

CORE OFFER BUDGET FOR COMPLAINTS AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE AND WHAT DOES IT NEED TO COVER?

The Council has a statutory duty to manage and investigate complaints, Compliments and Comments in accordance with;

- the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comment Procedure.
- the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009
- the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 /
- NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012
- the Localism Act 2011 / the Council's Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure.

The Council must also respond to requests for information requests and internal reviews in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and manage and respond to requests in accordance with the subject access provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998

The Complaints and Information Governance Team manage complaint investigations and prepare all write all responses to information requests. They investigate all Stage 2 corporate and housing complaints and undertake all internal reviews of information requests. They provide advice and guidance to complaints investigators and act as a central point of contact for the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) gathering relevant case history as required to support any investigation.

The team provide advice and guidance to staff, senior management and Elected Members on compliance with information rights legislation and deliver training sessions in relation to complaints, information requests and compliance with information rights legislation (inc. supporting the Information Security Manager in the delivery of information management/information security management training sessions).

Provide support to the Information Security Manager in undertaking information management reviews, in the delivery of associated work programmes, in the development of information management policies and procedures and to assist in the delivery of the corporate-wide information management work programme including reporting and audit.

The Council must comply with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the team ensure the governance and policies around data protection and sharing along with data handling are in place to reduce the risk of breaches and with it fines from the Information Commissioner's Office punishable up to £500,000.

VALUE FOR MONEY

To give members a context on the workload of the section number of complaints, compliments, comments, freedom of information requests and subject access requests that were handled in 2014/15 are shown in the table below.

	2014/15	2013/14
Complaints		
Corporate		
<i>Stage 1</i>	744	672
<i>Stage 2</i>	99	72
Adult Social Care	24	26
Children's Social Care		
<i>Stage 1</i>	60	46
<i>Stage 2</i>	15	9
<i>Stage 3</i>	1	0
Housing		
<i>Stage 1</i>	106	101
<i>Stage 2</i>	13	12
<i>Stage 3</i>	2	1
Public Health	0	0
Local Government Ombudsman	45	22
Housing Ombudsman	3	0
Compliments		
Corporate	185	233
Adult Social Care	40	39
Children's Social Care	12	6
Housing	47	0
Public Health	0	0
Comments		
Corporate	263	209
Adult Social Care	0	0
Children's Social Care	1	0
Housing	9	0
Public Health	0	0
Information Requests		
FOI	1,134	1,073
<i>FOI Internal Review</i>	41	27
EIR	132	101
<i>EIR Internal Review</i>	5	2
Subject Access	34	46
Information Commissioner Review	13	4
Total handled	3,028	2,701

DOES THIS DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT SERVICE?

In the last couple of years a number of initiatives have been undertaken to realise efficiencies, the corporate complaints process was reduced from three to two stages and the team was centralised reducing the number of staff dealing with complaints and information requests / governance issues across the Council. No further savings are anticipated in this area as it is believed the core offer and current costs are as low as possible to still meet our statutory obligations.

WHAT IS THE CORE BUDGET MADE UP OF?

2019/20 cost - **£193,363**

£187,450	4.5 full time equivalent members of staff.
£5,913	Overheads