

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE  
SCRUTINY**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
CORPORATE SERVICES**

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2024/25**

## **Summary**

The report provides details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) annual review letter for 2024/25. The annual review letter details that there were 30 enquiries submitted to the Ombudsman during 2024/25 (a reduction from the previous year), 8 met the threshold for a detailed investigation by the Ombudsman. Of the 8 complaint investigations, all were upheld. All recommendations made by the Ombudsman, following their investigations, have been accepted and implemented by the Council.

## **Recommendations**

1. Executive Scrutiny to note the report.

## **Detail**

1. Each year the Ombudsman publishes its annual letter and summary of statistics on the complaints and enquiries it has received about Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the decisions made. The Council has received the latest report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025.
2. Of the 30 complaints and enquiries dealt with by the Ombudsman in 2024/25, 8 were progressed to investigation, with all 8 of the complaints being upheld. The number of complaints investigated by the LGSCO has decreased since the previous year (13 in 2023/24) suggesting that more complaints are being appropriately resolved and addressed locally without the need for escalation to the Ombudsman.
3. Of the 8 upheld Ombudsman complaint investigations, 3 related to Adults Services, 2 related to SEND and Inclusion, 1 related to Planning, 1 related to Revenues and Benefits and 1 regarding Community Transport.
4. The report details that the LGSCO was satisfied with the remedy offered by the Council (such as an apology, financial redress) in advance of the complainant raising the complaint with the LGSCO, in 3 out of the 8 cases. Remedy guidance for officers undertaking complaint investigations, has been strengthened in the complaints training programme delivered by the Information Governance Team and will also be included in the annual Complaints Officer Forum in the new year.

5. A copy of the 2024/25 performance tables received from the LGSCO is attached at **Appendix I** of this report. A useful guide to interpretation of the Ombudsman's statistics is available on the [LGSCO website](#).

### **Financial Implications**

6. None as a direct result of this report. The financial implications of individual complaints would be dealt with separately as part of the responses to those complaints.

### **Legal Implications**

7. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. They may, however, arise on a case-by-case basis, depending on the particular circumstances of the complaint and related decision and Legal Service input is called upon in these cases. The Corporate Governance Group also has a Legal Service representative.

### **Risk Assessment**

8. LGSCO complaint investigations and associated decision notices create public relations risks to the Council and can undermine resident confidence. The Council's Complaints Policy and associated procedures are designed to minimise these risks, and the oversight provided by the Complaints Team and Corporate Governance Group provide assurance to senior management and Members that complaints are taken seriously, corrective action is implemented and learning maximised.

### **Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors**

9. The Ombudsman complaints information does not indicate any significant ward specific information or trends.

### **Background Papers**

10. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual review of Local Government complaints for 2024/25 has been published and relevant extracts have been included in this report. A copy of the complete report can be viewed on the [LGSCO website](#).

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## **Appendix I - Stockton data from the annual report 2024/25**

<b>Complaints upheld</b>	
<b>100%</b> of complaints investigated were upheld.	National average of <b>80%</b> in similar organisations
<b>8</b> upheld decisions	
<b>4</b> upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Average for authorities of Stockton's type is <b>5.3</b> upheld decisions per 100, 000
Statistics are based on a total of <b>8</b> investigations for the period between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025	

<b>Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations</b>	
<b>100%</b> of cases the Ombudsman were satisfied Stockton had successfully implemented for recommendations.	National average of <b>100%</b> in similar organisations

<b>Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation</b>	
In <b>38%</b> of upheld cases the Ombudsman found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman	
<b>3</b> satisfactory remedy decisions	
Statistics are based on a total of <b>8</b> upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025	