

SELF ASSESSMENT FORM

This self-assessment form was completed by the complaint's officer/ team.

Evidence is included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations is 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.

Section 1 – Definition of a complaint

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2/1.4	Complaints are defined in line with the Code and we recognise the difference between a service request and a complaints	Yes	All staff handling complaints receive training to recognise a complaint and a service request. This is also identified in our Corporate Complaints Policy
1.3	Complaints submitted via a third party or representative are handled in line with our Complaints Policy	Yes	Our internal Complaints process guidance for staff, advises of the process to obtain a Third Party disclosure. Our revised Complaints Policy and website page will reflect this once they have been finalised and agreed in the approvals process (they are currently part way through this process).
1.5	Individuals completing surveys are made aware of how to make a complaint	No	Our Communications team will be updating our Surveys webpage terms and conditions to reflect this.

Section 2 – Exclusions

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Our policy clearly states that complaints will be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	This can be found in our Complaints Policy
2.2	Complaints are accepted when referred to us within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issues	No	Our revised Complaints Policy will be reflecting this as it currently states 6 months
2.3	We do not exclude complaints about safeguarding, or health and safety issues	Yes	This can be found in our Complaints Policy
2.4	Our policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter might not be considered or escalated.	Yes	This can be found in our Complaints Policy
2.5	Where we decline to consider a complaint we explain our reasons to the individual and signpost them to the relevant Ombudsman	Yes	This can be found in our Complaints Policy, although we will also signpost customers to other relevant bodies where necessary e.g. Planning Inspectorate

Section 3 – Accessibility and Awareness

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	We provide different channels through which individuals can make a complaint. We have considered our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipated the needs of individuals who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints Policy, customers can complain in person, via email, website, telephone, social media, letter
3.2	Individuals can raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. This includes	Yes	Complaints Policy. Covered in ongoing staff training in managing complaints

	complaints made directly to the organisation via social media. All staff are aware of the complaint process and able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person.		
3.3	We do not view high volumes of complaints as a negative. We analyse areas where there are low volumes of complaints to ensure individuals are able to complain	Yes/No	We do not view high volumes of complaints as a negative as we use this information to learn and improve our services. Analysis of low volumes and what the reasons may be will be captured when feedback is obtained from service areas prior to the annual report.
3.4	Our complaints policy is available in a clear and accessible format for all individuals. The policy is published on our website.	Yes	Dacorum Borough Council Complaints Policy 2022 (An updated version of this policy is currently in the approvals process.)
3.5	Our complaints policy explains how we will publicise details of the complaints policy and information about the relevant Ombudsman schemes.	Yes	Complaints Policy
3.6	We give individuals the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with us.	Yes	Internal complaints process guidance. Added in the new draft complaints policy
3.7	We provide individuals with information on their right to access the relevant Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the relevant Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy and also added on the template extension of time and Stage 2 template letters

Section 4 – Complaint Handling Staff

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	We have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for the complaint handling process, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring that complaints are reported to our governing body (or equivalent).	Yes	There is a corporate complaints team within the organisation and an individual named for Ombudsman contacts
4.2	The complaints officer has access to staff at all levels to facilitate the quick resolution of complaints and report on complaint handling performance. They have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.	Yes	Complaints team have regular contact with staff at all levels and report regularly at senior leadership meetings
4.3	We prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All staff are suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. Complaints teams are seen as a core service and not given additional roles that impact their ability to handle complaints effectively.	Yes	The complaints team are seen as a core service Lessons learnt from complaints is captured and fed into the Tenants Voice report

Section 5 – Complaint Handling Process

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code	Yes	Complaints Policy
5.2	We do not have extra named stages (such as 'stage '0' or 'informal complaint')	Yes	Complaints Policy states the stages we have, these are Stage 1 and Stage 2
5.3	We register complaints when an individual expresses dissatisfaction. We then set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes	Yes	Internal complaints process guidance

	the individual is seeking. We seek clarification from individuals if the complaint is unclear		
5.4	Our complaint handlers: a) clarify with the individual any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about; b) deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; c) give individuals a fair chance to set out their position; d) take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and e) consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	Internal process for dealing with complaints
5.5	We are clear with individuals about which aspects of the complaint we are not responsible for	Yes	Complaints Policy and in the acknowledgement back to the customer where will explain why we are not responsible, if outside our remit.
5.6	Our communication with individuals does not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	Only if this is relevant to the complaint
5.7	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in the Code we agree with individual suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy, internal process guidance for staff and ongoing staff training
5.8	We make reasonable adjustments for individuals where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. We keep a record of agreed reasonable adjustments and keep these under review	Yes	Our corporate complaints system has the ability to add a customer note
5.9	We do not refuse to escalate complaints unless there are valid reasons for doing so.	Yes	Complaints policy
5.10	We keep a full record of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This includes the original complaint and the date received, all	Yes	Corporate complaints system and back office systems. We will look to make

	correspondence with the individual, correspondence with other parties and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.		improvements when we design the new Complaints module in our Digital Platform
5.11	We have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of our complaints process.	Yes	Complaints policy
5.12	We have a policy and procedure in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from individuals and/or their representatives. We are able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and keep these restrictions under review. Restrictions are subject to an annual review as a minimum.	Yes	Draft policy due to be approved and launched

Section 6 – Complaint Stages

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	We have processes in place that allow us to identify whether complaints can be responded to quickly or whether they require further consideration	Yes	Complaints policy and internal process.
6.2	We take account of the complexity of the complaint and whether individuals are vulnerable or at risk when deciding how quickly we should respond to a complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy and internal process.
6.3	Complaints are acknowledged and logged within five working days of receipt.	Yes	Stated in our Policy
6.4	We issue a final response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged	Yes	Complaints Policy

	made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.		
6.12	We have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of our complaints process.	Yes	
6.13	We progress complaints to stage 2 where all or part of the complaint has not been resolved to the individual's satisfaction. This is sent by a staff-member authorised to speak on behalf of the organisation	Yes	Complaints Policy
6.14	Requests for stage 2 are acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of receipt.	Yes	
6.15	Individuals do not have to explain their reasons for wanting a stage 2, simply that they remain unhappy.	Yes	
6.16	Stage 2 consideration is a review of the adequacy of the stage 1 response as well as any new and relevant information not previously considered. Stage 2 is not a more thorough, detailed investigation of the complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy
6.17	If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we ask the individual for clarification. On receipt of the escalation request, we set out our understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking	Yes	Yes, internal process
6.18	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 is never the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaint Policy

6.19	We respond to the stage 2 reviews within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated by the individual.	Yes	Complaints Policy
6.20	Extensions to the timescale for a response do not exceed 20 working days.	No	Amended in the internal process documents
6.21	When we inform an individual about an extension to stage 2 timescales they are provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman.	Yes	Template letter provided
6.22	We confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the relevant Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	Template letter provided
6.23	If a complaint is upheld at stage 1, and the stage 2 response agrees with those findings, we record the complaint as upheld. This is the case even if the stage 2 response finds no fault in the way the stage 1 complaint was handled.	Yes	
6.24	Our complaint process has no more than two stages	Yes	Complaints policy
6.25	Complaints handled by third parties on our behalf (e.g contractors) follow the two stage process set out in the code. Individuals are not expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	

6.26	We ensure that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code	Yes	All complaints handled by council departments follow the code
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Section 7 – Putting it Right

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.1	Where something has gone wrong we acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right.	Yes	Template letters and guidance
7.2	Remedies offered reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Housing Compensation Policy and draft corporate remedies guidance
7.3	Remedies offered clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the individual where appropriate. Any remedy proposed is followed through to completion.	Yes	Template letters and guidance
7.4	Remedies take account of the guidance on remedies issued by the relevant Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Housing Compensation Policy

Section 8 – Self Assessment, Reporting and Compliance

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which include: a) the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the	No	Annual report will be produced this year.

	<p>organisation's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;</p> <p>c) any findings of noncompliance with this Code;</p> <p>d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</p> <p>e) any annual report about the organisation's performance from the relevant Ombudsman; and</p> <p>f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the relevant Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.</p>		
8.2	<p>Our annual complaints performance and service improvement report is reported to our governing body (or equivalent) and published to residents. The governing body's response to the report</p>	No	Annual report will be produced this year

Section 9 – Scrutiny and Over-sight: continuous learning and improvement

Code section	Code requirements	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
9.1	We look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether any service improvements should be made as a result of any learning.	Yes	
9.2	We use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	

9.3	We report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in an annual report and more frequently to other stakeholders, such as individuals, staff and relevant committees or panels.	Yes/No	Annual report to be produced this year. Individual reports produced throughout the year to senior management
9.4	A suitably senior executive oversees our complaint handling performance. They assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision	Yes	Senior Management aware of performance throughout the year
9.5	A member of the governing body (or equivalent) has been appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture.	Yes	
9.6	The appointed person ensures the governing body (or equivalent) receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. This person has access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Monthly KPI data provided
9.7	Our governing body (or equivalent) receives the information required under this section of the Code.	Yes	
9.8	We have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to: 1. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments. B. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others and c. act within the	Yes	New behaviours launched will be included in annual appraisals.

	professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.		
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