

Ref No: EQ768670629

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**Date of executive meeting report will be going to:** 13/01/2026

**Officer Name:** Susan Lewis

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**Title of report:** Complaints Policy Review 2025

**Report :** The Council's complaints policy has been reviewed following feedback from the Housing Ombudsman, provided as part of the annual self-assessment and policy submission process. This review ensures full compliance with regulatory requirements and alignment with best practice standards. The Code of Practice sets out a clear framework and defined standards for managing complaints effectively. Its purpose is to promote consistency, fairness, and transparency throughout the process, strengthening organisational accountability and building customer confidence that concerns will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

**What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.:**  Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Annual Self Assessment - Feedback Received

**Service area:** Customer Services and Channel Shift

**Corporate Manager:** Hannah Leys

**Corporate Manager email:** Hannah.Leys@ipswich.gov.uk

**Links to supporting documents where available:**

**Please upload any supporting documents:** Executive Report - Revisions to Complaints Policy for EWG version for JF.docx, Appendix 1 - Revisions to Complaints Policy amends for EWG version for JF.docx

**What is proposed?:** The Complaints Policy is to be updated following Executive approval for the proposed amendments received from the Housing Ombudsman. The previous EQIA has been reviewed in alignment with these proposed amendments and in accordance with the requirement for an annual review.

The enhancements are primarily focused on improving clarity, accessibility, and procedural transparency. Notably:

- Clarifications around complaint exclusions and service requests ensure customers understand their rights and routes for resolution.
- Support for complaints made in person or by phone reinforces inclusive access, particularly for individuals who may face digital barriers.
- Commitments to timely responses and escalation rights promote fairness and consistency.
- Reference to the Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy supports staff and customer wellbeing.
- Additional provisions under Equality and Diversity such as offering hard copies of the policy to enhance accessibility for those with specific needs.

**Why are the changes being introduced?:** The changes to the Complaints Policy are proposed to provide greater clarity on the definition of a complaint and outline in more detail how the Council manages complaints. The changes strengthen the Council's commitment to equitable service delivery.

**What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?:** We are following the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment criteria which sets out how the Council must meet all areas of the code.

**How will this change be implemented?:** The Complaints Policy will be updated following approval of the proposed amendments at Executive 13th January 2026. The Housing Ombudsman advises the amendments should be implemented before next year's annual submission. Following approval, the revised Complaints Policy will be published on the Council's website and disseminated internally to all staff. This will ensure widespread awareness and understanding of the updated policy and its application.

**Age:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Disability:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Marriage & Civil Partnership:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Race:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the

implementation of the proposed changes

**Pregnancy & Maternity:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Religion or Belief:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Gender Reassignment:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Sex:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**Sexual Orientation:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** There is no impact to this characteristic through the implementation of the proposed changes

**I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives:** I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

**The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):** By embedding principles of fairness, accessibility and transparency

**The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):** By providing clear guidance to ensure everyone understands their rights and processes, which may reduce confusion that might disproportionately affect certain characteristics.

**The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):** By providing respect, understanding and trust in the complaints process

**The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s):** With an annual review of the complaints policy and in accordance with any further feedback received following the Councils annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman

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