

COMPLAINT FORM



1. Your details

Please provide us with your name and contact details

Title:	
First name:	
Last name:	
Address:	
Daytime telephone:	
Evening telephone:	
Mobile telephone:	
Email address:	

Your address and contact details will not usually be released unless necessary or to deal with your complaint.

However, we will tell the following people that you have made this complaint:

- the member(s) you are complaining about
- the monitoring officer of the authority
- the parish or town clerk (if applicable)

We will tell them your name and give them a summary of your complaint. We will give them full details of your complaint where necessary or appropriate to be able to deal with it. If you have serious concerns about your name and a summary, or details of your complaint being released, please complete section 3 of this form.

Please tell us which complainant type best describes you:

- Member of the public
- An elected or co-opted member of an authority
- An independent member of the standards committee
- Member of Parliament
- Local authority monitoring officer
- Other council officer or authority employee
- Other ()

Equality monitoring questions

We are keen to ensure that our services are available to all sections of the community, so could you please fill out the following section.

Your gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your age	Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>	35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
	45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>	55-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
	65+	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your working status

Employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Which of these groups do you belong to?

White British	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black-British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black-African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rather not say	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Making your complaint

Your complaint will be considered by a sub-committee of the Council's Standards Committee (the Assessment Sub-Committee).

As the Assessment Sub-Committee may have to consider potentially damaging complaints about members, its initial assessment decision and any review of such decisions will not be open to the public.

It should complete its initial assessment of a complaint within 20 working days of receipt, on average.

The sub-committee must make one of three decisions about your complaint:

- 1) refer it to Suffolk Coastal District Council's Monitoring Officer (MO) for action;
- 2) refer it to the Standards Board for England (SBE) for action;
- 3) take no action on it.

The criteria which the sub-committee will use for accepting a complaint or for deciding to take no action are set out at section 5 below.

If the assessment sub-committee decides that the complaint should be referred to the MO or to the SBE, it will send a summary of the complaint to the relevant people, stating what the allegation is, and what type of referral has been made.

If the assessment sub-committee decides to take no action over a complaint, it will let you know as soon as possible after making the decision, and will give you reasons for that decision.

Where the decision is to take no action, you will have 30 working days to request a review of that decision.

If you have any queries about this process, please do not hesitate to contact the MO who is Hilary Slater, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1AU, 01394 444336 (direct line) or email to hilary.slater@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk.

Please provide us with the name of the member(s) you believe have breached the Code of Conduct and the name of their authority:

Title	First name	Last name	Council or authority name

Please explain in this section (or on separate sheets) what the member has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct. If you are complaining about more than one member you should clearly explain what each individual person has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct.

It is important that you provide all the information you wish to have taken into account by the assessment sub-committee when it decides whether to take any action on your complaint. For example:

- You should be specific, wherever possible, about exactly what you are alleging the member said or did. For instance, instead of writing that the member insulted you, you should state what it was they said.
- You should provide the dates of the alleged incidents wherever possible. If you cannot provide exact dates it is important to give a general timeframe.
- You should confirm whether there are any witnesses to the alleged conduct and provide their names and contact details if possible.
- You should provide any relevant background information.

Please provide full details of your complaint. Continue on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form.

3. Only complete this next section if you are requesting that your identity is kept confidential

In the interests of fairness and natural justice, it is considered that members who are complained about have a right to know who has made the complaint. They have a right to be provided with a summary of the complaint. It is unlikely that you will be allowed to withhold your identity or the details of your complaint unless there is good reason to believe that certain criteria are met.

The criteria for considering requests for withholding a complainant's details are set out in section 6 below.

Please note that requests for confidentiality or requests for suppression of complaint details will not automatically be granted. The Assessment Sub-Committee will consider the request alongside the substance of your complaint. You will then be contacted with the decision. If your request for confidentiality is not granted, you will usually be allowed the option of withdrawing your complaint.

However, it is important to understand that in certain exceptional circumstances where the matter complained about is very serious, an investigation or other action can be commenced and your name disclosed even if you have expressly asked that it not be.

Please provide us with details of why you believe we should withhold your name and/or the details of your complaint:

4. Additional Help

Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes fax and electronic submissions. Please submit your completed form to:

Chairman of the Assessment Sub-Committee
The Standards Committee
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Melton Hill,
Woodbridge,
Suffolk IP12 1AU.

Fax: 01394 385100

Email: committee.section@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

In line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2000, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing.

We can also help if English is not your first language. We can translate this form into another language if you ask us to, or will provide it in large type, Easy Read or Braille. Please telephone 01394 383789 if you require further assistance.

If you need any support in completing this form, please let us know as soon as possible.

5. Criteria for accepting-rejecting complaints

1. The information provided was insufficient to make a decision as to whether the complaint should be referred for investigation or other action. So unless, or until, further information is received, the assessment sub-committee is taking no further action on this complaint.
2. Where the member is no longer a member of one authority but is a member of another authority, the complaint will be referred to the standards committee of that other authority to consider.
3. The matter of complaint had already been subject to a previous investigation or other action and there was nothing more to be gained by further action being taken.
4. The period of time that has passed since the alleged conduct occurred was taken into account when deciding whether this matter should be referred for investigation or further action. It was decided under the circumstances that further action was not warranted.

5. The matter was not considered to be sufficiently serious to warrant further action.
6. The matter appeared to be malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat, and not sufficiently serious, and it was decided that further action was not warranted.
7. The complaint was made anonymously and for that reason was only referred for investigation or some other action because it included documentary or photographic evidence which showed a very serious or significant matter.

6. Criteria for considering requests for confidentiality

1. The complainant has reasonable grounds for believing that they will be at risk of physical harm if their identity is disclosed.
2. The complainant is an officer who works closely with the subject member and they are afraid of the consequences to their employment or of losing their job if their identity is disclosed.
3. The complainant suffers from a serious health condition and there are medical risks associated with their identity being disclosed. In such circumstances, the Assessment Sub-Committee may wish to request medical evidence of the complainant's condition.