

Self-assessment against the requirements of the Code

| Code section | Action | Do we follow the Code: Yes/No | Explanations and Commentary |
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| 1: Definition of a service request and complaint | We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures. | Yes - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | <p>This is set out in the Complaints Policy (latest version adopted 17 July 2024).</p> <p>The definition of a Service Request used in the Joint Complaint Handling Code is used by the Complaints Policy in Section 1 (Definition of a Service Request).</p> <p>As the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman use slightly different definitions of a complaint (one refers to residents, the other refers to individuals) both definitions are contained within the Policy in Section 2 (Definition of a Complaint).</p> |

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| 2: Exclusions | Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress. | Yes - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | <p>The Complaints Policy has set this out in Section 3 (Matters Falling Outside the Scope of the Complaints Procedure).</p> <p>The Complaints Policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter might not be considered or escalated. If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided to the individual setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.</p> <p>Decisions are taken giving consideration to the individual circumstances of each complaint.</p> |
| 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 - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | <p>The Complaints Policy has set this out in Section 4 (Accessibility and Awareness).</p> <p>The Council provides several different channels through which residents and individuals may make a complaint and in keeping with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 will make reasonable adjustments for those that need to access the complaints process. A record of any reasonable adjustments will be made, and the agreed reasonable adjustments will be kept under active review as appropriate.</p> |

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| 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 | A member of the Corporate Services team fulfils the role of complaints officer. Other members of the team provide support as required. The Corporate Services Officer can additionally call upon the support of the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy and the Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory) if needed. |
| 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 - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | The Council has a single Complaints Policy that deals with the Joint Complaint Handling Code for both Ombudsmen. Individuals will never be treated differently if they choose to raise a complaint. The Council views complaints as an opportunity for service improvement. |
| 6: Complaints stages (Stage 1) | We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code. | Yes - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | The Council processes Stage 1 complaints within the timescales and processes set out in the Code. Where an extension of time is required, this is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Complaint Handling Code now incorporated into the Council's Complaints Policy. |
| 6: Complaints stages (Stage 2) | We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code. | Yes - This can be found in the Complaints Policy on our website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | The Council processes Stage 2 complaints within the timescales and processes set out in the Code. Where an extension of time is required, this is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Complaint Handling Code now incorporated into the Council's Complaints Policy. |

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| 7: Putting things right | When something has gone wrong, we take action to put things right. | Yes | <p>The overwhelming majority of interactions by individuals and the Council do not result in any problems. However, sometimes things can go wrong and when this happens, we encourage our residents and customers to tell us so that we can put things right, learn from our mistakes and improve our services.</p> <p>The Council will demonstrate that through increased transparency, accessibility and good governance. This demonstrates that residents and customers are at the heart of our service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that.</p> |
| 8: Performance reporting and self-assessment | We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code. | Yes – The Council will be publishing the completed Self-Assessments of the Local Government and Social Care on its website: Comments, Compliments and Complaints (dover.gov.uk) | The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Self-Assessment will form part of the Annual Complaints Report. This will set out performance against the Code and where improvements have been identified as part of the complaints process. |

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| 9: Scrutiny & Oversight | We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance. | Yes | <p>The Leader of the Council has designated the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Climate Change and Environment as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy will be working with the MRC on the best method of delivering information to the governing body on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Governance Committee has Constitutional responsibility for the monitoring of complaints. This will continue in conjunction with the governing body (the Cabinet) in recognition that it provides a wider overview of the Council's complaints.</p> |