

PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

Proposal Name: Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

EIA ID: 2532

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Proposal Outline:

The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO) & Housing Ombudsman (HO) Ombudsman are proposing the implementation of a new Joint Complaint Handling Code which will become a statutory code by 1 April 2024. *Note - The Code does not replace any statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. Emphasis is focussed on:

- Single statutory code covering all complaints (except for exclusions outlined above*)
- Prioritisation of complaints and to engender a culture of learning from complaints
- Adopt a 'comply or explain' approach including annual self-assessment which should be published internally and externally
- A focus on keeping complainants updated and informed
- A focus on accessibility to the complaint handling policy and processes (providing complainants with reasonable adjustments where required). A focus on recording complaint documentation and service improvements and remedies identified through the complaint investigation - ensuring that these are implemented in a timely way.
- To accept complaints referred to us within 12 months (formerly 6 months) of the issue occurring or the individual becoming aware of the issue.
- All complaints to be acknowledged within 5 working days of the complaint being received
- Stage 1 – responses within 10 working days from receipt of complaints (currently 20 working days) with a maximum 10 days extension.
- Stage 2 – 20 working days from receipt of complaint (currently is 20 working days), with a maximum of 20 days extension.
- Extensions are only permitted with 'good reason' e.g. delay of complainant response, complex cases or multi partner/service response required.
- Complainants to be provided with Ombudsman contact details at each stage of a complaint.
- Removal of 'partially upheld' designation. Complaints outcomes to be upheld or not upheld.
- The publishing of the annual self-

assessment annual complaints performance report and service improvements to governance body and to a newly appointed: • Senior executive to oversee the complaint handling performance, and • Lead Member (Deputy Leader) to have lead responsibility for complaints.

Proposal Type: Non-Budget

Year Of Proposal: 24/25

Lead Director for proposal: Tom Smith

Service Area: Operational Services - Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team

EIA Start Date: 22/01/2024

Lead Equality Objective: Understanding Communities

Equality Lead Officer: Louise Nunn

Decision Type

Committees: Policy Committees

- Strategy & Resources

Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Neighbourhood Services

EIA is cross portfolio:

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Whole Organisation

EIA is joint with another organisation: Yes Ombudsman (LGSCO & Housing Ombudsman)

Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

The Joint Code aims to provide a national standard for councils to work to, which will clarify requirements, simplifying internal processes, and giving assurances to all citizens and local Members about how complaints must be handled. The joint Code sets out clear expectations for the level of staffing, oversight and governance for councils to have a good complaint handling service which encourages the satisfactory resolution of complaints at an early stage and before they go to the Ombudsman. This single model of complaint handling which makes it easier for all citizens to hold their local authority or social landlord to account.

Impacted characteristics:

- Disability
- Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
- Age
- Armed Forces
- Carers
- Cohesion
- Gender Reassignment
- Health
- Partners
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Consultation and other engagement

Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative

impact:

Impact areas:

Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required: Yes

Review Date: 22/01/2024

PART B - Full Impact Assessment

Health

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: All staff must prioritise the managing and handling of complaints and respond within the proposed timescales. They must provide regular updates to complainants and provide support/reasonable adjustments for the complainant (as required) throughout the complaints process. They must provide written confirmation and a formal response for each complaint. As an organisation we must identify a Lead Director (Director of Operational Services) and a Lead Member (Deputy Leader) who will have oversight for the complaints handling function; and we must provide annual reports and an annual self-assessment to the Ombudsman. Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Name of Lead Health Officer:

Comprehensive Assessment Being Completed: No

Public Health Lead signed off health impact(s):

Age

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Armed Forces

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Carers

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Care Experienced

Staff Impacted:

Customers Impacted:

Description of Impact:

Cohesion

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Disability

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Gender Reassignment

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Partners

Staff Impacted:

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Poverty & Financial Inclusion

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Pregnancy / Maternity

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Race

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Religion / Belief

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Sexual Orientation

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Voluntary / Community & Faith Sectors

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan: None

Action plan evidence: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Changes made as a result of action plan:

Significant risk after mitigation measures: No

Outline of impact and risks:

Review Date

Review Date: 22/01/2024

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