

Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 23/24

Leicester City Council

Introduction

Leicester City Council serves circa 368,000 citizens and manages high levels of customer contact. In 2023/24, the organisation received nearly 426,000 calls and handled nearly 90,000 emails or webforms in respect of providing support and assistance through our customer services function. There are other services who manage their own contact directly and on which we don't hold data and information about.

During the same period, the Council received 2,023 corporate complaint related contacts. As the Council takes its responsibility for managing complaints very seriously, this annual report not only sets out how those contacts have been handled, but also explores the reasons behind the complaints and makes recommendations around future service improvements.

This is the first annual report of this nature and in the current format, and therefore no information exists from previous years that can be used to create a reliable point in time by which the current performance can be compared.

The Councils Executive Team, including Assistant City Mayor Councillor Vi Dempster with responsibility for the handling of complaints, have noted the report, the self-assessments, and the proposed improvement actions (page 8).

Complaints handling

The council operates a corporate complaints policy which can be found here - <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/>.

This policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the council about matters that are covered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman, as well as how the Council handles compliments, comments and complaints.

It also sets out what is not covered by this policy. This includes the following:

- Complaints about adult social care, such as a delay in the Council making arrangements with a care agency following an assessment of social care needs, or if some information has not been taken into account as part of a care review, have a dedicated process and team in place so these can be handled.
- Complaints about children's social care by or about children, such as where a social worker may have failed to progress actions recommended at a child protection conference within the specified timeframe, or a child who is looked after by the local authority has requested contact with family members on a number of occasions and this has not been progress, also have a dedicated process and team in place so these can be handled.
- Complaints about elected officials are handled by the Council's Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee.

- Complaints about school matters, such as those that relate to bullying, discipline, uniform or school outings, or the educational provision at school, should be lodged with the school leadership team, usually the headteacher.

The Council is also unable to deal with complaints that are considered outside of our control. This includes matters of law or central government policy, where the customer or the council has started legal proceedings on the matter, complaints that have already been decided by a court, independent tribunal or Ombudsman, or where another organisation is the key decision-maker in respect of a matter.

Because of that policy provision, complaints about these matters are also outside the scope of this report.

Complaints definition and procedures

Corporate complaints covered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The council currently defines a corporate complaint as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of our services; or lack of resolution by the council, its staff, contractors or volunteers that requires a response that you have been unable to resolve with the service directly in the first instance.”

This may include but is not limited to things like unreasonable behaviour or conduct by a council employee towards an individual, poor quality service provision, or where a stated policy or procedure has not been followed correctly.

Generally, issues brought to the council for the first time are dealt with as a service request and are not processed as a complaint. However, these are escalated to a formal complaint if the resident/customer remains unsatisfied.

For these complaints we have a one-stage process in place, and which means that we:

- Acknowledge the complaint within five working days and advise how we will deal with it.
- Allocate the complaint to a complaints officer independent of the service in question.
- An investigation will take place, conducted by the complaints officer, who will investigate with the service concerned.
- Usually seek to conclude our investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint.
- Inform the complainant if we need to extend the response deadline where there is good cause to do so.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our investigation and explain what we have done to resolve the matter.
- Try to reach a resolution (i.e., where a solution has been actioned) within 10 weeks of the complaint being received.

Housing complaints covered by the Housing Ombudsman

The council currently defines complaints of this nature as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.”

For these complaints we have a two-stage process in place, and which means that at stage one we:

- Acknowledge the complaint within five working days and advise how we will deal with it.
- Allocate the complaint to a complaints officer independent of the service in question.
- An investigation will take place, conducted by the complaints officer, who will investigate with the service concerned.
- Usually seek to conclude our investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint.
- Inform the complainant if we need to extend the response deadline where there is good cause to do so.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our investigation and explain what we have done to resolve the matter.

At stage two we:

- Acknowledge that it will be handled in line with our second stage procedure.
- Allocate it to another independent complaints officer within three working days.
- Liaise directly with the Head of Service concerned.
- Aim to conclude a full stage two investigation within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our stage two investigation and, where necessary, explain what we have done to resolve the matter.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can escalate their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman.

2023/24 corporate and housing complaints overview

In summary:

- A total of 2023 complaint enquiries were received by the Corporate Complaints team.
- Of those, 1055 (%) were about housing ombudsman related matters and 923 (%) were corporate or LGSCO related matters.
- The remaining 45 (%) are comments or compliments.
- 1,025 of those were triaged as service requests and matters that could be immediately actioned, comments or compliments about the council and our services, or not suitable for the complaints procedure for some other reason consistent with our policy position.

- The remaining 999 were accepted as complaints. Of which, 609 (%) were about housing ombudsman related matters and 390 (%) were about LGSCO related matters.
- Of these 609 housing related complaints, 116 of these were escalated to Stage Two.

The council further sub-categorises these complaints as follows:

	Corporate Complaint	Housing Complaint - Stage 1	Housing Complaint - Stage 2
Anti-social behaviour	3	11	3
Blue badges	2		
Bus passes	2		
Cemeteries	0		
Council premises	4	11	2
Council vehicles and drivers	1		
Culture, leisure centres and library services	10		
Customer services	6	5	0
Housing applications and homelessness	8	87	4
Housing benefits and council tax support	27	5	0
Housing rent	1	9	2
Housing repairs	5	186	34
Member of staff	12	27	6
Parking and permits	16	3	0
Parks and green spaces	2	1	0
Pest control	1	4	1
Planning	11	2	0
Plants, trees and verges	4	1	0
Right to buy	1	5	3
Roads, pavements, streetlights	6		
Street cleaning and litter collection	4		
Vehicle fines and enforcement	4		
Waste collection, rubbish, and recycling	8		
Other	252	252	60
Totals	390	609	115

The council aims to acknowledge all complaints within no more than 5 days of receipt. The table below shows our performance towards that requirement.

	Acknowledged		
	Complaints Received	On Time	%
Housing Complaint	609	586	96.2
Corporate Complaint	390	366	93.8

The council aims to have investigated and responded to all stage 1 complaints within 10 working days, or by the agreed extended deadline. The table below shows our performance towards that requirement.

	Stage 1 - Complaint Responses		
	Complaints Received	On Time	%
Corporate Complaint	390	333	85.4
Housing Complaint	609	499	81.9

The council aims to have investigated and responded to all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days, or by the agreed deadline. The table below shows our performance towards that requirement.

	Stage 2 - Complaint Responses		
	Complaints Received	On Time	%
Housing Complaint	114	95	83.3

Complaints upheld

Our current case management software, together with our complaints handling arrangements, mean that we are not able to reliably report on the number of complaints upheld.

Measuring upheld complaints would allow the council to be more focused and targeted in directing improvement actions where service faults have been identified, therefore enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of actions identified to provide better quality customer experience.

2023/24 Ombudsman complaints overview

The LGSCO and the HO are independent organisations providing impartial reviews of citizen complaints. Whilst most complaints come under the LGSCO's remit, the HO deals with social housing related complaints. The Ombudsman decision is final, bringing the complaint to a close. There are 2 stages for Ombudsman complaints:

- Preliminary Enquiry: Ombudsman requests original complaint and LCC responses (first and final stages). Depending on their findings they may decide to investigate the complaint further (see below).
- Investigation Request: Ombudsman conducts investigation (often escalation from Preliminary Enquiry stage) resulting in Ombudsman final decision, actions for Local Authority etc.

Every year, the LGSCO issues an annual letter to the Council summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with in each Council that year. The latest letter covers complaints to Leicester City Council between April 2022 and March 2023 (2022/23), though it should be noted one is due imminently for the 2023/24 period. That letter can be found in Appendix 3.

Our own held data for the 2023/24 period indicates that 99 complaints were investigated and responded to by the Ombudsmen, though that is not to say they all come from complaints received by the council in 23/24. That is because ombudsmen complaints often run across multiple years depending on the time taken by them for assessment and (where relevant) investigation of the complaint.

Of the 99 ombudsmen complaints received in 2023/24, 20 of those are from the HO. 7 of those complaints were upheld in favour of the complainant, 8 not upheld, and 5 are still outstanding. A total of nearly £7,000 was ordered to be paid in compensation. The remaining 79 were from the LGSCO, with 16 upheld in favour of the complainant, 54 not upheld, and 8 are still outstanding. A total of nearly £8.5k was ordered to be paid in compensation.

The upheld HO and LGSCO complaints related to the following matters – the condition of property on allocation, delays in completing housing repairs, delays in assessing homelessness circumstances, housing register applications, complaints handling delays, the handling of Anti-Social Behaviour reports, outdated Anti-Social Behaviour policies, and the handling of a Right To Buy application. Where the HO instructed resolutions, these have been completed. Mostly, these related to resolutions in-service.

It should be noted that a significant proportion of the LGSCO complaints related to matters outside the scope of this report, and in particular matters of Childrens and Adults Social Care, or Schools.

Improvement actions

Processing

- Consider setting a KPI target for the handling of all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.
- Refresh the way complaints are allocated, preferably by council Division and Service area so the recording of complaints better reflects the way the council is structured.
- Create improved complaints handling sub-categories so more meaningful management information can be captured that tells us more about the nature of the complaints we receive.
- Update the council's complaints policy so it reflects the HO and LGSCO complaints handling code requirements regarding the complaint definition and stages of complaint handling.
- Standardise the use of the complaints system so that all complaints officers follow the same processes, which in turn gives more reliability to the management information extracted from it.
- Ensure all our main council satisfaction surveys include, where possible, information about how to complain.

Governance

- Make clear the councils Executive Team lead for all corporate complaints related matters.

Behaviours & Improvements

- Immediately review the learning possible from all Ombudsmen complaints that have been upheld against us.
- Put a plan in place that shows how we will improve the qualitative analysis of complaints that we receive.
- Agree and document a proper approach to reviewing service improvement and learning opportunities that arise from complaint investigations.
- Develop and implement a standardised arrangement for the recording, tracking, and monitoring of the completion of complaint resolutions.
- Provide updated guidance to all Divisions and services regarding the council's complaints policy, including best practice information regarding complaint recording, investigation, and resolution (including the award of compensation).
- Develop a Council wide acceptable behaviour policy for customers so they're clear about the standards of expected behaviour.
- Put in place regular arrangements within the service for reviewing Ombudsman guidance, attending training, and sharing any learning across the organisation.

Housing Ombudsman Self-assessment

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i></p>	Yes	<p>The Council currently defines a corporate complaint as:</p> <p><i>"An expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of our services; or lack of resolution by the council, its staff, contractors, or volunteers that requires a response that you have been unable to resolve with the service directly in the first instance."</i></p> <p>The Council defines a housing specific complaint as:</p> <p><i>'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i></p>	
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third</p>	Yes	<p>The Council recognises that a complainant or someone acting on their behalf does not have to use the word 'complaint' for something to be treated as a complaint. The</p>	

	party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.		Council's Complaints Team are aware of this approach/requirement.	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	<p>The Council recognises that there is a difference between a complaint and a request for service. Initial requests for service when it comes to tenancy management, housing repairs, etc. are all handled by our Customer Services team or done through Housing Online, and where action is required a work item is recorded and action is taken. These work items are reviewed within the service by Management.</p> <p>Our complaints policy outlines what will be dealt with during our day-to-day activities and includes initial requests for service.</p>	
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	<p>See our Corporate Complaints Policy:</p> <p>https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p> <p>To accept and investigate something as a complaint, that is done based</p>	

			<p>on having had the opportunity to resolve whatever the matter is that is being brought to our attention in the first place i.e., through a request for service, such as a housing repair.</p> <p>As landlord, we do not usually withdraw support or services whilst complaints are investigated and responded to.</p>	
1.6	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.</p>	Yes	<p>All main surveys of Council tenants will include information about how to complain. No surveys have been issued since the new code has been in place.</p>	<p>Action: Management to ensure all our main tenants surveys include, where possible, information about how to complain.</p>

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy at 2.3 and 2.4 - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	This information is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	We currently accept complaints referred to us within 12 months of the issue occurring and if there are good reasons to do so will consider complaints beyond that date.	
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an 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. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	<p>This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p> <p>All complaints are reviewed to see if they meet our policy requirements. Where they don't, the complainant is notified.</p>	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	All complaints are dealt with on an individual basis. This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints can be made by phone, by email, through our complaint's portal, in writing, in person at our customer service centre, or through their local Councillor. We also accept complaints made by social media.	
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Staff are aware of the Corporate Complaints process or can seek advice from management if they are unsure.	Action: to put in place a regular whole-service staff training/communication session re corporate complaints (including Housing).
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	The Council's complaints position is set out here - Comments, compliments and complaints (leicester.gov.uk) – and includes information about how complaints can be made. We share information with tenants about how to complain in the event that they are dissatisfied with the service they receive.	

3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Our complaints policy is available here: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Our complaints policy is available here: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
3.6	Landlords must 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.	Yes	The Council's complaints policy allows someone to act on behalf of someone else with their permission, such as friends, family members or representatives. Those acting on behalf of someone must provide written authorisation that will then be retained on file and provide ID to ensure they are the person authorised. https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	<p>The Council's complaints information and policy sets out how to complain to the Ombudsman.</p> <p>https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p> <p>When complaints are acknowledged, investigated, and responded to, we include information about what to do if dissatisfied with the complaint handling and outcome.</p>	
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Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	<p>The Council has a Corporate Complaints team that is responsible for handling complaints that are set out in this policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p> <p>The processing of complaints is currently the responsibility of the Director of Corporate Services.</p>	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	The Complaints Team report to the Director of Corporate Services and are able to escalate things as required.	
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.	No	We comply with this in part but there is room for improvement. We do prioritise complaint handling and have in place a policy, processes, and team to do that. However, we need to do more to make sure that we learn from complaints into the service, especially where there are commonly occurring themes etc. Learning takes place operationally	Action: to agree and document a proper approach to reviewing service improvement opportunities that arise from complaint investigations.

			when complaints are investigated and failure revealed, but this behaviour needs to be standardised and whole-service learning needs to be facilitated.	
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Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Our two-stage process is set out clearly in our complaints policy, which can be found here: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Our two-stage process is set out clearly in our complaints policy, which can be found here: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code.	Yes	Our complaints are not handled by a third-party.	

	Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.			
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Our complaints are not handled by a third-party.	
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	In our stage 1 and stage 2 responses, we set out what the complainant was complaining about.	
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	In our stage 1 and stage 2 responses, we set out what the complainant was complaining about and what we have accepted to investigate.	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or 	Yes	This is in line with our complaints policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

	perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy – https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	The Council welcomes complaints from all sections of the community. The Council is committed to ensuring all individuals are dealt with on an equal basis and are treated with respect and courtesy at all times. To achieve this, we will deal with complaints fairly and impartially. If customers have particular needs we will do our best to meet these needs to ensure our complaints procedure is accessible and non-discriminatory.	
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

	must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.			
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, 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 relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Information about complaints are both recorded in the Council's complaints system and held in service.	
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	We apply a variety of different remedies at the different stages of the complaints process. These remedies vary because each case is considered in its own merits, and the nature and circumstances of the complaints vary from one to the next.	Action: to put in place guidance for investigating managers re complaint investigation and the variety of different resolution remedies that could be considered.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	We expect our tenants to behave appropriately and set out what these expectations are in different ways. The Conditions of Tenancy outline what is considered to be good tenant like behaviour - section 4. A risk register exists in service whereby any unreasonable tenant	Action: to develop a Council wide acceptable behaviour policy.

			conduct is recorded, as are any special arrangements necessary when it comes to providing services safely.	
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	The individual needs of tenants are considered when reviewing behaviour. Any equalities related matters are considered as part of that process, especially matters related to their special or protected characteristics. That said, the Council has a duty of care as an employer towards the wellbeing of our workforce and will take firm action where necessary to protect our staff from all forms of abuse.	Action: to create and share guidance and a process approach in respect of the review of unacceptable behaviour and any resulting action to amend service arrangements.

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	This information is included in current template responses.	
6.6	A complaint response must be provided 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 promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	No	We are partially compliant with this requirement and are working to become fully compliant. How and when we respond to complainants is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ . It sets out that we will respond to the complaint when we've investigated it, not at the point that we have acted on the resolutions identified/agreed.	Action: to develop and implement a standardised arrangement in service to record, track and monitor the completion of complaint resolutions.

			To be fully compliant, we do not currently have in place a method of centrally documenting and reviewing completion of agreed service resolutions. Any resolutions are implemented by the relevant services, and only Ombudsman specific resolutions are tracked for completion.	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 		complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
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Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	

6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/ .	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with	Yes	This information is included in current template responses.	

	the contact details of the Ombudsman.			
6.17	A complaint response must be provided 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 promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	No	<p>We are partially compliant with this requirement and are working to become fully compliant.</p> <p>How and when we respond to complainants is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/. It sets out that we will respond to the complaint when we've investigated it, not at the point that we have acted on the resolutions identified/agreed.</p> <p>To be fully compliant, we do not currently have in place a method of centrally documenting and reviewing completion of agreed service resolutions. Any resolutions are implemented by the relevant services, and only Ombudsman specific resolutions are tracked for completion.</p>	Action: to develop and implement a standardised arrangement in service to record, track and monitor the completion of complaint resolutions.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant	Yes	Point by point responses are provided back to complainants.	

	policy, law and good practice where appropriate.			
6.19	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	<p>This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p>	
6.20	<p>Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</p>	Yes	<p>This is set out in our Corporate Complaints Policy - https://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/corporate-complaints-policy/.</p>	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>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. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	<p>Though each complaint is considered on its own merits, the examples given are exactly the sorts of resolutions that we would seek to put in place to make things right.</p>	<p>Action: to develop and implement a standardised arrangement in service to record, track and monitor the completion of complaint resolutions.</p>
7.2	<p>Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.</p>	Yes	<p>Complaints are considered individually, as are suitable remedies.</p>	<p>Action: guidance document and training to be provided to investigating managers so we can make sure that remedies are appropriately determined and implemented in a standardised way across the Council.</p>

7.3	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	This is included in our complaint responses.	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	No	We do not periodically review and learn from Ombudsman guidance. This activity needs to be prioritised by the Complaints Team and done in partnership with the Housing Service.	Action: to put in place regular arrangements within the service for reviewing Ombudsman guidance, attending training, and sharing any learning across the organisation.

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	23/24 complaints performance is intended to be reported in September 2024 and will be in line with the requirements outlined here.	

8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	23/24 complaints performance is intended to be reported in September 2024 and will be in line with the requirements outlined here.	Action: to put in place and publish our arrangements for a standard annual reporting schedule as required.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	N/a	No such restructure, merger and/or change in procedures have taken place.	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	We would comply with any such Ombudsman investigation.	
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes		

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	No	Whilst we do have a complaints team that process as required all incoming complaints so that they are properly recorded, investigated and responded to, we do not currently have standardised and mature arrangement for looking at and learning from complaints into the Council.	Action: to develop and put in place a proper process of review when it comes to continuous learning from incoming complaints and citizen voice.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	No	Whilst we do have a complaints team that process as required all incoming complaints so that they are properly recorded, investigated and responded to, we do not currently have standardised and mature arrangement for looking at and learning from complaints into the Council.	Action: to develop and put in place a proper process of review when it comes to continuous learning from incoming complaints and citizen voice.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	No	Whilst we do have a complaints team that process as required all incoming complaints so that they are properly recorded, investigated and responded to, we do not currently have standardised and mature	Action: to develop and put in place a proper process of review when it comes to continuous learning from incoming complaints and citizen voice.

			arrangement for looking at and learning from complaints into the Council.	
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	No	<p>Whilst we do have a complaints team that process as required all incoming complaints so that they are properly recorded, investigated and responded to, we do not currently have standardised and mature arrangement for looking at and learning from complaints into the Council.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Housing have accountability for the complaints arrangements.</p>	Action: to develop and put in place a proper process of review when it comes to continuous learning from incoming complaints and citizen voice.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Currently, between them City Mayor and the Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Housing have responsibility for Corporate Complaints and the Housing Service.	
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable	Yes	Currently, between them City Mayor and the Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Housing have responsibility for Corporate Complaints and the Housing Service.	

	information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.			
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	<p>23/24 complaints performance is intended to be reported in September 2024 and will be in line with the requirements outlined here.</p> <p>We will also have in place arrangements that enable trends and issues to be shared.</p>	
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 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 	Yes	<p>This is expected of all Housing employees and third-party providers.</p>	

	complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			
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Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Self-Assessment against the requirements of the Code

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>1: Definition of a service request and complaint</p>	<p>We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy</p> <p>We explain what matters will be considered as day-to-day duties.</p> <p>We define a complaint as “An expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of our services; or lack of resolution by the council, its staff, contractors or volunteers that requires a response that you have been unable to resolve with the service directly in the first instance.”</p> <p>The LGSCO suggest a complaint may 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 or group of individuals.”</p>
<p>2: Exclusions</p>	<p>Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The code suggests that we should accept complaints referred to us within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issue. And we should use some discretion to accept complaints outside of this where there are good reasons.</p> <p>Our complaints handling practices are in line with this, but we could strengthen that position by including this in our policy.</p>

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
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	We need to do more to make sure that all staff are aware of the complaints process and can pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation. And to make sure they know that if someone wants to complain, staff should take the complaint on behalf of the person concerned and share with the complaints team.
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	We have a dedicated corporate complaints team who take responsibility for complaints handling. Though we are compliant, more regular updates to our Executive Lead and Executive Team (our Governing Body) are required, as is more activity on service improvement opportunities.
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	
6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	No	We are compliant with the requirements here, apart from not having a second stage in place right now. We go further and aim to get all resolutions actioned within 10 weeks of the complaint being raised.
6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	No	We do not have a second stage in place.

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
7: Putting things right	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.	Yes	We need to make sure we have guidance in place for complaints investigators and services when it comes to resolutions.
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	
9: Scrutiny & Oversight	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.	No	We need to clarify and document our “Member Responsible for Complaints”, and regular updates need to be provided on complaint handling performance, and any emerging issues and trends.