

Section 2: Making your complaint

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

| Title | First name | Last name | Council or authority name |
|-------|------------|-----------|---------------------------|
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Section 3: Nature of the complaint

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.

Notes to Section 3: (a)

Here is a summary of the provisions of the Code of Conduct:

- failing to treat others with respect
- acting in a way that may cause the authority to breach an equality enactment
- bullying
- intimidating, or attempting to intimidate a person involved in an allegation against the member
- compromising the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the authority
- disclosing confidential information
- bringing an office or authority into disrepute
- using their position as a member improperly to confer or secure an advantage or disadvantage
- not using the resources of the authority in accordance with their requirements
- disregarding advice when reaching decisions
- failing to give reasons for decisions
- failing to declare a personal or prejudicial interest
- having a prejudicial interest and failing to act appropriately
- failing to register interests

Your complaint must fall within one or more of these provisions and you will also have to show that the councillor was acting in their role as a councillor, and not as a private citizen, when they did what you are complaining about.

The Code of Conduct for South Hams District Council is available on our web site and can be obtained from the Monitoring Officer. The Codes of Conduct adopted by each of the Town and Parish Councils in our area can be obtained by contacting the Clerk to the appropriate Council.

Please provide us with the details of your complaint. Continue on a separate sheet(s) (please number them) if there is not enough space on this form.

Notes to Section 3: (b)

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.*

Section 4: Confidentiality

Please complete this next box only if you are requesting that your identity is kept confidential. See notes below.

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

Notes to Section 4

In the interests of fairness and natural justice, we believe that members who are complained about have a right to know who has made the complaint and at least a summary of the complaint. We are unlikely to withhold your identity or the details of your complaint unless you have good reason to believe that should we reveal it, you will be subject to some form of reprisal or intimidation from the member to whom the complaint relates or some other person. You should tell us why you believe that.

In considering your request we will have regard to any relevant guidance and in particular any guidance published by the Standards Board for England.

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. We will then contact you with the decision. If your request for confidentiality is not granted, we will usually allow you 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, we can proceed with an investigation or other action and disclose your name even if you have expressly asked us not to.

Section 5: What happens next?

You must make your complaint to the Monitoring Officer, who will submit it to the Standards Committee's Assessment Sub-committee. Her address is on the next page.

On receipt, the Monitoring Officer will look over your complaint and may ask you for more information in order to clarify it. She will in any event acknowledge that it has been received on behalf of the Assessment Sub-Committee and you will be given an estimated timescale for dealing with it. We aim for the Assessment Sub-Committee to complete its initial assessment of your complaint within 20 working days of its receipt.

The decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee will be sent to you within 2 working days of the Sub-Committee meeting. The decision will be one of the following:

- *No further action.*
- *The matter is referred to the Monitoring Officer for training, conciliation or other action (excluding investigation) as the Sub-Committee consider appropriate.*
- *The matter is referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.*
- *The matter is referred to the Standards Board for England for investigation.*

The decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee will also be notified to the member the subject of the complaint, and other parties where appropriate, such as the Clerk to the Parish or Town Council, or the County Council where the member also belongs to one of those authorities.

If the decision of the Sub-Committee is "no further action" you have a right of appeal to a Review Sub-Committee. This will be a sub-committee of members of the Standards Committee of either West Devon Borough Council or Teignbridge District Council, thus providing a completely independent review of the initial assessment

If the matter is referred for investigation you will be contacted by the Monitoring Officer or the person appointed by her to conduct the investigation with details of how it will be carried out and the anticipated timescale. Following the investigation a report will be presented to the Standards Committee of South Hams District Council.

If the matter is referred for investigation by the Standards Board for England, which will only happen in the most serious of cases, the Monitoring Officer will contact you to explain what is going to happen.

Section 6: Additional help

Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes fax and electronic submissions. However, 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.

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

Section 7: Equalities monitoring

Please go on to complete the equality monitoring questions on the next two pages. They will not be disclosed to the Assessment Sub-Committee or the member(s) you are complaining about and will be detached from this form before it is submitted.

Section 8: Please send the form to

The Standards Committee
c/o The Monitoring Officer
South Hams District Council
Follaton House
Plymouth Road
Totnes
Devon
TQ9 5NE

Telephone: 01803 861234

Fax: 01803 861477

e-mail: monitoring.officer@southhams.gov.uk

web site: www.southhams.gov.uk

Disability information

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? **Yes/No**
(see *Guidance Note 1 below*)

Do you meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability? **Yes/No**
(see *Guidance Note 2 below*)

Guidance Note 1

A disabled person is someone who has an impairment, experiences externally imposed barriers and self-identifies as a disabled person. Impairment is a physical or mental condition, or lacking all or part of a limb or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body.

Guidance Note 2

A person has a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 if he/she has a physical or mental impairment. Included in this definition are the following:-

- *Physical impairments*
- *Mental impairments relating to mental functioning, including learning difficulties and mental health issues which are clinically well-recognised.*
- *Sensory impairments such as hearing impairment or visual impairment (not corrected by glasses).*
- *Progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy or HIV infection.*
- *People who have had an impairment (covered by the Act) in the past but have since recovered.*

It should be remembered that to comply with the Act, the impairment should have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

An impairment has a substantial effect if it affects mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift or otherwise move everyday objects, speech, hearing, eyesight (excluding those who wear glasses/contact lenses), memory and/or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.

Long term means has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months, or for the rest of the life of a person.