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## 1.0 Introduction

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is committed to providing an excellent standard of customer service and using valuable customer feedback as an indicator of performance, providing opportunity to review the quality of services delivered and to make improvements.

This annual report, provided by the Council's Complaints Team (CCT), outlines the activity and performance related to the Council's complaint handling, providing assurance that all complaint handling related matters across the Council are being effectively managed; matters raised as complaints are being addressed and that action has been taken to rectify issues where necessary.

The report reflects on the work undertaken during **the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024** and highlights the progress made; where improvements are required to ensure compliance with policy and / or legislation and details the plans in place to minimise risk and improve performance.

## 2.0 The Council's Complaint Handling process

### 2.1 Definition of a complaint

The Council has complaint handling procedures and a policy which define a concern or complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about one or more of the following: -

- *The provision of a Council service*
- *A Council Policy or Procedure*
- *The way in which the Council's staff carry out their duties.*

The policy and this report **do not** cover the following:

- Complaints from Council employees (*current or former*), trainees, apprentices, or persons on work placements, regarding working conditions, pay or any other internal grievance or staffing dispute.
- Complaints about any aspect of the Council's recruitment process.
- Complaints about Elected Members of Council.
- Complaints about the internal services provided by one Service / Department to another.
- Complaints from external agencies/organisations unless made on behalf of and with the consent of the complainant.
- Complaints from suppliers of services to the Council or those working in partnership with the Council.
- Complaints about missed bin collections, faulty streetlights, fly tipping, dog fouling, noise nuisance etc., in the first instance, as these will be dealt with as a "service request" by the relevant Council Department.
- Where there is a recognised formal process for dealing with the dissatisfaction of a decision, such as a formal appeal route or a claim for damages.
- Complaints about the handling of information requests, under the Freedom of Information (FOI), Environment Information (EIR) or Data Protection Act.
- When the complainant has stated, in writing, to the Council that they are taking, or intending to take, legal proceedings.
- Complaints regarding fraud or misuse of Council property

## 2.2 Making a Complaint

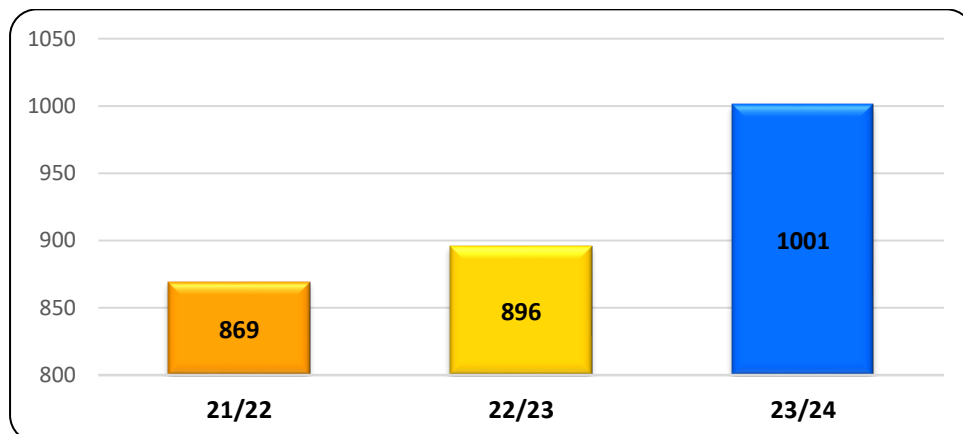
The Council provides the facilities for customers to report complaints in a variety of accessible ways and will accept a complaint from a person (or anyone acting on behalf of a person who has the appropriate authority and full consent), in any of the following formats: -

- Email to [complaint.officer@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:complaint.officer@bradford.gov.uk)
- Via the Council's website [Make a complaint about Bradford Council | Bradford Council](#)
- Letter
- Telephone call
- In person – any Council office

Since April 2023 complaints in relation to Children's Social Care (CSC) are dealt with by Bradford Children's & Families Trust (BCFT). To enable direct comparisons, the information within this report **excludes** all historic complaints that related to CSC at each stage.

For context, as Children's Services relating to education and school improvement remain service areas of the Council, they are including in the data provided.

**Chart 1 below** represents the total number of **all formal** complaints recorded over the last 3 financial years.



Additionally, during 2023/24, the Council received a number of informal complaints which are considered by the receiving Service, or the Corporate Complaints Team (CCT), as requiring little or no investigation and are able to be quickly resolvable under "business as usual", preventing these being escalated to the formal complaints process. **Table 1 below** details the numbers of 'other matters' raised and dealt with by CCT and recognition is made that service areas across the Council also deal with many informal complaints as part of their service delivery, as such this is difficult to quantify.

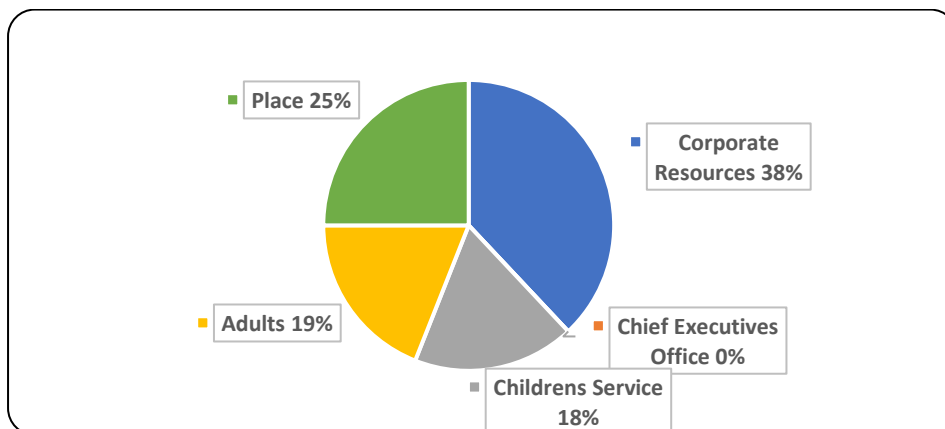
Table 1	Totals for 2023/24
Service Requests	765
Informal Resolution (Stage 1 complaint prevented)	328
General enquiries	345
Professional Complaints	36

Of the 328 'complaints' where CCT have identified that they can be dealt with informally,

thus preventing a Stage 1 complaint, performance by department is shown in Table 2 below;

Table 2	Total for 2023/24	% dealt with within 5 working days
Corporate Resources	24	65%
Chief Executives Office	2	50%
Adults	16	92%
Place	279	64%
Childrens Services	7	83%

**Chart 2 below** represents the **complaints received** in 2023/24 broken down by Council Department

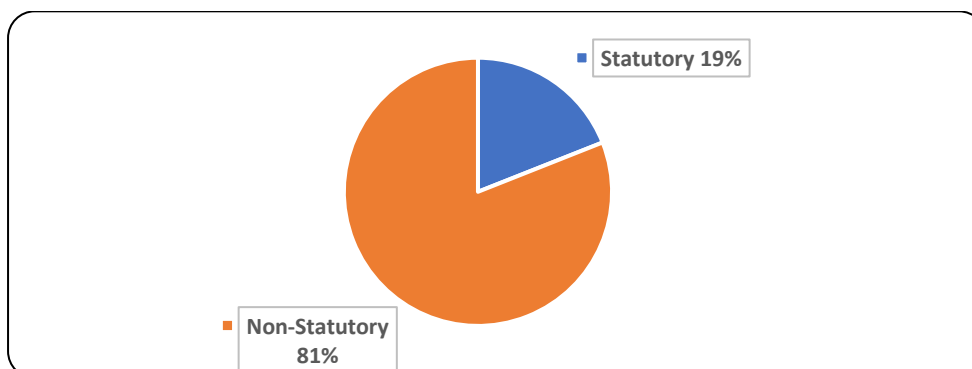


## 2.3 Complaint investigation

Formal Complaints received are grouped and recorded as either statutory or non-statutory.

- **Statutory** i.e. Those complaints which the Council must investigate by law. These relate solely to Adult Social Care.
- **Non - statutory** i.e. Those that whilst the Council does not have a statutory duty to investigate it is recommended, by the Local Government Ombudsman, as best practice.

**Chart 3 below** represents the **% of formal complaints received** in 2023/24 broken down by category



## 2.4 Stages of a complaint investigation

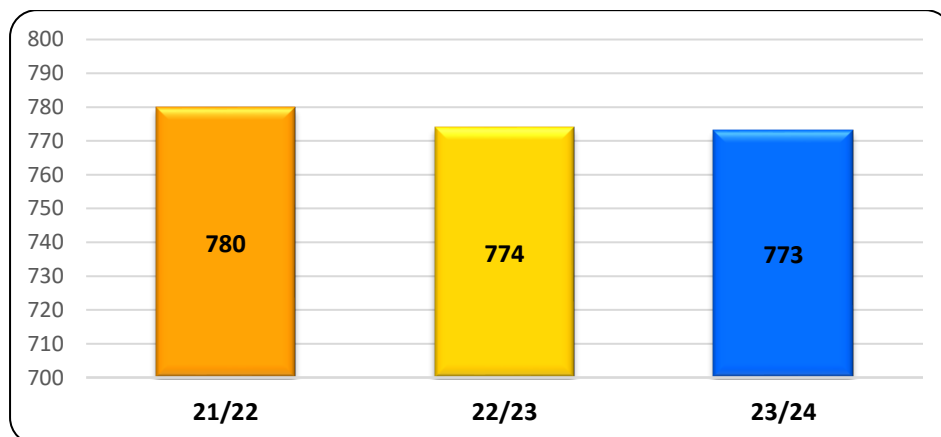
The Council has a two stage complaints procedure which is easily accessible on the external website. Most complaints are resolved at Stage 1 where the complaint is investigated and responded to by a manager in the relevant service area. If the matter is escalated by the complainant to Stage 2, a review of the complaint is carried out by an officer from the CCT to ensure impartiality.

**Table 3 below** details the investigation stages for all types of formal complaint

Type	Category	Stage	
Adult Social Care	Statutory	1	Investigated by Managers within the relevant Service area with assistance from the Corporate Complaints Team (CCT).
Public Health			
All other complaint types	Non - statutory		
Adult Social Care	Statutory	N/A	Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following the outcome of their original complaint there is no Stage 2 included in the legislation governing these complaints and complainants will normally be referred to the Ombudsman.
Public Health	Statutory	2	Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following the outcome of their original complaint, these escalated complaints are investigated by the CCT.
All other complaint types	Non - statutory		

## 2.5 Complaint resolution

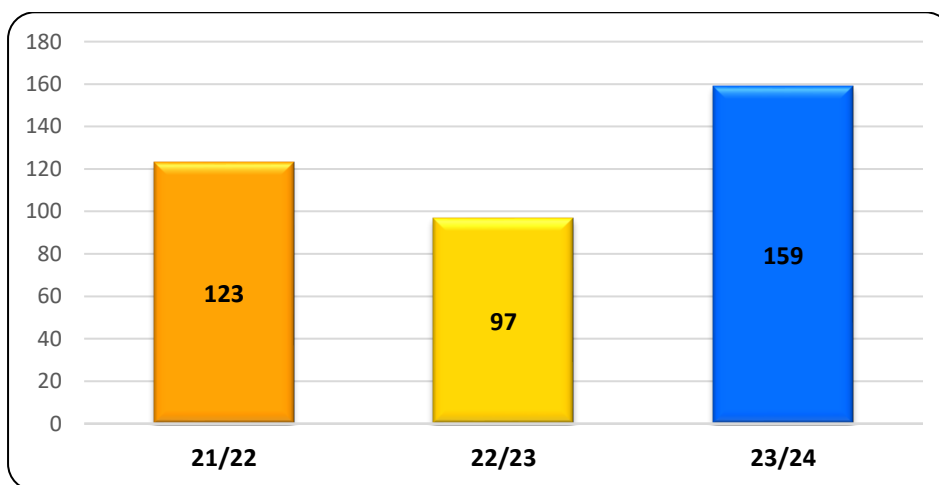
**Chart 4 below** represents the total number of **Stage 1 complaints resolved** in the last 3 financial years



**Table 4 below** represents the total number of **Stage 1 complaints resolved by Council Department**

Department	Number of Stage 1 complaints resolved
Corporate Resources	335
Adults	185
Place	128
Children's Service	125
CE Office	0

**Chart 5 below** represents the total number of **Stage 2 complaints resolved** in the last 3 financial years



**Table 5 below** represents the total number of **Stage 2 complaints investigated by CCT by Council Department**

Department	Number of Stage 2 complaints resolved
Corporate Resources	50
Adults	NA - no Stage 2 for statutory cases*
Place	72
Children's Service	33
CE Office	0

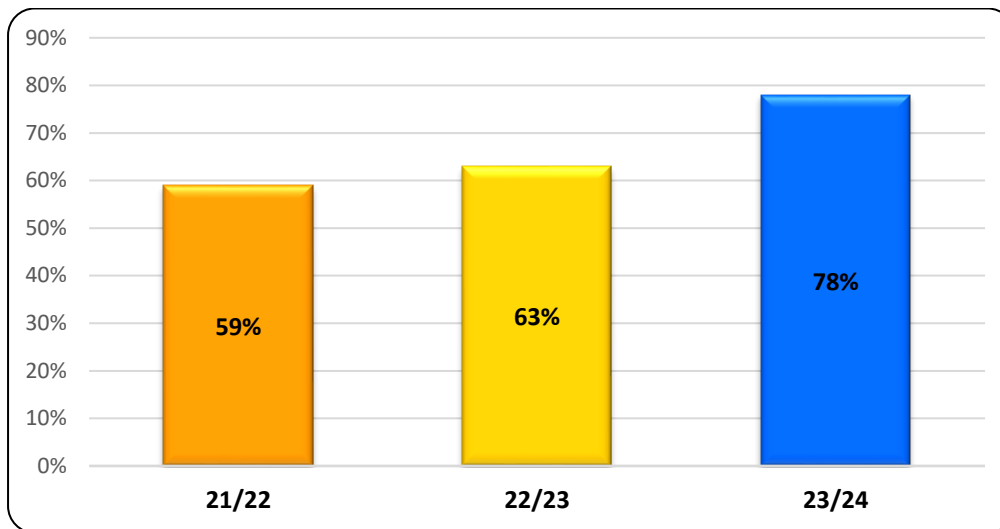
\*4 Adults cases – corporate complaints only (non-statutory)

### 2.5.1 Formal resolution timescales

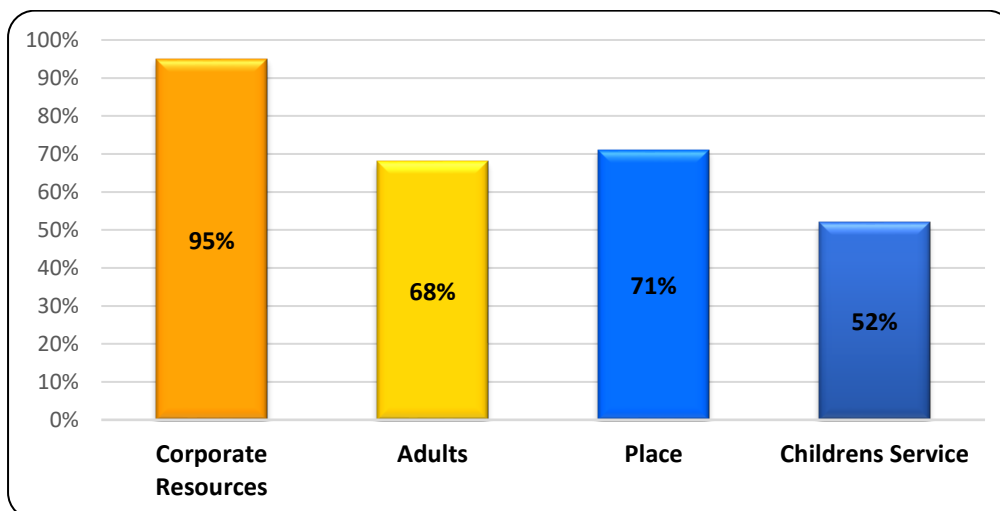
**Table 6 below** represents the timescales for resolving a complaint either in accordance with legislation (*green*) or in accordance with Council policy (*amber*).

Table 6	Stage 1	Stage 2
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health</b>	20 working days	Not applicable
<b>All other complaints</b>	20 working days	65 working days

**Chart 6 below** represents the % of **Stage 1** complaints concluded within the specified **timescales** in the last 3 financial years



**Chart 7 below** represents the % of **Stage 1** complaints concluded within the specified **timescales** in 2023/24 by Council Department



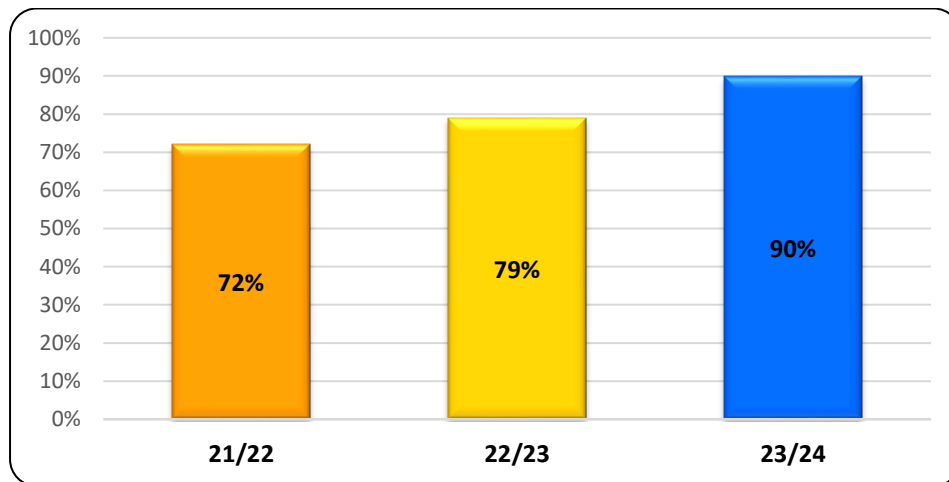
The key performance indicator applied by the Ombudsman to stage 1 complaints performance within the specified timescales is 90%. In 2023-24, Corporate Resources was the only department to attain this level.

**Table 7 below** represents the total % of **Stage 1** complaints escalated to **Stage 2** by **Council Department**

Department	Number of Stage 2 complaints resolved
Corporate Resources	15%
Adults	NA
Place	56%
Children's Service	26%
CE Office	NA



**Chart 8 below** represents the % of **Stage 2 complaints concluded within the timescales**, over the last 3 financial years



As with stage 1 complaints, the key performance indicator applied by the Ombudsman for stage 2 complaints completed within timescale is 90% and it is reassuring to report that this level was achieved in 2023-24.

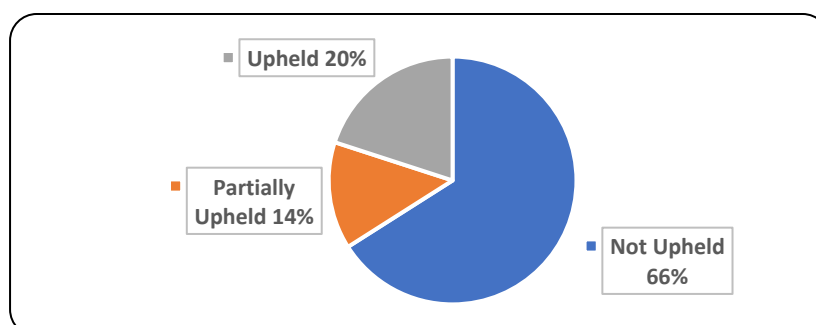
Stage 2 investigations require input by departments to provide specialist knowledge of the complaint in hand and to comment on how and why they may have taken a specific action. Where services delay in providing this information, investigations may not be concluded in a timely manner. In 2023-24, whilst the majority of services provided information without delay and thus achieved over 90%, the Council's SEND service fell short of the deadline dates on several occasions resulting in only 79% of stage 2 complaints relating to Children's Services meeting the key performance indicators. This has been reported back to the service as requiring improvement.

### 2.5.2 Formal complaint investigation outcomes

Complaint investigation outcomes normally fall into the following **3** categories;

1. **Not upheld** – The investigator found **no fault** in the Council's actions
2. **Partially upheld** – The investigator found **some fault** the Council's actions
3. **Upheld** – The investigator found **fault in all** of the Council's actions

**Chart 9 below** represents the % of **concluded Stage 1 complaint outcomes** in 2023/24



**Table 8** below represents the % of **Stage 1** complaints **UPHELD** (either fully or partially) by **Council Department**

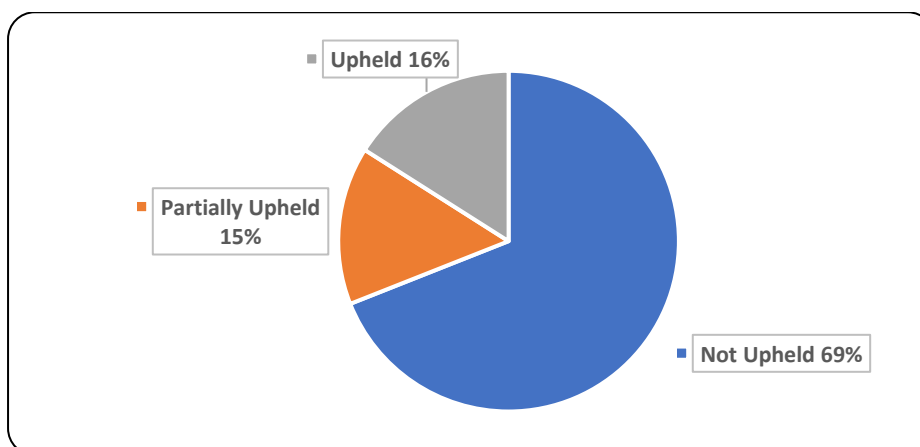
Department	Fully Upheld	Partially Upheld
Corporate Resources	14%	7%
Adults	26%	19%
Place	16%	15%
Children's Service	30%	25%
CE Office	NA	NA

Of the cases **FULLY UPHELD\*** at Stage 1, the **most common themes and number of instances, by Council Department**, are detailed in Table 9 below;

Table 9	Corporate Resources	Adults	Place	Children's Service	CE Office
Staff conduct / attitude	5	4	8	0	NA
Communication	2	7	2	8	NA
Financial / Charges applied	29	2	1	2	NA
Delays	4	4	3	9	NA
Failure to provide a service	0	14	6	10	NA
Poor quality of the service provided	3	16	6	11	NA

\*themes not recorded for partially upheld

**Chart 10** below represents the % of **concluded Stage 2** complaint outcomes in 2023/24



**Table 10** below represents the % of **Stage 2 complaints UPHELD** (either fully or partially) **by Council Department**

Department	Fully Upheld	Partially Upheld
Corporate Resources	6%	4%
Adults	NA	NA
Place	11%	17%
Children's Service	42%	27%
CE Office	NA	NA

Of the cases **FULLY UPHELD\*** at Stage 2, the **most common themes and number of instances, by Council Department**, are detailed in Table 11 below;

Table 11	Corporate Resources	Adults	Place	Children's Service	CE Office
Staff conduct / attitude	1	0	1	0	NA
Communication	1	0	3	3	NA
Financial / Charges applied	0	0	0	0	NA
Delays	1	1	1	4	NA
Failure to provide a service	0	0	2	1	NA
Poor quality of the service provided	0	0	2	3	NA

\*themes not recorded for partially upheld

Importantly, where Stage 2 investigations have been upheld the CCT feedback to the service area giving advice for service improvements and any lessons that can be learned.

### 2.5.3 Complaint remedy

If the Council finds that injustice has been caused at any stage of a complaint investigation then a remedy which is proportionate, appropriate, and reasonable based on all the facts of the case will be offered. Remedies may include a letter of apology, a review of the procedure or policy used, a review of a process to deliver a service and, in exceptional circumstances, a payment which will often be a modest amount where the value is intended to be largely symbolic rather than financial. No such payments were made in 2023/24.

## 3.0 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

The Commission for Local Administration is an independent body funded by government grant which runs and oversees the work of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).





A complainant can approach the LGSCO at any time after making their complaint, however, the LGSCO will not normally take any action until the Council's own investigations have been concluded. When cases are accepted and investigated by the LGSCO consideration is given to assess any maladministration or fault by the Council and whether this has caused an injustice to the complainant.

### 3.1 LGSCO Annual Performance Summary

In July each year the LGSCO shares with every Council, and online as public information, a summary of complaints they have received and an average marker of performance across similar Councils for comparison. The statistics focus on 3 key areas: -

1. **Complaints upheld** – The LGSCO uphold complaints when they find fault in the Councils actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before the LGSCO investigated. The total number of investigations completed is shared to provide important context for the statistic.
2. **Compliance with recommendations** – The LGSCO recommend ways for Councils to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with LGSCO recommendations. The LGSCO suggest that failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.
3. **Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the Council upheld the complaint and LGSCO agreed with how the Council offered to put things right. The LGSCO encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit Councils that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

**Table 12 below** demonstrates the key annual LGSCO statistics for last two financial years and whether performance has improved, maintained or deteriorated.

Table 12	2022/23	2023/24	Direction of Travel
<b>LGSCO Investigations</b>	34	29	
<b>LGSCO Upheld Decisions</b>	26 (76%)	20 (69%)	
<b>Compliance with LGSCO recommendations</b>	100%	100%	
<b>Satisfactory remedy provided by the Council before reaching LGSCO</b>	0%	0%	

**Table 13 below** demonstrates the Council's performance against the key LGSCO statistics in 2023/24 compared with the average of all similar Councils.

<b>Table 13</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24 Average – Similar Councils</b>
<b>LGSCO Complaints upheld</b>	<b>69%</b>	80%
<b>Compliance with LGSCO recommendations</b>	<b>100%</b>	99%
<b>Satisfactory remedy provided by the Council before reaching LGSCO</b>	<b>0%</b>	14%

The LGSCO are one of the few Ombudsman schemes to publish the decisions they make. Cases that raise serious issues or matters of public interest are issued as public reports.

The following data, in tables 14 & 15 below, demonstrates Bradford's performance over 2023/24 and how Bradford fair in comparison to other similar and neighbouring authorities per LGSCO data.

<b>Table 14 Council (similar)</b>	<b>Uphold rate</b>	<b>National average of similar councils</b>
<b>Bradford</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Birmingham</b>	<b>87%</b>	
<b>Manchester</b>	<b>77%</b>	
<b>Liverpool</b>	<b>79%</b>	
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>75%</b>	
<b>Sheffield</b>	<b>83%</b>	

The outcomes above confirm that we are performing more favourably than all other similar councils listed and well below the average **(80%)** of all similar councils nationally.

<b>Table 15 Council (neighbouring)</b>	<b>Uphold rate</b>
<b>Bradford</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Calderdale</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Kirklees</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Wakefield</b>	<b>67%</b>

Our performance in comparison to our West Yorkshire neighbouring councils is less favourable to 2 others yet significantly better than the worst performing authority.

### 3.2 LGSCO Financial remedy

When a complainant has suffered an injustice the LGSCO tries to put them back into a position where they would have been had that error not occurred, with a focus on restoring services that have been denied and taking practical steps to put things right.

When the LGSCO decide that an organisation need to learn from the fault to prevent likely injustice to others in the future, they can recommend the action that the organisation needs to take known as service improvement. In almost all cases the LGSCO publish service improvement remedies on their website.

In 2023/24 the LGSCO upheld **21** complaints related to Bradford Council and awarded a total of **£20,400** in financial remedy.

Individual cases upheld by the LGSCO are detailed in Appendix A.

### 3.3 LGSCO comments

The annual LGSCO letter received in July 2024 stated the following in relation to Bradford Council's performance;

*"In last year's letter, it was noted that, despite raising the concern in previous years, we had continued to see late responses to our investigation enquiries. It is therefore disappointing that we have encountered similar problems this year; there were 11 instances where the Council failed to respond to our enquiries on time. In addition to the delays, there were instances of poor-quality and incomplete responses. This makes it difficult to progress investigations and increases the likelihood that we need to ask for more information. I, again, ask that you take action to improve responses to our enquiries; both in terms of timeliness and quality. It is important we are provided with the information we have asked for promptly, and that, where you encounter delays, you keep us informed."*

Of the **21** upheld decisions our Council failed to provide a satisfactory remedy in none (**0%**) of these cases before the complaint reached the Ombudsman (this compares to an average of **14%** in other similar councils). The Corporate Complaints Team (CCT) will be undertaking a review of processes, to see if any intervention can be included at an early stage where cases, on the balance of probabilities, are going to be upheld by the LGSCO. This however, will need to be balanced with the current budgetary situation where financial remedies may need to be considered.

The LGSCO have commented that they have encountered **11** instances in the reporting period where our council has failed to respond to their enquiries on time and extensions were requested. Analysis of the 11 instances shows that these relate to **7** individual cases (one case requested 2 extensions and a further case requested 4 extensions).

Following the LGSCO comments and analysis of the caseload, the CCT have identified **4** instances where the information provided was not what the Ombudsman had specifically requested. Of these 4 cases, 3 related to cases for the Bradford Children & Families Trust (BCFT) and the other was a Council department case. This feedback from the LGSCO has been shared with BCFT and liaison is ongoing to review how communications can be improved to ensure compliance with LGSCO expectations can be met in the future.

## 4.0 Training, Learning & Service Improvement

Complaint handling training has been provided by the CCT to officers, within Adults Services and Children's SEND service, who have responsibility of investigating and responding to complaints. The training provided guidance on writing stage 1 responses, information relating to investigation techniques, the importance of adhering to timescales, writing effective apologies and the Ombudsman complaint process. Bespoke training continues to be available to Managers and Responding officers to improve awareness and raise the standard of complaint handling, in addition to, the dedicated Effective Complaint Handling training package on Evolve for front line staff.

CCT staff have attended LGSCO run training modules on 'Effective Complaint Handling for Individuals' and LGSCO webinars throughout the reporting period to ensure CPD and knowledge of complaints themes and practices remains current. Published guidance produced by the LGSCO has been forwarded to services it relates to, in order to highlight issues and provide possible solutions to complaint themes identified by the Ombudsman.

It is recognised that complaints provide a tool for service improvement and lessons learned. This can be in the form of general reminders for staff, specific learning points resulting in changes to processes and the sharing of good practice. CCT monitors services and teams to ensure any agreed outcomes and actions from complaints are implemented within a timely manner. Specifically, work has been undertaken with Adult Services under their 'Learning From' model which aims to gather, analyse and disseminate learning from a number of workstreams including complaints.

Feedback from stage 2 investigations continues to provide services and individual officers, with advice and guidance relating to the quality of stage 1 responses. A number of officers from Children's SEND team have benefited from this feedback. Where stage 2 complaints are upheld, service area are informed of processes or procedures that have either not been followed or could be improved to prevent further complaints.

Common themes from complaints relating to the newly developed clean air zone have been discussed and scrutinised with the service to improve communications and working practices.

Additionally, work has been implemented alongside the Council's Web Content Team to improve the clarity of the Council's webforms to help differentiate between service requests and formal complaints to ensure these are routed to the correct services. This has reduced the number of service requests received in CCT via this route, enabling better management of customer expectations. It is noted however, that CCT continue to receive a large amount of either general enquiries or service requests via email or phone which customers perceive as complaints but can instead be passed to services to deal with as "business as usual" and thus avoid issues and concerns escalating to a formal complaint.



## 5.0 Key improvement actions implemented in 2023/24

<b>1. Reaffirming responsibilities and accountabilities for complaint handling across Departments and Services to improve performance</b>	<p>All Services now have a complaint handling champion known as a “link officer”. Network meetings have been held and a MS Teams channel created to provide them with support, advice and updates to be cascaded through the services they represent.</p> <p>Complaint handling performance reports issued monthly to CMT in relation to all Council Departments</p>
<b>2. Reviewing the Councils complaint handling policy focussing on the timescales for responding to complaints ensuring that they are, realistic, achievable, comparable to neighbouring Councils whilst demonstrating the Councils ambition to substantially improve both response times and the quality of responses.</b>	<p>The Council's complaint handling policy was reviewed and relaunched in July 2023 and is displayed on the Council's external website.</p>
<b>3. Reviewing the content of all external and internal websites to ensure up to date information is available for employees and Service users.</b>	<p>Both external and internal websites have been reviewed and updated to provide clarity, support and guidance to both complainants and Council staff responding to complaints.</p>
<b>4. Ensuring all those involved in complaint handling have access to specialist advice, support, guidance, and training material, including delivery of specific training were deemed necessary</b>	<p>A bespoke training package “Effective Complaint Handling” was created and delivered to a number of Managers within Adult Social Care and Special Education Needs service with a view to extending this rollout Council wide.</p>

## 6.0 Complaint Handling Code 2024

During 2023 the LGSCO published a Complaint Handling Code for consultation to all Local Authorities. The aim of the code is to provide a consistent approach to the handling of non-statutory complaints across all local authorities. Following extensive feedback, a re-drafted version was released by the LGSCO for Councils, as advice and guidance and good practice. A link to the code is here;

[Complaint Handling Code - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

The main aspects of changes to be introduced through the Complaint Handling Code include;

### Complaint Handling Resources

- Organisations should have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take



responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).

- Anyone responding to a complaint should have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They should also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.
- Organisations are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff should be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling.
- It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and resourced accordingly.

#### New Complaint Timescales

- Acknowledgement of all complaints within 5 working days.
- Stage 1 complaints to be resolved within 10 working days, with Councils able to apply a further 10 working day extension when considering complexity of individual cases.
- Stage 2 complaints to be resolved within 20 working days, with Councils able to apply a further 20 working days extension when considering complexity of individual cases.

Following consultation and feedback, the LGSCO made changes to their proposed complaint handling code. The main changes are;

- (i) The LGSCO have decided to remove their decision in the new code to no longer apply partially upheld as an outcome, so this will continue to be applied in future.
- (ii) The LGSCO has also decided to remove reference to accepting complaints via social media whilst stating that Council's should continue to allow complaints to be accepted from various channels.

The LGSCO have committed to working with Councils over the course of 2024-25 to understand the impact on services and will subsequently produce accompanying guidance by the end of 2024-25 financial year. The guidance will aim to assist Councils to embed the new code and timescales into their working practices over the course of 2025-26. All Councils are expected to fully implement the new code from April 2026 when the LGSCO will then also apply the code to their own processes and decision making from financial year 2026-27.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Overall, the Council's complaint handling performance has improved significantly when compared to the previous financial year. The Council's response rate for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints have increased by 15% and 11% respectively. This is largely due to the considerable amount of work done to improve feedback to services and delivery of training by the CCT to Officers involved in complaint handling.

## 8.0 Key improvement actions for 2024/25

<p><b>1. Further improve complaint handling performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that the timescales for responding to complaints are, realistic, achievable, comparable to neighbouring Councils whilst demonstrating the Council's ambition to substantially improve both response times and the quality of responses.</li> <li>- Benchmark performance with other comparable Council's and identify any learning</li> <li>- Begin preparatory work in readiness to introduce the new Complaint Handling code to working practices in 2025/26.</li> <li>- Work with colleagues in BCFT to improve communications to enable LGSCO queries to be dealt with more effectively both in terms of timeliness and quality.</li> <li>- Provide deep dive into departmental performance on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Ensure effective complaint handling remains a priority for Council Departments and Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a Complaint Handling Newsletter for circulation</li> <li>- Continually review the content of all internal websites to ensure up to date information is available for employees involved in Complaint Handling</li> <li>- Bespoke training available on Evolve for Managers and Responding Officers</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Reduce the numbers of complaints received</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce regular root cause analysis system reports for individual services</li> <li>- Ensure outcomes of complaints result in improved service delivery</li> <li>- Investigate and develop solutions to reduce escalation to Stage 2</li> <li>- Investigate and develop solutions to the increasing uphold rate</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Use learning from complaints to shape service improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to feedback to services where complaints are upheld</li> <li>- Encourage services to apply actions and learning from outcomes to drive service improvement</li> <li>- Regular attendance at DMT's to review complaints performance and learning points</li> <li>- Successful implementation of 'learning from' model developed with Adults Service to be rolled out across the authority</li> </ul>

## Appendix A – LGSCO Upheld complaints 2023-24

Summary of upheld complaint	LGSCO decision	Recommendations	LGSCO satisfied with remedy
Mr X says the Council failed to properly consider his complaint about light pollution	We will not investigate how the Council responded to Mr X's complaint about a neighbour's security light. This is because Mr X's complaint is made late to us and there are not good reasons for us to investigate now. We have found some fault by the Council in its complaint handling.	Within one month of my decision, apologise for the faults identified and pay Mr X £150 for his time and trouble.	Completed
Mrs X complains the Council's care provider, has failed to meet her son's needs and despite the Council upholding many of her complaints about this in December 2022, her son continues to lack support, leaving him at risk of harm	Based on the evidence the Council has taken action to ensure the provider improves its working practices and can evidence providing Mr Y with the support he has been assessed as needing. Nevertheless, the Council needs to make a symbolic payment to Mr Y to reflect the lack of support he experienced and the risk of harm he was put to. It also needs to send Mrs X an effective apology.	Within four weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write to Mrs X apologising for the lack of support her son received and the time and trouble she has been put to in pursuing her concerns, taking account of our published Guidance; and</li> <li>• pays Mr Y £300 to reflect the injustice he has been caused.</li> </ul>	Completed
Mr X complained the Council failed to properly consider complaints he made about a breach of planning control and alleged statutory nuisances from a neighbouring property.	Fault was found for raising Mr X's expectations about what action it would take in relation to his statutory nuisance complaints and for delay in the process. We also find fault with how the Council considered Mr X's complaint.	within one month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Mr X with a written apology for the injustice identified above</li> <li>• Pay Mr X £150 to recognise the uncertainty caused when it incorrectly told him it would serve a noise abatement notice</li> <li>• Pay Mr X £100 to recognise the trouble and upset caused by the extra time he spent in the complaint process</li> </ul>	Completed
Mr X complained the Council	We find the Council at fault for delays in	To remedy the injustice identified within one	Completed

failed to properly consider complaints he made about a breach of planning control and statutory nuisances at a neighbouring property.	communicating its decision with Mr X. We recommend the Council apologise and make a payment to recognise the uncertainty caused.	month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Mr X with a written apology for the injustice identified above</li> <li>• Pay Mr X £150 to recognise the uncertainty caused by the delay in confirming the outcome of his statutory nuisance complaint</li> </ul>	
Mr D complains on behalf of his disabled son about the Council's decision to refuse to fund previously agreed home adaptations.	We found fault by the Council which raised Mr D's expectations and caused him time and trouble.	<p>Within a month</p> <p>a) Apologise to Mr D and pay him £500 to acknowledge the time and trouble and distress he has been caused since March 2021.</p> <p>b) Explain the discretionary DFG application process to him and ask if he wishes to continue. If Mr D wishes to continue with an application, the Council should follow the process set out in its Housing Renewal Policy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the Housing Adaptations OT to carry out an assessment of whether the loft conversion is necessary and appropriate to meet Mr Y's care and support needs.</li> <li>- Ask Mr D to submit a written discretionary DFG application, enclosing the estimate of costs already obtained.</li> <li>- Ask its Housing Service to determine if the build is reasonable and practicable.</li> <li>- Put the application to the Review Panel to determine. In considering the application, the Council should take into account the possible purposes of a DFG. It may also be necessary to take a best interest decision about where</li> </ul>	Completed

		Mr Y should live, or whether the loft conversion is necessary.	
Miss Z complains about the actions of the Council when she requested an Education Health and Care assessment for her son, Y	We find fault because the Council took eleven months to notify Miss Z of its decision not to assess Y. The Council also took seven months to respond to Miss Z's complaint. This fault caused injustice because it frustrated Miss Z's right of appeal.	Within four weeks: Pay £300 to Miss Z in recognition of her time and trouble and her frustrated appeal rights. Within eight weeks the Council will provide evidence to show it has: Reminded relevant officers, either through staff training or a briefing paper, of the requirement to issue decision notifications to parents as per its statutory duty under Regulation 5(3) of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.	Completed
The Council was at fault for how it dealt with Mr B's application for a clean air zone exemption for his car. It did not apply its own criteria correctly.	The decision was not consistent with the procedure on the Council's website, which only refers to when a car was bought, not when it was registered. Applying the logic used in Mr B's decision would mean nobody moving to the area would ever qualify for an exemption. This was fault by the Council. It has offered to reconsider Mr B's application, which is an appropriate remedy.	a) Within 6 weeks 1) Reconsider Mr B's application using the correct CAZ exemption criteria (inviting him to submit relevant evidence if required). 2) Make a payment of £100 to recognise Mr B's inconvenience. b) Within three months ensure all staff who deal with CAZ exemption applications are properly trained on the exemption criteria.	Completed
Mrs B complains that the Children's Trust failed to provide the agreed post-adoption support services; failed responded to her or complete statutory visits and reviews; and failed to apply for compensation on the children's behalf. Mrs B also complains that the	There is fault by BCFT because it has acknowledged that it failed to provide the life story work and support required, failed to respond to Mrs B's contact or to visit the children as required, failed to apply for compensation, and to ensure that a child had the needed health review. The Trust's shortcomings have denied Mrs B and the children their right to redress through the	within one month 1) consider Mrs B's complaints at stage two of the statutory process and provide a response within the regulations. 2) complete the life story work it agreed to do (regardless of the ongoing complaints investigation). 3) Share this decision with relevant staff and remind them that eligible complaints should	Completed

Council has failed to take the action it agreed in its response to her complaint and refused to consider her complaint at stage two of its process when she requested this.	statutory complaints procedures. It is clear that Mrs B's aim was to access essential ongoing support for the family and that the lack of this is causing distress.	be referred to the statutory process.	
Mr X complained about the Council's failure to properly assess his eligibility for adaptations to his home for his disabled children.	Council is at fault -. The injustice to Mr X is that he cannot be satisfied the decision was made following consideration of all the relevant factors. It is entirely possible that the outcome would be the same, but that decision should be made in the right way and informed by an up-to-date assessment.	a) Apologise in writing to Mr X. b) Reconsider Mr X's request for DFG funding based on a new assessment that specifically addresses his concerns about heating and lack of space.	Completed
Mr B complained about excessive delay by BCFT in dealing with his complaint about children's services through the statutory complaints procedure.	the Council (BCFT) delayed excessively in completing two stages of the process which caused Mr B additional distress, harm and frustration.	within one month • to pay Mr B the agreed £5000; • to commit to providing three-monthly updates to Mr B on progress with the agreed actions; and • to commit to providing us with an update of agreed changes to the BCFT complaints service once it has completed its review in December 2023.	Completed
Miss F complains through her mother, Mrs J, that the Council has failed to provide the provision set out in her EHC plan since July 2021	We found there was service failure which caused Miss F to miss out on education for six terms and significant distress to Mrs J.	Within a month • Pay Mrs J £9,600 to be used for Miss F's educational benefit. • Pay Mrs J £1,500 to remedy the distress she has been caused.	Completed
Mr X complained the Council's building control service failed to properly inspect the drains of his	We found fault that will be remedied by the Council reviewing its practices and procedures to help avoid recurrence of the	To avoid recurrence of the fault the Council has agreed to within 3 months a) review its practice, procedures, record	Completed



house before he bought it. He said that because of this failure, his drains were not connected to the main sewer, causing significant impacts on his amenities, costs and disturbance.	fault.	keeping and use of document management systems to avoid problems identified in this report occurring again; and b) report the findings of its review and any changes it makes as a result to the Ombudsman and to the relevant Council scrutiny committee.	
Mrs X complained the Council's building control service failed to properly inspect the drains of her house before she bought it. She said that because of this failure, her drains were not connected to the main sewer, causing significant impacts on her amenities, costs and disturbance.	We found fault that will be remedied by the Council reviewing its practices and procedures to help avoid recurrence of the fault.	To avoid recurrence of the fault the Council has agreed to within 3 months a) review its practice, procedures, record keeping and use of document management systems to avoid problems identified in this report occurring again; and b) report the findings of its review and any changes it makes as a result to the Ombudsman and to the relevant Council scrutiny committee.	Completed
The Council accepted several failings in the care one of its Care Home's provided to an elderly resident.	The Council did not acknowledge the impact these failings had on the resident and her family. The fault caused an injustice. Before the complaint came to the Ombudsmen the Council had accepted, at various stages, there had been failures to: 1) Produce adequate care plans in relation to Mrs A's nutritional needs, use of codeine and bowel care, 2) Maintain adequate food charts, 3) Adhere to its Covid visiting policy, 4) Ensure staff acted professionally during a family visit, and 5) Call a member of the	Within 3 months of the final decision the Council should complete proportionate work to check whether there have been improvements in these areas.	Completed

	family after a GP visit.		
Mrs X, who was a foster carer, complained about the Trust's failure to properly investigate her complaint about inaccurate statements made by a social worker.	The Trust were at fault because it failed to carry out a specific enquiry and failed to amend inaccurate records in response to her complaint.	<p>Within four weeks</p> <p>a) Apologise in writing to Mrs X for the fault I have identified with its complaint handling.</p> <p>b) Amend the relevant records to reflect the errors that have been accepted by the Trust.</p> <p>c) Reflect on the issues raised in this decision statement and identify any areas of service improvement in complaint handling, particularly around making appropriate enquiries where there is a conflict of evidence. The Trust should prepare a short report setting out what it intends to do to ensure similar problems do not reoccur. This report should be sent to the Ombudsman.</p>	Completed
Mrs D complained about the Council's assessment of her mother's care needs in May 2022 and that it did not fully refund money spent on her care as a result. Also, that it was at fault for how it assessed her late father's care needs in June and August 2022.	The complaint was upheld around the Council's assessment of her mother's care needs in May 2022 and that it has not fully refunded money spent on care as a result. Also, that it was at fault for how it assessed her late father's care needs in June and August 2022. These faults have caused distress. We have set out actions we want the Council to take to remedy that injustice and improve services to avoid a repeat.	<p>Within one month</p> <p>a) Provide an apology to Mrs D in line with section 3.2 of our guidance on remedies</p> <p>b) Make a symbolic payment to Mrs D of £750 – to encompass the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £150 to recognise the distress caused by the faults around the assessment of Mrs C's needs;</li> <li>- £200 for time, trouble and frustration waiting for a refund of money spent on care charges to meet Mrs C's needs;</li> <li>- £150 for the distress arising from the flawed June 2023 assessment of Mr C's needs; and</li> <li>- £250 for the distress arising from the flawed August 2023 assessment of Mr C's needs.</li> </ul>	Completed



		<p>c) Repay Mrs C's care costs for the period 22 May to 5 June 2022 subject to the following terms - the Council can ask Mrs D for proof of the charges incurred.</p> <p>d) Repay Mr C's care costs for the period 22 August until his admission to hospital in September 2022, which total £352</p> <p>Within two months</p> <p>Brief all social care assessors accordingly, to make clear our expectations in this area.</p>	
Mrs X complained about the Council's response to her request to increase her support after her health deteriorated.	We found fault with time taken to carry out the assessment for Mrs Begum. There was no fault with the assessment itself. The Council carried out a review and decided Mrs X's needs could still be met within the existing personal budget. This was a decision the Council was entitled to make having carried out a face-to-face review of her circumstances.	<p>Within four weeks</p> <p>Apologise in writing to Mrs X and Mrs Y.</p>	Completed
Mr X complains that the Council reduced his housing priority band as he refused interim accommodation which could not accommodate his dog.	The Council is at fault as it did not accept the relief duty when Mr X's section 21 notice expired and when he disclosed domestic abuse. The Council also did not consider offering interim accommodation which could accommodate his dog. The Council is also at fault as it did not notify Mr X of his right to seek a review of its decision to reduce his housing priority. These faults caused avoidable uncertainty to Mr X and his partner, Ms Y.	<p>Within one month</p> <p>Apologise to Mr X and Ms Y and make a symbolic payment of £300.</p>	Completed
A care home, acting on behalf of the Council, failed to provide an	The Council failed to properly investigate the complaint, it accepted the word of the	<p>Within four weeks</p> <p>Apologise to Miss Y for the failings above and</p>	Completed

appropriate level of care to Miss Y.	care home and failed to give due weight to information from Miss Y's representative.	<p>make a payment of £500 in acknowledgment of her distress</p> <p>Apologise to Ms X for the failings set out above and make a payment of £250 in acknowledgement of her time and trouble pursuing the complaint with the Council, the care home, and this office.</p> <p>Within three months</p> <p>Discuss the findings with the Council's monitoring team and establish what action is required to address the failings by the care home and follow up with monitoring visits</p> <p>consider lessons learned in respect of complaint investigation;</p>	
Mrs X complains on behalf of Mrs Y, that Mrs Y's son, Z, has not received specific therapeutic provision detailed in his Education and Health Care Plan.	There was fault by the Council because it did not treat the lack of therapeutic provision with the urgency it required due to a dispute with a third party. This fault along with a delay in responding to Mrs X's complaint has caused Mrs Y frustration.	<p>Within one month</p> <p>a) apologise to Mrs Y for the faults identified in this statement</p> <p>b) pay Mrs Y a total of £500, to reflect her frustration at its faults in this case;</p> <p>c) arrange a meeting with Mrs Y and Z to discuss the options available to ensure he receives the therapeutic provision set out in his EHC Plan going forward.</p>	Completed