the council and for impartiality, will not have prior involvement in the matter.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	The council takes the complaints of residents seriously and as such improved stage 2 response timelines with 95% responses within 20 days and zero complaints exceeding a 10 days agreed timeframe.
5.16	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint stage • The complaint definition • The decision on the complaint • The reasons for any decisions made • The details of any remedy offered to put things right • Details of any outstanding actions <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the landlord has a third stage, details of how to 	Yes	<p>There is an agreed template for stage 2 responses which includes how to contact the Housing Ombudsman once the council's complaint process has concluded.</p> <p>A third stage is not adopted by the council.</p>

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	<p>escalate the matter to stage three</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied 		

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.17	<p>Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.</p>	Not applicable	The complaints policy only consists of 2 stages.
5.20	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint stage The complaint definition The decision on the complaint The reasons for any decisions made The details of any remedy offered to put things right Details of any outstanding actions Details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains 	Not applicable	The complaints policy only consists of 2 stages.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	dissatisfied		

Best practice 'should' requirements

Stage 1

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Once the investigation has started, the complaint officer will contact the relevant parties to discuss when the need for an extension has arisen and to ensure quality is not compromised.
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	Yes	This is referenced in the Council's Complaint Policy.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	Investigations are thorough and where relevant will draw on previous findings and/or reports.
5.7	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the	Yes	This is referenced in the Council's Complaint Policy.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.		

Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Complaint officers will contact the resident where a response will exceed the 10 working days and explain the rationale for making such a request and seeking agreement to do so.
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response	Yes	This is referenced in the Council's Complaint Policy.

Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date	N/A	The complaints policy only consists of 2 stages.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.		
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response.	N/A	The complaints policy only consists of 2 stages.

Section 6 – Putting things right

Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	Both stage 1 and stage 2 responses set out the original complaint and through information acquired including, telephone recordings, emails, written documents, and photographic evidence will provide an evidenced-based response and against each point of the complaint state action to remedy either in the form of ensuring service failure is rectified, impact on day to day environment, time and inconvenience incurred and/or financial compensation, both with a date by which these will be made available.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	Refer to 6.1
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Refer to 6.1
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due,	Yes	Compensation awards will take into account all aspects of the complaint and its subsequent findings. The

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused		response will set out what each compensation award is for and the basis on which it is made.

Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	Where learning is identified this will be identified to service and/or where a procedure or policy would benefit from review subject to it being proportionate to an individual finding.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded	Yes	Where legal advice is prudent and necessary to the response, this will be sought from the council's legal team.

Section 7 – Continuous learning and improvement

Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels	Yes	Learning from complaints is shared in several ways across the council and includes self-identified learning by service, determination findings, including maladministration and service failure. A revised learning template will form part of the quarterly complaint performance data report and the cross-council complaint leads group provides another forum of sharing learning and good practice. Learning from complaints also informs policy changes and/or clarifications. As part of the strategic improvement plan for 2023 frequency of reporting to corporate management board, and performance scrutiny board will be strengthened WEF 1 April 2023.

Best practice ‘should’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord’s complaint handling performance.	Yes	The Corporate Director and Lead Member are responsible for supporting a positive complaints culture. This is supported by a newly established complaints board.
7.4	As a minimum, governing bodies should receive:	Yes	

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge. 		<p>The Council has a comprehensive improvement plan, scrutinised by a complaint board who meet weekly. The undertakings include the review of actions needed to ensure the Council fully complies with the HO code requirement.</p> <p>Complaint handling report is presented at Corporate Management Board.</p> <p>The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly Corporate Performance Reports and considers complaints issues through this item.</p>
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	The cross-council complaint leads group established in October 2022 provides a forum for complaint learning and identifying key themes. Reports are also produced for the Corporate Management Board. 7.4 above also refers.
7.6	<p>Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving 	Yes	We expect all staff to collaborate and cooperate across services and teams, to demonstrate professional values under the council's Dignity for All policy and underpinned through its care values.

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
	<p>complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others • Act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing. 		

Section 8 – Self-assessment and compliance

Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply yes/no	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	The council completed a self-assessment in November 2021 and updated that self-assessment in February 2023.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	Yes	This requirement is noted, there has not been any significant restructures pertaining directly to the council’s complaints response and/or process.
8.3	<p>Following each self-assessment, a landlord must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members • Publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents • Include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance 	Yes	<p>The self-assessment is uploaded onto the council’s website.</p> <p>As part of our improvements in governance the Corporate Management Board and Elected Members(s) annual report will include performance against the self-assessment.</p>