

# Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Review 2020/21

## Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Review 2020/21

The Council receives an annual review letter from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). It includes a summary of statistics on the complaints made to the LGO about the Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 (see table A below).

During 2020/21, the LGO received 13 queries and complaints in relation to MDC. This has decreased compared to 2019/20.

During the same period, the LGO made decisions on 15 queries and complaints. This is the same as in 2019/20.

The LGO carried out detailed investigations on 2 complaints in 2020/21, of which one was upheld.

Table A below shows how LGO complaints and queries are categorised and provides comparison over five years. Table B shows the categories that the LGO uses to define the decisions made. A description of the categories is provided below Table B.

**TABLE A: Complaints received**

Year	Benefits and Council tax	Neigh - bourhood Services	Corporate and other services	Environmental services and Public protection and regulation	Housing	Highways & Transport	Planning and development	Total
<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
2019/2020	4	0	0	4	1	0	8	17
2018/2019	7	1	2	1	1	0	3	15
2017/2018	2	0	1	0	3	0	2	8 plus 1 null category
2016/2017	4	0	1	4	1	0	9	19

**Table B: Decisions made**

Year	Upheld	Not upheld	Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete / invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Total
<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>
2019/2020	0	3	0	4	2	6	15
2018/2019	1	2	0	5	0	6	14
2017/2018	2	2	0	1	1	7	13
2016/2017	1	2	0	7	0	7	17

*Note: The totals in the above tables are not comparable. This is due to the fact that number of complaints received in one fiscal year are not the same as the overall number of decisions made in the same fiscal year. Decisions in the period could have been made on complaints from previous years.*

The decision categories for the LGO complaints are explained below:

- **Upheld:** These are complaints where the LGO has decided that an authority has been at fault in how it acted and that this fault may or may not have caused an injustice to the complainant, or where an authority has accepted that it needs to remedy the complaint before the LGO makes a finding on fault. If the LGO has decided there was fault and it caused an injustice to the complainant, usually it will have recommended the authority take some action to address it.
- **Not upheld:** Where the LGO has investigated a complaint and decided that a council has not acted with fault, the LGO classifies these complaints as not upheld.
- **Advice given:** These are cases where the LGO gives advice about why it would not look at a complaint because the body complained about was not within the LGO's scope or the LGO had previously looked at the same complaint from the complainant, or another complaints handling organisation or advice agency was best placed to help them.
- **Closed after initial enquiries:** These complaints are where the LGO has made an early decision that it could not or should not investigate the complaint, usually because the complaint is outside LGO's jurisdiction and it either cannot lawfully investigate it or it decides that it would not be appropriate in the circumstances of the case to do so. The LGO's early assessment of a complaint may also show there was little injustice to a complainant that would need an LGO investigation of the matter, or that an investigation could not achieve anything, either because the evidence we see shows at an early stage there was no fault, or the outcome a complainant wants is not one we could achieve, for example overturning a court order.
- **Incomplete/invalid:** These are complaints where the complainant has not provided the LGO with enough information to be able to decide what should happen with their complaint, or where the complainant tells the LGO at a very early stage that they no longer wish to pursue their complaint.
- **Referred back for local resolution:** The LGO works on the principle that it is always best for complaints to be resolved by the service provider wherever possible. Furthermore, the Local Government Act 1974 requires LGO to give authorities an opportunity to try and resolve a complaint before they will get involved. In many instances, authorities are successful in doing this.