

Wandsworth Borough Council Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides statistics and context to the complaints received and closed by Wandsworth Council for all services during the year 2023/24. Wherever possible comparative analysis with previous years is included.
- 1.2 The report also provides case studies throughout that highlight where learning from complaints has been used to make improvements to service. Appendix 5 highlights outcomes and learning from Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), Appendix 7 highlights outcomes and learning from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and Appendix 9 provides learning from stage 2 corporate complaints across the Council.
- 1.3 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the overall numbers of complaints made to the Council and to provide a snapshot of how many and the types of the complaints which progress through each of the three complaints procedures for Wandsworth Council, and those which result in an investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Complaints are counted in the year in which they were closed.
- 1.4 **Section 2** sets out the background to the complaints process and the role of the Complaints Team.
- 1.5 **Section 4** provides information on the new Complaint Handling Codes. To ensure compliance, Members, through this report, are asked to endorse a new Corporate Complaints Policy that will reflect the requirements of the aligned Complaint Handling Codes and reduce the Key Performance Indicator for stage 2 complaints on time from 80% to 70%. This will reflect the reduction in complaint timescales the new Code requires.
- 1.6 A key part of an effective complaints system is to highlight areas for learning from those complaints that can inform ongoing improvement of services. Learning is set out throughout this report including specific case directorate case studies which evidence where learning from complaints has directly resulted in service improvements.
- 1.7 This year Wandsworth Council completed 965 complaints which is a 5% increase on the 921 complaints last year. It should be noted that only a very small proportion of interactions and contacts with the Council result in formal complaints, such context has been set out in greater detail in the report below.
- 1.8 In 2023-24 the LGSCO received 121 complaints for Wandsworth cases which resulted in 32 investigations, of which 27 were upheld, including 1 Public Report. This equates to 44% increase on the 84 complaints received last year and a 78% increase on the 18 detailed investigations in the previous year.
- 1.9 In 2023-24 the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) made determinations on 27 complaint cases which resulted in 93 orders (some level of maladministration). This is 238% increase on last year when determinations were made on 8 complaint cases which resulted in 10 orders. A substantial increase in housing complaints was expected as the HOS have increased awareness on tenants' rights to complaint to landlords, alongside new statutory powers to issue wider social orders under the Housing Regulation Act which offers wider protection to residents, as well as addressing individual complaints against landlords.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Alongside this, the demand for housing has continued to increase year on year due to a variety of factors such as the ongoing cost of living crisis and limited affordable tenancies in the private rental sector.

- 1.10 The increase in determinations and orders has resulted in an overall maladministration rate of 65% compared to 28% last year. The 65% maladministration rate is still lower than the national maladministration rate of 73%, when comparing to landlords of a similar size and type.
- 1.11 Across all stages and processes, this year 410 complaints were not upheld (42%), 268 were upheld (28%) and 287 (30%) were partially upheld.
- 1.12 As in previous years, 'service delay or failure' was the most raised issue of complaint (57%).
- 1.13 This year 760 (79%) of complaints at all stages and both corporate and statutory processes were responded to on time.
- 1.14 Breakdowns by directorate are detailed in **Section 5** of this report which provide more analysis on performance, trends and learning outcomes.
- 1.15 **Section 6** of the report provides further analysis of LGSCO performance. Wandsworth's average upheld rate of 84% equates to **8.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents** and matches the average of 8.2 per 100,000 residents of similar authorities.
- 1.16 The Council is still performing well in relation to similar sized boroughs. The average 'upheld' rate for the three statistical neighbouring boroughs with the closest profile to Wandsworth (Lambeth, Bromley and Enfield) is 86%. Whilst Wandsworth's upheld rate was 84%, the Council received 32 formal investigations compared to an average of 37 across its statistical neighbours.
- 1.17 As Wandsworth received 1 Public Report this year, the number of Public Reports issued by the LGSCO against Wandsworth Council is slightly above the average for its statistical neighbouring boroughs with 3 issued in the last five years (compared to an average of 2.25)
- 1.18 **Section 7** of the report provides further analysis of HOS performance. The Housing Ombudsman has reported in their annual Landlord Report that Wandsworth Council has a maladministration rate of 65% when compared to a national rate of 73% when comparing to landlords of a similar size, which are those with housing units above 10,000.
- 1.19 The final part of this report sets out key achievements this year and describes how, in the forthcoming year, the Complaints Team will prioritise supporting directorates with the requirements of the new aligned Complaints Handling Codes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Corporate Complaints Team's role is to support the organisation to ensure that the Council has effective and efficient complaints procedures, in line with best practice and statutory requirements. The Complaints Team also have responsibility to train and support

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Council officers to respond effectively to complaints and ensure learning from complaints feeds directly into service improvement.

- 2.2 The Council's response to complaints it receives remains a key element of its approach to the delivery of quality services. Dealing positively and swiftly with complaints continues to be a high priority task for Directors, managers and staff at all levels. The Council encourages residents and businesses to provide feedback on services, to make a complaint or comment or to submit a suggestion, through various channels and online arrangements.
- 2.3 All councils in England and Wales are required to provide a complaints procedure for people who are in receipt of council services. Wandsworth Borough Council follows three complaints procedures:
- a) The Corporate complaints procedure, revised 1 January 2021 and 1 April 2023
 - b) The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaint Regulations 2009
 - c) The Children Act 1989 Complaints Procedure.
- 2.4 The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual report for the complaints procedures at (b) and (c) above – these are submitted separately to the Health Committee and to the Education and Children Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.5 Data gathered for both the Adult and Children's Social Care annual reports has been included in this report to provide a complete picture of all complaints that the Council dealt with during the past year, from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 2.6 There is a statutory duty on Monitoring Officers to report to Council Members where there has been maladministration or service failure. This annual corporate complaints' report details the organisation's performance against internal performance measures as well as steps being taken to continually improve. improve.
- 2.7 The council's corporate complaints procedure is available on the public webpages. A useful definition of a complaint is provided below, along with a description of other enquiries which follow different procedures and are therefore not considered under Wandsworth's Council's corporate complaints' procedure.
- 2.8 A complaint is:
- “...an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals”.*
- 2.9 Other enquiries: In line with LGSCO guidance, the council now logs minor matters such as missed refuse collections, street related issues, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and fly tipping as '**faults**' or '**service requests.**' They are often resolved quickly by the service or the relevant contractor. However, if the same issue occurs repeatedly (more than twice), it is elevated to a formal stage 1 complaint.
- 2.10 Other matters which have a separate appeals procedure are:

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- Housing Benefit appeals
- Council Tax disputes
- Planning application appeals
- School admission appeals
- School exclusions
- Special Educational Needs and Disability decisions (Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Penalty Charge Notice appeals
- Homelessness decisions

- 2.11 Wherever possible, a corporate complaint should be dealt with at stage 1. If, however, the complainant is not satisfied with the response received or the action taken, the matter can be referred to a senior manager for a review of the way the complaint was handled (stage 2). There are separate complaint regulations for Adult Social Care complaints and some statutory functions for Children's Social Care
- 2.12 The timescale to respond at stage 1 is 20 working days and the review at stage 2 is currently 25 working days (total 45 days). Further recourse is open to the complainant through the LGSCO or the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), who may choose to investigate the matter to see if there has been evidence of fault leading to injustice by the Council or possible maladministration.
- 2.13 Complaints are counted in the year in which they were responded to or closed. Therefore 2023-24 complaint figures include complaints that will have been initiated in the previous year but then closed in the reporting year.

3 COMPLAINT HANDLING CODES

- 3.1 In February 2024, the HOS and LGSCO launched their aligned complaint handling codes. The codes set out best practice in complaints handling, supporting councils to respond to complaints effectively and fairly, resolve complaints promptly, use data to drive service improvements and encourage a positive culture of complaints.
- 3.2 The codes place leadership and governance as central to ensuring a good culture of complaints handling with an expectation that the codes will lead to high levels of complaints upheld at a local level with remedies already provided before they reach the Ombudsman. Councils will be required to annually self-assess compliance against the codes.
- 3.3 The HOS and LGSCO are clear that "high volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process". The aligned codes support this change in culture through clear guidance on effective complaints handling.
- 3.4 The most significant change is that published timescales in Wandsworth for corporate complaints will need to reduce from 20 to 10 days at stage 1, and from 25 days to 20 days at

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

stage 2 (with options to extend in exceptional circumstances). The HOS expected Council's to be compliant with their code by 1st April 2024. In March 2024 a decision was taken through S083(A) to put in place a temporary separate Corporate Complaints Process for housing complaints where recourse is to the Housing Ombudsman to ensure full compliance with the Housing Ombudsman by 1 April 2024.

- 3.5 The reduction in timescales will be challenging to meet – previously the council had purposely placed most emphasis on having an extended period at the earliest stage (1) to investigate and fully respond to, or rectify, a complaint. As such this change will cause challenges in meeting the current Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set at meeting 80% of stage 2 corporate complaints on time as set in April 2023 following an agreement by this committee. At that time, the timeframe for stage 2 responses increased from 15 working days to 25 working days.
- 3.6 By the end of year, on 31 March 2024, Wandsworth achieved a response rate of 74% within the target timeframe for stage 2 complaints. This is lower than the 80% target, indicating that directorates are facing challenges meeting such a high target amidst pressures on service delivery.
- 3.7 Given the aligned complaints handling codes have now reduced **stage 2 response times to 20 working days**, reducing the KPI to **70%** is more realistic. This recommended adjustment aims to balance the need for timely responses with the practical constraints faced by the directorates. It is important to continually review and adjust these targets to ensure they are both challenging and achievable.
- 3.8 There are several implications and risks flowing from the introduction of the aligned codes, these are alongside existing capacity and complaint casework demands. The codes will impact staffing capacity both within the central Complaints Team and in directorates. This stems from the changes in timescales to respond to complaints under the codes at both stage 1 and 2. There are also, various other requirements the central Complaints Team needs to ensure are in place and consistently met so that the Council remains fully compliant to the aligned codes.

4. OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

- 4.5 This section sets out the key messages regarding the number of complaints, the types of complaints, the timescales in which they were responded to, and a summary of the outcomes and learning.
- 4.6 Timescales and types of complaints for Adult and Children's statutory complaints have been separated as they follow a different process. Both Adult and Children's statutory complaints have a separate more detailed report as required by the complaints legislation. These reports will go separately to the relevant Adult and Children's Scrutiny Committees¹.
- 4.7 Where available, specific examples are explored for each Directorate in **Section 5** below but examples of learning from complaints are outlined below:

¹ Children's Committee 14th November 2024 and Health Committee 27th November 2024

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- **Housing Regeneration Directorate** have improved the housing repairs process by strengthening procedures to ensure that correspondence from residents is responded to on time. This has included ensuring the contractors understand the need for good communication on the progress of repairs. Management teams will regularly review how well residents are kept informed and hold regular meetings with contractors to ensure that service standards are continuously improved.
- **Environment and Community Services** has provided further training on the Corporate Complaints Process to Waste and Street Clearing Officers to ensure they can deal effectively with complaints in the future. This recognises the importance of consistent complaints handling across the organisation which is particularly pertinent since the introduction of the LGSCO Complaints Handling Code.
- **Adult Social Care**, through the statutory process has improved the customer journey has been improved by strengthening the quality of information and advice available at first contact, particularly around financial assessments and transparency about service wait times.
- **Children’s Social Care**, through the statutory complaints process, has improved work with young people to ensure that they understand the role of Future First and the role of housing and how each of the departments are different, carry out different tasks and have different duties and responsibilities.
- **Finance Directorate** has reviewed and improved the debt recovery process by providing additional training to officers in respect of bankruptcy situations to ensure procedures are followed correctly when further recovery should be halted.

4.8 Appendix 2 to this report provides figures for the whole Council and shows all corporate complaints by type, level and time and includes information on complaints received via the statutory reporting processes and equalities data. Appendix 3 provides the new Corporate Complaints Policy from April 2025, Appendix 4 provides key changes to the new Corporate Complaints Policy, Appendix 5 provides the learning arising from upheld LGSCO complaints. Appendix 6 provides the LGSCO Annual Review letter in respect of Wandsworth Borough Council. Appendix 7 provides a summary of the outcomes of investigations by the HOS during 2023-24. A link is provided to the Council’s self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code². Appendix 8 provides the HOS Landlord Report and Appendix 9 provides examples of learning from upheld or partly upheld stage 2 corporate complaints across all directorates.

4.9 As **table 1** below shows, the number of complaints has decreased in the last 4 years, although this year there has been a 5% increase on last year. In 2021-22 service requests were separated from formal complaints as including them was giving a distorted picture of the types of concerns the Council receives. Now, lower-level issues (service requests) are

² The Council’s self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code was approved on 3 July 2024 via the SO83(A) route [HO123 - Appendix 1 for Wandsworth Council's self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman for 2024](#)

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

resolved quickly, leaving the complaints process for more serious matters that require a full investigation.

Table 1: WBC total number of complaints 2020-21 to 2023-24

Year	Number of Complaints
2020/21	5600
2021/22	995
2022/23	921
2023/24	965

4.10 The volume of complaints should be set in context by looking at the wider picture of the level of contact and interaction the Council has with its residents and services users. For example, complaint numbers are low given that the Council’s Customer Services handled 156,150 customer calls (and 5,730 callback requests), 4,587 emails and 23,887 webchats. This year Wandsworth Council also handled approximately 8,782 Member Enquiries³.

Chart 1: Total number of complaints 2020-21 to 2023-24

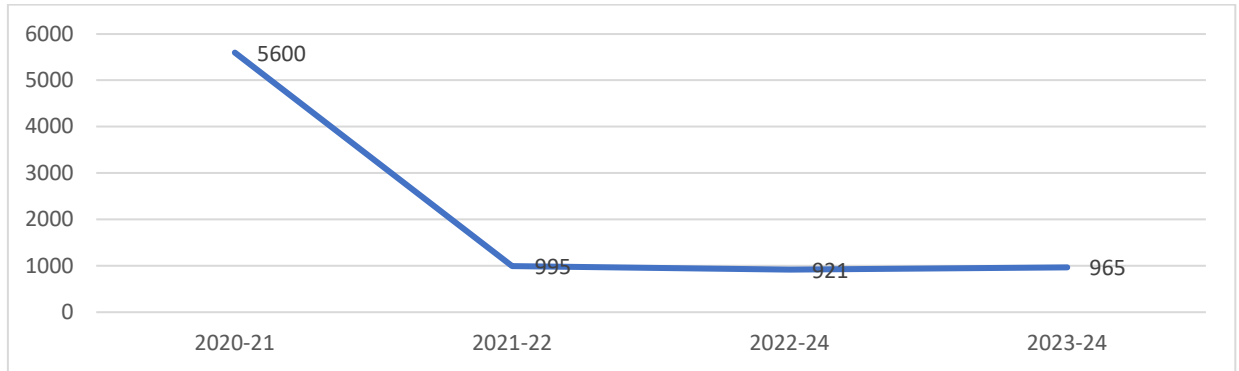
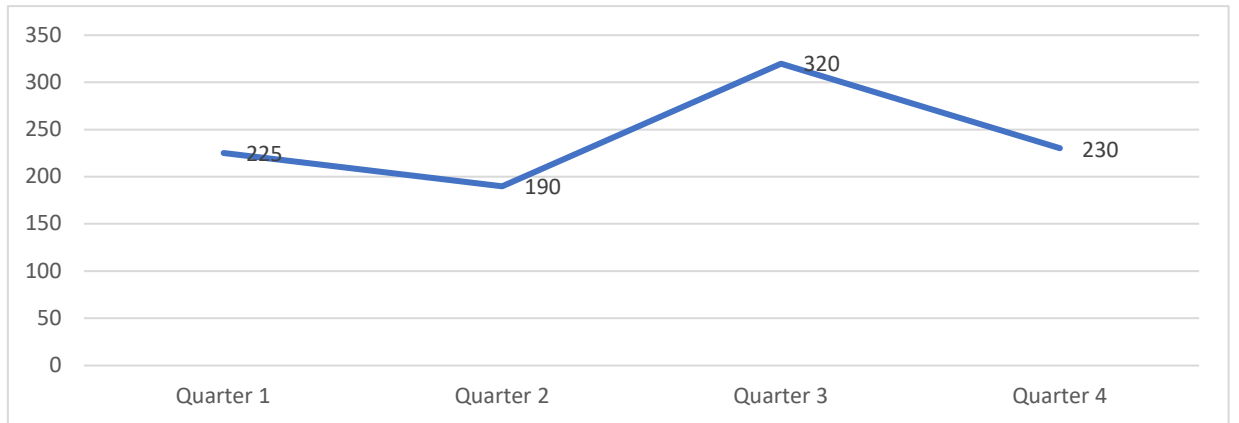


Chart 2: Total number of complaints across corporate and statutory process by quarters 2023-24

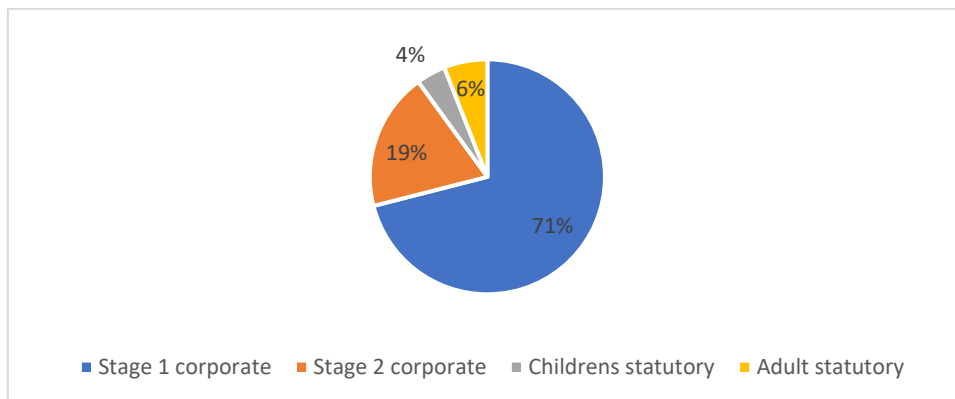


³ Does not include Quarter 1 data for Housing Regeneration Directorate

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 4.11 As **Chart 2** demonstrates, in Quarter 3 there was a significant spike in complaints compared to other quarters.
- 4.12 Whilst a detailed breakdown and analysis across directorates is provided later in the report, **Chart 3** below sets out the proportion of the 965 complaints across stages 1 and 2 corporate process and both statutory processes.
- Stage 1 corporate complaints accounted for most complaints. 682 complaints (71%) were completed which is a 3% increase on the 662 completed last year.
 - Stage 2 corporate complaints accounted for 183 (19%) complaints, which is a 5% increase on the 174 completed last year.
 - Children’s statutory complaints accounted for 37 (4%) complaints which is a 40% reduction on the 62 completed last year.
 - Adult statutory complaints accounted for 63 (6%) of complaints which is a 5% reduction on the 66 completed last year.

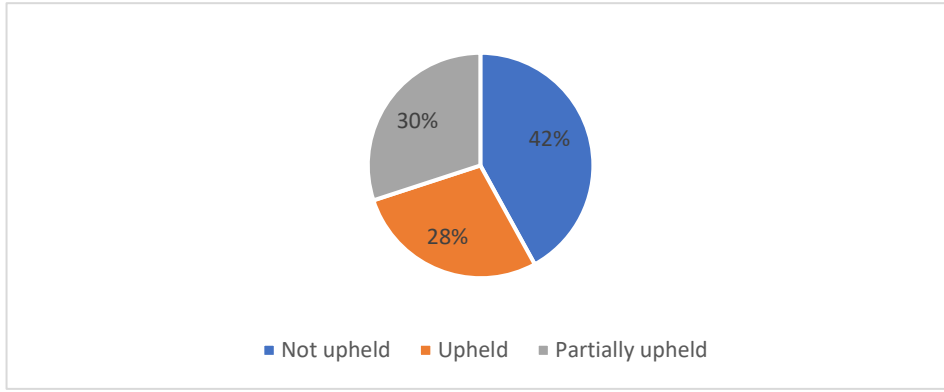
Chart 3: Percentage of complaints split by Corporate and Statutory processes 2023-24



- 4.13 Statutory complaint numbers and trends are examined in detail in the Adult and Children’s Statutory Complaints reports 2023-24 and a summary is provided in the commentary for the two directorates later in this report.
- 4.14 This year 183 corporate complaints (or 19%) escalated from stage 1 to stage 2. Last year 14% of complaints escalated to stage 2.
- 4.15 Across all stages and processes, this year 410 complaints were not upheld (42%), 268 were upheld (28%) and 287 (30%) were partially upheld. **Chart 3** below details the split by percentage.

Chart 4: Chart 4 percentage of complaints by outcome across all stages and types 2023/24

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24



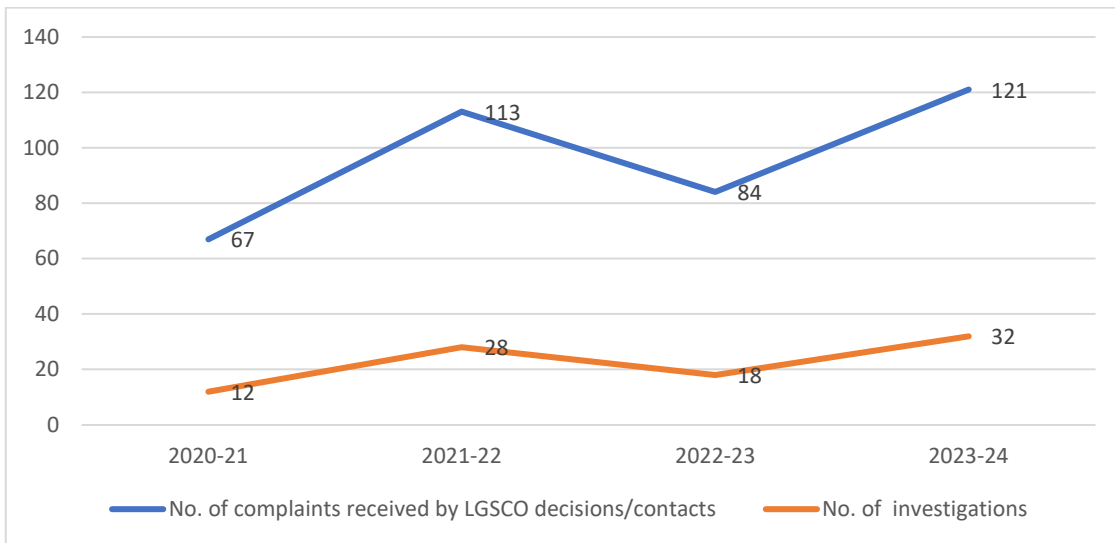
4.16 **Table 2** below shows outcome of complaints from for the past two years, following the removal of service requests from the complaints process. Across all three complaint outcomes, proportionally the numbers are similar.

Table 2 Complaints by outcome 2022/23 to 2023/24

Outcome	2022/23	2023/24
Upheld	234 (25%)	268 (28%)
Partially Upheld	249 (27%)	287 (30%)
Not Upheld	438 (48%)	410 (42%)
Total	921	965

4.17 In **2023-24** the LGSCO received 121 complaints for Wandsworth cases which resulted in 32 investigations, of which 27 were upheld. This equates to 44% increase on the 84 complaints received last year and a 78% increase on the 18 detailed investigations in the previous year.

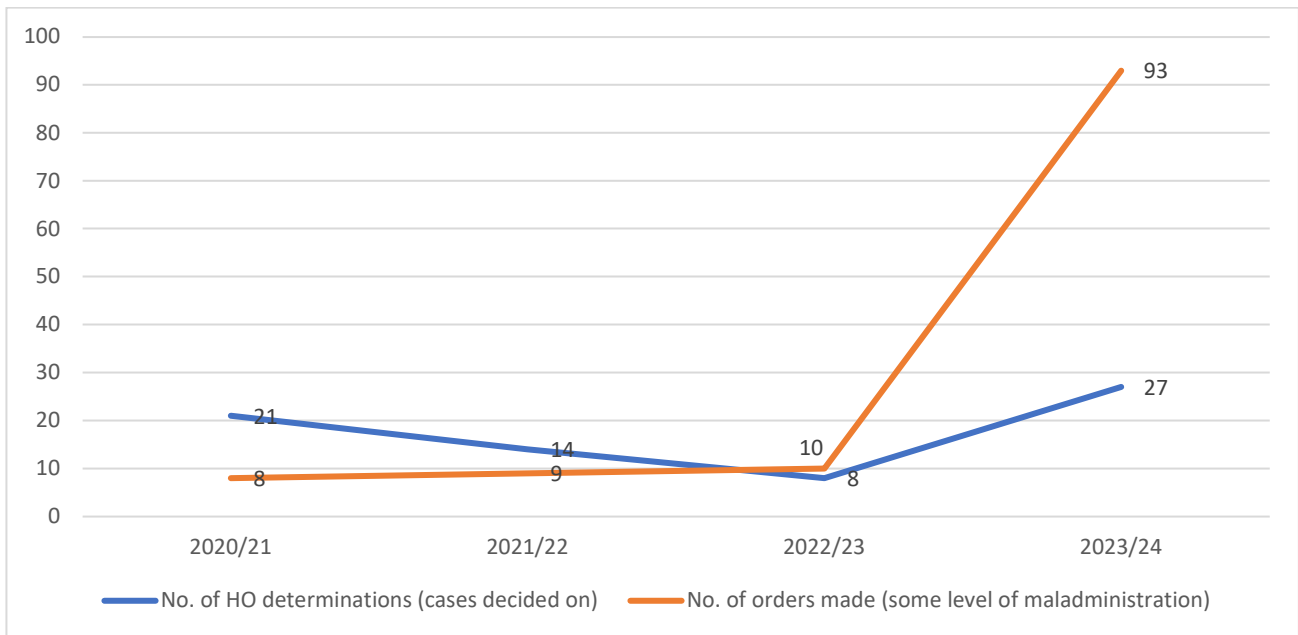
Chart 5 Number of LGSCO decisions and investigations: 2020/21 – 2023/24



Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

4.18 In 2022-23 the HOS made determinations on 27 cases which resulted in 93 orders (some level of maladministration). This is 238% increase on last year when determinations were made on 8 cases which resulted in 10 orders. This has resulted in an overall maladministration rate of 65% compared to 28% last year. This compares to a national maladministration rate of 73% when comparing to landlords of a similar size and type. These numbers exclude any cases which were determined as outside jurisdiction, withdrawn or premature complaints that were referred back to the Council’s complaints process.

Chart 6: Number of Housing Ombudsman cases closed 2020/21 – 2023/24



Type of complaints by directorate

4.19 This section sets out the type of complaints received, and the categories used for recording. **Table 3** shows the types of issues raised within complaints but on review, for the first time, the table does not include statutory complaints as these are categorised differently. Complaint types for statutory Adult and Children’s social care complaints are analysed in detail within the 2023-24 Statutory Complaint reports. Therefore, analysis of the types of corporate complaints this year should be based on the proportion of times raised when compared to previous years.

4.20 This year, and as in previous years, ‘service delay or failure’ was the most raised issue of complaint (57%). It is recognised that ‘service delay or failure’ is a broad category and there may be a benefit of splitting this out in future years so we can be clearer if complaints are mostly about delays or failures to deliver services in accordance with council procedures. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in complaints about ‘staff error/attitude’, although often this can be because complainants focus on the person they have been dealing with, when this might not be the main cause of the issue.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Table 3: Types of corporate complaints 2022-23 to 2023-24

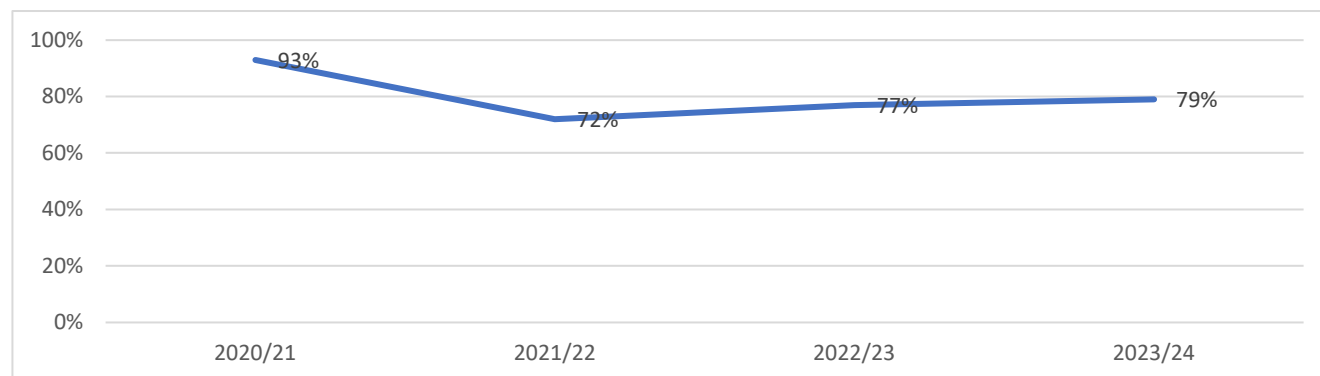
Type of Complaint	2022-23	2023-24
Service delay or failure	584 (63%)	481 (56%)
Outside service procedure	84 (9%)	74 (8%)
Staff error/attitude	97 (11%)	184 (21%)
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment	52 (6%)	45 (5%)
Financial charges/billings/costs	56 (6%)	32 (4%)
Poor/incorrect information	48 (5%)	49 (6%)
TOTAL	921 (including statutory complaints)	865 (not including statutory complaints)

4.21 A more detailed breakdown of types of types of complaints by Directorate is provided further in the report and a full breakdown of all types of complaints across the last three years is provided in **Appendix 2**. Data from previous years is merged with statutory complaints whereby the types of issues raised in statutory complaints were adjusted to fit in with types of issues raised in corporate complaints. As statutory complaints have different categories for the issues raised, this is the first year that we have reported on these separately. Whilst the Directorate sections of this report touch on these briefly, complaint types for statutory Adult and Children's social care complaints are analysed in detail within the 2023-24 Statutory Complaint reports.

Timescales for responding to complaints

4.22 This section sets out the timescales of complaints responded to. As shown in **chart 7**, this year 760 (79%) of complaints at all stages and both corporate and statutory processes were responded to on time. This is 3% higher than the 77% on time last year.

Chart 7: Overall % of complaints on time across corporate and statutory 2020-21 – 2023-24

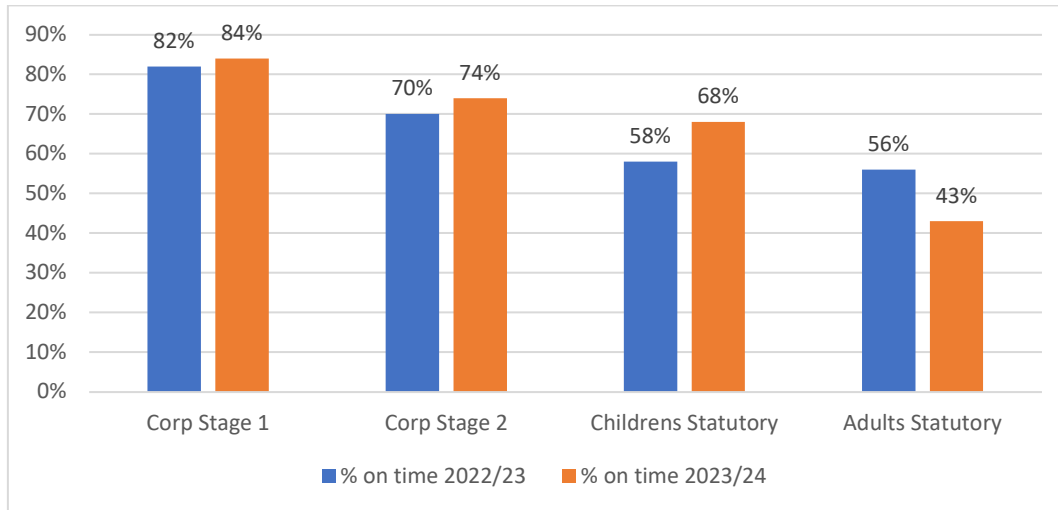


Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

4.23 When analysing the proportion of complaints completed within the target timescales, statutory social care (Adults and Children’s) complaints are also shown separately in **Chart 8** as they follow different procedures and timescales.

4.24 **Chart 8** below provides a breakdown of the percentage of complaints on time compared to last year.

Chart 8: Percentage of complaints on time by complaint processes and corporate stages 2022/23 and 2023/24



4.25 Stage 1 of the corporate process currently has a timescale of 20 working days to investigate and respond. This year 573 (84%) of the 682 stage 1 complaints were completed on time which is slightly higher than the 543 (82%) of the 662 stage 1 complaints completed on time last year.

4.26 At stage 2 of the corporate process, the Council has 25 working days to undertake a review of the stage 1 investigation and respond. Of the 183 stage 2 complaints, 135 (74%) were completed on time. This is higher than the 70% completed on time last year.

4.27 Children’s Statutory Complaints has also seen an improvement in timescales, completing 68% of complaints on time at all three stages compared to 58% last year. Adults completed 43% of complaints within the local 25-day target compared to 56% last year (although all complaints were resolved within the 6-month statutory timeframe). Across all 3 stages, children’s services completed 68% of complaints on time which is higher than the 58% on time last year.

5. BREAKDOWN BY DIRECTORATE

5.1 This section focuses on numbers of complaints, the timescales, and any directorate specific context that will give context to the complaint numbers. **Table 4** below shows the breakdown of complaints per Directorate (and includes statutory complaints) for 2023/24.

Table 4: Volume of Corporate complaints by directorate 2023-24

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

	Directorate Totals			2023/24	% +/-
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Environment and Community Services	4,714	273	244	229	-6%
Finance	255	185	188	153	-19%
Housing and Regeneration	342	276	291	403	+38%
Children's Services Corporate ⁴	111	59	63	64	+2%
Adult Social Care Corporate	7	18	6	1	-
Children's Service - Statutory	91	96	62	37	-40%
Adults Social Care - Statutory	80	80	66	63	-5%
Chief Executives Group	1	8	1	15	-
Total	5,600	995	921	965	

- 5.2 This year Housing and Regeneration completed the most complaints and saw a 38% increase on last year. This is to be expected as the demand for housing has increased significantly and the Housing Ombudsman Service continues to raise its profile, resulting in greater publicity about how leaseholders and tenants can raise complaints to landlords. Decreases in Finance are due to changes in the Directorate, which no longer includes Customer Services, Electoral Registration, HR and IT. The reduction in statutory complaints for Children's Social Care can be attributed to reduction in the number of young people being supported through child protection and a reduction in turnover rates for social workers which has provided more continuity to families.

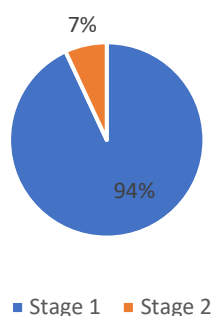
Environment and Community Services (ECS)

Chart 9: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and 'on time' for ESC 2023/24

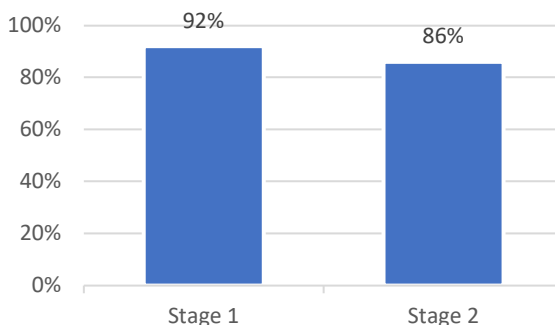
⁴ Numbers of corporate complaints for the adult and children's social care directorates were combined in previous reports. Going forward these two separate functions will be separated for reporting purposes.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

% of complaints by stage



Complaints 'on time' by stage



- 5.3 This year ECS completed 229 complaints compared to 244 last year which is an 6% decrease. Of the 229 complaints, 215 (94%) were completed at stage 1. This is a 6% decrease on the 229 stage 1 complaints completed last year. Also, 14 (7%) of complaints were completed at stage 2. This is a marginal decrease on the 15 complaints that escalated to stage 2 last year.
- 5.4 As well as the 229 complaints, there were a total of 28 LGSCO complaints received in the year with 8 of these resulting in full investigations following assessment. ESC also handled 3,065 Member Enquiries this year.
- 5.5 Whilst inevitably some complaints will escalate to stage 2, the relatively low numbers after stage 1 demonstrate the Directorate's commitment to putting things right at stage 1.
- 5.6 In terms of timeliness, 197 (92%) stage 1 complaints were completed on time and 12 (86%) stage 2 complaints were completed on time.
- 5.7 The type of complaint raised most often this year was 'service delay or failure' which was raised 153 times (67%). Other notable types are 'outside service procedure' which was raised 26 times (11%) and 'staff error/attitude' which was raised 29 times (13%).
- 5.8 The Council received a number of complaints in relation to the operation of the Battersea Park fireworks display. The Battersea Park fireworks display is a major event with significant numbers of attendees. There were a range complaints with regard to various different perceived issues, including gate closures, overall numbers of people, excessive noise. The Council has worked with Enable Leisure and Culture who organise and operate the fireworks display to address the issues raised as part of a review of the event to seek to deliver a better experience for all for the next year.
- 5.9 As a Directorate providing significant face to face and other direct interaction with customers across a range of locations and facilities, there is always a risk that service standards fall below an acceptable standard. Complaints about quality of facilities or council staff are taken seriously with complaint reviews used to drive improvements in customer service through staff training or to utilised to support improvements in ongoing maintenance of facilities.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 5.10 Learning from complaints resulted in the directorate seeking to enhance regular review and consolidation of complaints which will allow us to identify areas of improvement and to address causes of concerns even where a complaint is not upheld. Where appropriate dedicated duty officers will oversee incoming resident contact which will help to ensure a responsive and timely service.

Table 5: Types of complaint Environment & Community Services 2022-23 and 2023-24

Type of complaint	Times raised 2022-23	%	Times raised 2023-24	%
Service Delay or Failure	172	70%	153	67%
Outside Service Procedure	43	17%	26	11%
Staff Error/Attitude	16	7%	29	13%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	5	2%	17	7%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	4	2%	4	2%
Poor/Incorrect Information	4	2%	0	0%
	244		229	

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Case Study: Preventing Digital Exclusion in Planning Enforcement (Stage 1)

Background: A complaint was lodged regarding the Council's handling of a planning enforcement application. The complaint highlighted issues with the enforcement letter, noting the absence of information about the site visit that determined a breach, and the lack of details on any appeal procedures. Additionally, the complainant pointed out that the letter did not consider the age or disability of the recipient because that the only way to apply for planning permission was online, and they could not access the internet.

The investigation clarified to the resident the necessity of planning permission for building works and the Council's process for investigating planning control breaches. Regarding the complaint, the investigator explained that the Council can sometimes determine breaches without site visits, using digital photographs, mapping software, and planning records. It was also clarified that the letter was a Stage 1 informal warning, and at this stage, there is no appeals process as officers consider representations from the affected resident. Appeal rights are integrated into the planning process if the issue remains unresolved after the informal stage and enforcement action is taken. However, the investigator acknowledged that the resident was incorrectly advised that planning applications must be submitted online.

Learning: An apology was issued to the resident for the incorrect advice that planning applications must be submitted online, especially since they did not have internet access. The Planning Enforcement Team is committed to ensuring their services are accessible to all residents. As a result of the complaint, officers were reminded of the alternative options for submitting planning applications for residents without internet access. This issue was also discussed in the weekly enforcement team meeting, and officers have been instructed to inform residents of these options when inviting planning applications.

Case Study: Enhanced Waste Management Practices (stage 2)

Background: A local resident reported repeated failures in waste and recycling collection services over a span of three weeks. The resident's dissatisfaction was compounded by the council's delayed response to their request for a stage 2 complaint escalation.

The stage 2 review confirmed the resident's claims of non-collection, noting similar incidents in the past year. Despite efforts by the Waste Officer to resolve the issues, the stage 2 review identified communication shortcomings regarding providing timely updates and complaint escalation procedures.

Learning: Acknowledging the resident's proactive reporting and the inconvenience suffered, the council offered a compensatory payment of £50.00, adhering to LGSCO remedies guidance.

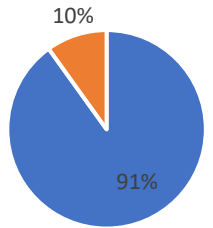
To mitigate future incidents, Waste and Street Officers received additional training on the Corporate Complaints process. The resident's address was also placed on a priority inspection list for weekly monitoring by both the Waste Officer and the collection contractor to avoid the situation from reoccurring.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Finance Directorate

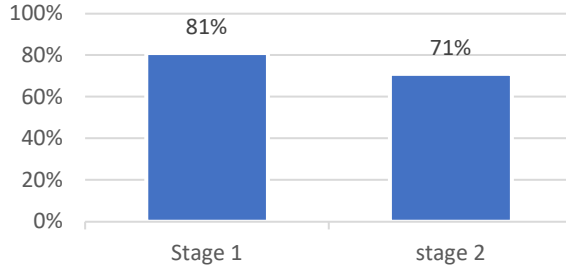
Chart 10: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and 'on time' for Finance 2023/24

% of complaints by stage



■ Stage 1 ■ Stage 2

% of complaints 'on time' by stage



■ Stage 1 ■ stage 2

- 5.11 In 2023-24 Finance completed 153 complaints which is 19% lower than the 188 completed last year. A direct comparison to previous years cannot be made due to changes in the Directorate, which no longer includes Customer Services, Electoral Registration, HR and IT. The directorate is responsible for processing in excess of 150,000 parking permits annually (resident, business and visitors permits) and also deals with other high-volume areas including almost 30,000 benefit claims, and over 150,000 Council Tax accounts.
- 5.12 139 (91%) were completed at stage 1 compared to 177 (94%) last year. Only 14 (10%) escalated to stage 2 of the process compared to 11 (6%) last year. Therefore, the Directorate continues to resolve most complaints at stage 1. As well as the 153 complaints, there were a total of 10 LGSCO complaints received in the year (9 of which related to Benefits and Council Tax). None of these resulted in full investigations following assessment. Finance also handled 166 Member Enquiries this year.
- 5.13 In terms of timeliness, 112 (81%) were on time at stage 1 compared to 124 (70%) last year. At stage 2, 10 (71%) complaints were completed on time compared to 11 (91%) completed on time last year. The 4 stage 2 complaints out of time were all responded to within 30 working days.
- 5.14 The most raised type of complaint was 'service delay or failure' which was raised 56 times (37%). There were 13 in regard to Parking, delays or issues obtaining permits or refunds, and 16 in relation to Benefits delays in processing, making payments or responding to correspondence. For context over 150,000 permits were issued and over 90,000 Benefit change in circumstances and new claims were processed last year. 'Outside service procedure' was raised 44 times and included disputing Council policy on parking permits, appealing PCN's and in Council Tax action taken by Enforcement Agents. Complaints about Financial Charges were raised 20 times mainly in relation to invoicing and bills related to Housing Benefit overpayments and other charges.
- 5.15 For Finance Directorate, 52 (33%) of complaints were upheld or partially upheld. The main learning from the complaints completed during 2023/24 was in relation to carrying out individual officer training and reviewing the allocation of resources. Any issues related to

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

third party providers have been escalated and prompt resolution monitored. Information on Websites have been reviewed and updated when they have contributed to a complaint.

Table 6: Types of complaint Finance 2022-23 and 2023 - 24

Type of complaint	Times raised 2022-23	%	Times raised 2023-24	%
Service Delay or Failure	91	48%	56	37%
Outside Service Procedure	30	16%	44	29%
Staff Error/Attitude	14	7%	11	7%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	0	0%	2	1%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	31	16%	20	13%
Poor/Incorrect Information	22	12%	20	13%
	188		153	

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Case Study Stage 1: Complaints about Parking Permit Policy and Customer Service

Background

Wandsworth Borough Council (WBC) residents faced unexpected Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) due to missing parking permit renewal reminders. Frustration grew as some residents found frontline staff unhelpful and were dissatisfied with being directed to appeal the PCNs. They sought explanations, permit issuance, and assurances of system improvements.

While not legally required, WBC routinely sends permit renewal reminders as a best practice. Investigations revealed that the missing reminders were not isolated incidents but affected entire batches. This issue escalated to senior management and generated numerous Member Enquiries.

As a result of the investigation, the Council quickly identified the problem as a systemic failure and raised it with the third-party permit system provider responsible for issuing reminders. Initial feedback from the provider was slow and incomplete, revealing the issue's widespread nature.

Learning

A working group was established to audit internal records and assess the problem's scope. The Council decided to cancel all PCNs linked to the reminder issue, ensuring fairness for affected residents.

Collaborative Problem-Solving: Permit officers, system providers, and parking appeal teams worked together to rescind challenged PCNs and proactively refund payments. Clear communication was maintained with residents and Members throughout the process.

Future-Proofing: The Council emphasised the need for a resilient permit reminder process in future system tenders, ensuring robust service expectations from third-party providers.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 2 Rent Collection

Background: A resident lodged a formal grievance regarding the Rent Collection Service’s communication methods. The complaint centered on receiving erroneous rent arrear notices despite the resident’s account being settled in full.

The tenant expressed dissatisfaction with the receipt of these notices and had previously been assured that their details would be removed from the automated notification system. Despite this, the issue persisted, leading to a Stage 1 complaint that was not fully resolved.

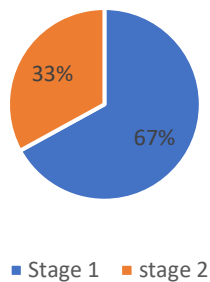
The Stage 2 review concurred with the initial findings, attributing the error to manual data entry oversights. It was determined that the failure to reapply a crucial system code resulted in the continued dispatch of unwarranted letters.

Learning: In response to the Stage 1 complaint, the Rent Collection Service instructed all officers to diligently reapply the necessary codes for tenants paying monthly. Further to the Stage 2 review, the Business Information team-initiated discussions with the software provider to explore automated solutions, thereby reducing the reliance on manual interventions.

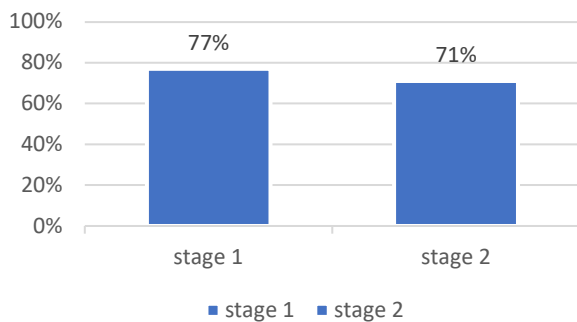
Housing and Regeneration Directorate

Chart 11: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and ‘on time’ or Housing and Regeneration 2023/24

% of complaints by stage



% of complaints 'on time' by stage



5.16 In 2023-24, the directorate completed 403 complaints which is a 38% increase on the 291 complaints completed last year and a 46% increase on the 276 completed in 2021-22. As well as the 403 complaints, HRD handled approximately 4,888 Member Enquiries⁵. They also received 55 LGSCO complaints with 15 of these resulting in full investigations following

⁵ Member Enquiry data for quarters 2 to 4 as data not available for quarter 1

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

assessment and closed 33 HOS complaints, with 27 of these resulting in full investigation and determinations.

- 5.17 This year, 271 (67%) were completed at stage 1 compared to 205 (70%) last year. This is a 32% increase. 132 (33%) escalated to stage 2 compared to 86 (30%). This is a 54% increase last year.
- 5.18 In the Housing Services division, many complaints relate to residents that were unhappy with the suitability of housing offered, disrepair in TA, delays in communication and response times from officers and also voicing dissatisfaction with their housing assessments and rehousing timeframes. The demand for housing has continued to increase year on year due to a variety of factors such as the ongoing cost of living crisis.
- 5.19 In the Housing Management division, most complaints relate to delays in the resolution of repairs, with a fewer number relating to the management of ASB and noise complaints. Responsive repairs continue to be a challenging service area and with around 75,000 responsive repairs orders issued annually with many requiring multi-trade attendance over a number of appointments it is unsurprising that complaints will arise given the number and variety of contractors we employ. With regard to anti-social behaviour complaints, it can also take a significant time to resolve these, and by their nature, it is not always possible to resolve a case to the resident's satisfaction. Furthermore, the department now monitors complaint types and looks to identify relevant learning from them.
- 5.20 The high proportion of stage 2 complaints can possibly be attributed to the above. The Housing Management Division see the majority of complaints escalated to stage 2 compared to other divisions; 84 (64%) of the 132 stage 2 complaints were logged to their teams. It is worth noting, that most of those complaints – 33 (39%) – were not upheld, with 23 upheld (27%) and 28 partially upheld (33%) respectively.
- 5.21 Where learning is shown, it is mostly with regards to following up on repair orders, allocating senior members of staff to monitor any outstanding repairs to completion, in addition to holding regular monthly meetings with contractors in the Housing Management division. While it can take time for repair orders to be completed by contractors due to access issues for example communication with residents by both Council staff and contractors regarding ongoing repairs is critical in maintaining or improving satisfaction levels with this service. The Housing Services division also recorded a number of stage 2 complaints throughout the year and its learning was mostly in the form of offering prompt and clear communication to clients in Temporary Accommodation, awaiting reassessments or applicants awaiting social housing, in addition to undertaking training and reviewing its procedures in line with the complaints raised about their teams and the services provided. While it can take time for officers to respond based on the exceedingly high demand for social housing, providing updates to clients and applicants can offer reassurance that their applications are being progressed, that assessment of any newly submitted evidence is being considered, as well as ensuring clients in temporary accommodation receive good service from the Property Management team and Temporary Accommodation team, and any concerns regarding suitability of accommodation are heard and responded to accordingly.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 5.22 In terms of timeliness, 210 (77%) of stage 1 complaints were completed on time compared to 165 (80%) last year. At stage 2, 94 (71%) of stage 2 complaints were completed on time compared to 59 (69%) last year.
- 5.23 For context, at the start of the financial year, the Housing complaints process had changed significantly with the move to follow the Housing Ombudsman's complaints handling code. Wherein the department's complaints that fell within the remit of the Housing Ombudsman changed from 20 working days to 10 working days for stage 1 complaints and stayed at 20 working days for stage 2. Despite this change, a significant rise in the number of complaints (a 38% rise), and ongoing challenges with its services affected by ongoing high demands upon it during the year, the department only saw a 2% decrease in performance for stage 1 responses in time, but a 3% improvement in stage 2 response times. It is worth noting that despite the increase in stage 2 complaints, the amount of responses submitted in time at stage 2 increased, (94 compared to the 59 responses in time submitted the previous year). Managers are regularly reminded of the importance of meeting deadlines and complaints performance and mitigation is discussed regularly in the departmental management team and senior management meetings.
- 5.24 The common topics that have been summarised in the category of 'Service Delay or Failure' are delays on repairs or unsatisfactory quality of repairs carried out, dissatisfaction with cases of anti-social behaviour that remain unsolved, dissatisfaction with the way the Council have handled their reports about the suitability of their temporary accommodation. The most common complaint topic was the delays on repairs, or the unsatisfactory quality of repairs made. The Housing Management division has increased its monitoring of contractor performance and reviewed its processes with its contractors to help deliver a better repair service to residents.

Table 7: Types of complaint Housing & Regeneration 2022-23 and 2023-24

Type of complaint	Times raised 2022-23	%	Times raised 2023-24	%
Service Delay or Failure	197	68%	213	53%
Outside Service Procedure	9	3%	2	1%
Staff Error/Attitude	41	14%	130	32%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	33	11%	25	6%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	4	1%	8	2%
Poor/Incorrect Information	7	2%	25	6%
	291		403	

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24**Learning from complaints: Homelessness application (Stage 1)**

Background: A resident expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of their homelessness application, specifically citing delays in decision-making and poor communication with the caseworker. The investigation confirmed that the council fulfilled its statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996, providing suitable temporary accommodation and considering the resident's needs as per the Equality Act 2010. Nonetheless, the investigation acknowledged a delay beyond the expected 57-day decision period as stipulated in the Homelessness Code of Guidance and recognised the need for improved communication.

Learning: The complaint was amicably resolved at stage 1. Housing service managers issued instructions to housing officers emphasising the importance of timely investigations, consistent updates to residents, and prioritisation of tasks. Additionally, housing officers were reminded to adopt an empathetic approach when dealing with distressing situations. Comprehensive training was conducted to reinforce the significance of understanding residents' circumstances to provide appropriate responses and actions. Housing officers were also briefed on the procedural standards for conducting inquiries in line with their responsibilities, ensuring measures are in place to alleviate individuals' experiences or situations.

Case Study: Addressing Disability Considerations in Housing Refurbishments (stage 2)

Background: A tenant expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of housing refurbishment, following an Occupational Therapy assessment that determined that the property was now unsuitable due to the tenant's newly assessed disabilities. During the interim period before re-housing, some pre-planned refurbishments still took place, however, the tenant felt neglected, citing insufficient assistance and a perceived lack of understanding regarding disabilities when they required help to prepare for the refurbishments.

The Stage 2 review empathised with the tenant's predicament, acknowledging the unfortunate timing of the disability assessment post-move-in and the subsequent need for re-housing. It was concluded that reasonable adjustments were indeed warranted to aid the tenant in preparing for the refurbishments to the current property.

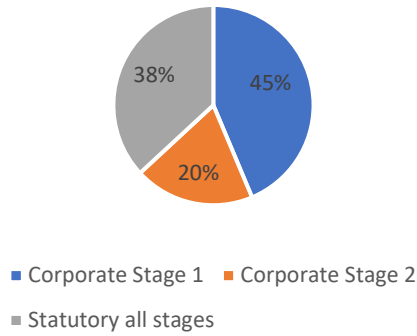
Learning: The stage 2 review highlighted the imperative need for staff involved in similar works to consider reasonable adjustments for individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently, the manager overseeing the major works team has initiated additional training focused on the Equality Act 2010 and the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

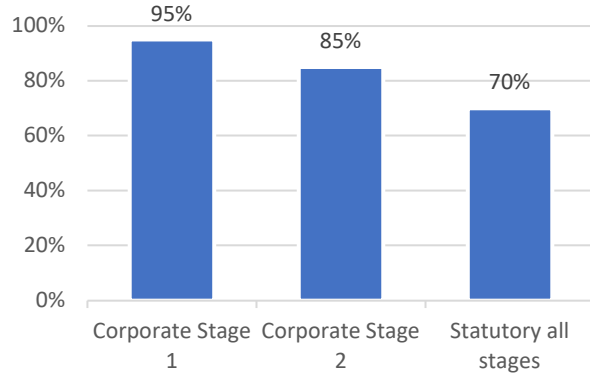
Education and Children’s Services

Chart 12: Percentage of corporate (by stage) and statutory complaints completed and 'on time' for Education and Children’s Services 2023/24

% of complaints by corporate stages and processes



% of complaints 'on time' by corporate stages and processes



5.25 The department receives two types of complaint and deals with them under separate processes:

- (i) Corporate complaints: these relate to non-statutory services which have not met the expectations of clients, perceived or actual attitudes of staff, or where clients have not achieved the outcome, they desired. These can be received from any service user or parent using any Education or Children’s Service, e.g, education welfare, school admissions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) etc.
- (ii) Children’s statutory complaints relate to complaints made by a child, young person (or their representative), who receives or is entitled to receive, a service relating to specialist provision covered under the Children Act 1989 and subsequent amendments made in 2004 and 2006, delivered by children’s services. Where a complainant is not eligible to access this statutory procedure, the Council’s corporate complaints procedure is applied.

5.26 In total, the Directorate completed 101 complaints which is a 19% decrease on the 125 complaints last year. Additionally, there were a total of 15 LGSCO complaints received in the year, 6 of these resulted in full investigations following assessment. As well as the 101 complaints, Childrens Services handled 217 Member Enquiries.

- 44 (45%) were at stage 1 of the corporate process which is a 4% decrease on the 46 (27%) last year.
- 20 (20%) were at stage 2 of the corporate process, which is an 18% increase on the 17 (11%) completed last year.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 37 (38%) were completed through the statutory process compared to 62 (62%) last year. Statutory complaints have decreased by 40%⁶.

5.27 As the number of corporate complaints have only marginally changed, the overall decrease is due to a reduction in statutory complaints which have decreased by 40%. The decrease in statutory complaints could also be positively impacted in the reduction of young people being supported. For example, last year there were 900 new Section 47 (Child Protection) enquiries, but this year only 479 which is a 47% decrease. As a high number of complaints are from parents/guardians whose families are subject to Child Protection enquiries, this overall reduction will have impacted on statutory complaint numbers.

5.28 There has been a notable improvement in the timeliness of responding to corporate and statutory complaints:

- 42 (95%) stage 1 corporate complaints were completed on time compared to 40 (87%) last year.
- 17 (85%) stage 2 corporate complaints were completed on time compared to 11 (65%) last year
- 26 (70%) of statutory complaints across all 3 stages⁷ were responded to on time compared to 25 (69%) last year.

5.29 At stage 1 of the corporate process stage 1 complaints were split as follows:

- 27 were for SEND/Education which is a 25% reduction on the 36 last year.
- 11 were for Children's Social Care.
- 1 complaint was for Early Help which is the same as last year.
- 5 complaints were for Business Resources which is the same as last year.

⁶ A full breakdown of statutory complaints across stages is provided in the Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints report 2023/24 submitted to Children's Scrutiny Committee.

⁷ Statutory stage 2 requires an Independent Person to oversee the investigation. The Council also use Independent Officers to carry out the main investigation. Statutory stage 3 involves a complaints panel made up of 3 Independent Officers and the Independent Officer and Independent Person appointed to carry out the stage 2 investigation.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Table 8: Types of complaint for the 59 stage 1 and 2 corporate complaints for Children's Services 2022-23 and 2023-24

Type of complaint	Times raised 2022-23	%	Times raised 2023-24	%
Service Delay or Failure	92	74%	54	84%
Outside Service Procedure	1	1%	2	3%
Staff Error/Attitude	17	14%	6	9%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	8	6%	1	2%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	1	1%	0	0
Poor/Incorrect Information	6	5%	1	2%
	125 (including statutory)		64 (corporate only)	

5.30 For SEND/Education corporate complaints key learning has focused on:

- **Team Restructuring and Capacity Enhancement:** Senior managers restructured the teams and increased capacity to address outstanding work, implementing changes to internal processes to reduce the likelihood of future issues. The service also reduced its reliance on agency staff by recruiting new permanent members. The SEND team now has distinct review teams and a full data audit to track and action annual reviews in accordance with the law.
- **Commissioning and Delivery of EHCP:** Whilst acknowledging that recruitment and retention of staff in the NHS is a national issue, the SEND service has reviewed therapy contracts with health providers through a Joint Commissioning Strategy. This included a review of its service level agreements to ensure there are set time limits in delivery once new Plans, aiming to minimise any delays.
- **Improved Inter-Service Communication:** Communication protocols were agreed upon between Pupil Services and the SEND and Inclusion teams to improve communication with families. Additionally training by SEND is delivered annually across all key areas – housing, health and social care.
- **Joint Approach for Out-of-School Children:** Pupil Services and a representative from the Pupil Referral Unit attended the Education Welfare Service's monthly case review

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

meetings, resulting in improved communications, a more collaborative approach to decision-making and better outcomes for children out of school.

5.31 For statutory social care complaints key learning has focused on:

- **Supporting Care Leavers:** Improved work with young people to ensure that they understand the role of Future First and the role of housing and how each of the departments are different and carry out different tasks and have different duties and responsibilities.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Identified and rectified communication gaps by offering interpreter services, ensuring comprehensive understanding for families where English was not the first language and acknowledged the unique challenges of working with individuals with neurodivergence, adapting communication and partnership strategies accordingly.
- **Father Engagement:** Recognised and promoted the active role of fathers in child and family assessments, fostering their involvement in decision-making processes.
- **Addressing Domestic Abuse:** Navigated the complexities of domestic abuse allegations by facilitating family meetings and Family Group Conferences, enabling families to find sustainable solutions.
- **Service Improvement:** Undertook a reflective approach to enhance service delivery, focusing on improved communication, decision-making, and support for disabled children and their families. Prioritised the prompt completion of child and family assessments, providing clear information about available resources for disabled children and their families.
- **Record Keeping:** Emphasised the importance of documenting all conversations and ensuring parents felt heard and taken seriously and that documents and assessments are shared with parents in a timely manner.
- **Direct Payments Process:** Streamlined the Direct Payments process, ensuring clear explanations were provided and progress inquiries were followed up.
- **Kind Communication:** Strived to connect better with families, ensuring communication was kind, respectful, and attuned, even during difficult conversations.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Case study Enhancing Communication in Social Care and Housing Services (stage 1 corporate)

Background: A parent with hearing difficulties and a non-English first language reported challenges in communication with social care and housing services during their re-housing process. The parent experienced difficulties in understanding written communications and requested that correspondence be provided in plain English, citing non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by the council. The social work team led the complaint resolution process and issued an apology for the oversight in communication. They acknowledged the necessity of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the parent's needs.

Learning: The case emphasised the critical importance of clear, accessible communication and highlighted the responsibility of social workers to verify and accommodate preferred methods of communication. This ensures adherence to the Equality Act 2010 and the provision of necessary adjustments for individuals with disabilities. The case also highlighted the potential for using alternative communication methods, such as including a named friend or family member in emails, sending video messages in British Sign Language (BSL), or utilising Microsoft Teams with a BSL interpreter for future interactions.

Case Study: Streamlining Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services (stage 2 corporate)

Background: A parental complaint was made against the council for failing to implement the provisions outlined in their child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The complainant expressed dissatisfaction with the Stage 1 investigation, which they felt did not adequately address the school's failure to implement the educational special provision as stipulated in the EHCP, and the delays in rectifying this.

The Stage 2 review concurred with the Stage 1 findings, upholding the complaint due to the absence of procedures for tracking annual reviews at the time. The council extended profound apologies for this oversight. Additionally, the review addressed other points of complaint concerning the school and acknowledged the family's challenges.

Learnings: Following the complaint, SEND officers reflected on the issues raised to enhance their personal practice. The council has also restructured its SEND services to ensure teams have sufficient capacity to fulfil statutory obligations in a legally compliant manner that meets Wandsworth families' needs. Significant efforts have been made to overhaul current processes and procedures for annual reviews. With increased staffing, distinct review teams, and a full data audit, the SEND team can now proactively track and action annual reviews in accordance with legal requirements. An Annual Review action plan has also been developed to guide future operations.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Adult Social Care and Public Health

- 5.32 This year the Directorate only received 1 corporate complaint which was completed at stage 1. Corporate complaint numbers are low as most complaints for Adult Social Care are processed through the statutory complaint's procedure. For this reason, this section of the report gives brief overview of statutory complaint performance. A full breakdown and analysis of complaints made through the Adult Statutory Process is provided in the Adults Statutory Annual Report 2023/24.
- 5.33 Adult Social Care completed 63 complaints through the statutory process, which is a 5% decrease on the 66 statutory complaints last year. Additionally, there were a total of 13 LGSCO complaints received in the year but only 3 of these resulted in full investigations following assessment. Wandsworth Adult Social Care also handled 326 Member Enquiries.
- 5.34 In terms of timeliness 27 (42%) of the 63 statutory complaints were completed within the 25-day local target. This compares to 56% on time last year. Where longer was needed to complete a complaint investigation, additional time was agreed with the complainant.
- 5.35 The Statutory complaints legislation does not provide a required timescale to respond to complaints, other than to ask Authorities to risk assess complaints and respond within an appropriate timescale (full resolution should be achieved within six months). This flexibility recognises the complexity of Adult Social Care complaints, which often require input from multiple teams, and at times, partner organisations. The focus within Adult Social Care is the quality of responses and achieving resolution within this process with no defined stages.
- 5.36 This year key learning from statutory complaints, is briefly summarised as:
- **Enhanced First Contact Services:** The customer journey has been improved by strengthening the quality and consistency of information and advice provided by our First Contact team, particularly around financial assessments, and transparency on estimated waiting times for assessment.
 - **Continuous improvement of case recording:** Ongoing training has emphasised the importance of high-quality case recording, meeting our high standard, to ensure that language and terminology is suitable for the person receiving services. (Community Advice and Support Team)
 - **Robust Information Governance:** Staff have been reminded of the requirement to obtain consent from residents, before sharing information with other professionals or involving their family members in care planning, as well as refreshing their knowledge of the Subject Access Request process. (Mental Health)
 - **Communication excellence:** A continuous focus on communication with residents; including the need to set realistic expectations about timeframes, clarify the scope of a Social Worker's responsibilities, and present complex information succinctly for better comprehension by residents drawing on services. (Locality services)
 - **Seamless Transition for Young Adults:** strengthening practitioner expertise in Housing processes and the need for transparent communication about case statuses, has ensured that young adults are consistently well-informed throughout their transition. This has included engaging earlier to allow sufficient time to assess needs and plan services. (Transitions service).

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- **Quality Assurance in Care Services:** Collaborating more closely with care providers has improved the quality of externally provided care, by ensuring providers signpost to complaint procedures, meticulously record care visits, escalate issues promptly to the Council, and improve invoicing processes to minimise charging errors. (Quality Assurance and Contract Monitoring Team).
- **Partnership Enhancement:** fostering stronger collaborative relationships with partner organisations has provided clarity for residents about which agency is responsible for certain care tasks. Where helpful, this is documented in writing for residents drawing on services, reflecting a dedication to transparency and coordinated efforts (Learning Disabilities).
- **Transition to housing placements:** To prevent delays in transition to new housing placements, teams have been reminded of the importance of adhering to established processes, ensuring communication remains clear and consistent throughout, diligently exploring all potential options from the start and offering support with benefit applications (Mental Health).

Learning from complaints: Case study LGSCO

Background

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) investigated a complaint concerning reported and repeated failures in timely invoicing for monthly care services provided by a domiciliary care provider. The complainant was dissatisfied that, despite their initial complaint, the errors recurred, making it difficult to track charges, which unfortunately led to an overpayment exceeding £1,000 for care visits that had not been provided.

This issue arose when the care provider stopped sending a breakdown of charges, and invoices were issued late, compounded by the resident drawing on services being admitted to hospital and care visits stopping temporarily. The Council confirmed that the care provider had suffered a cyber-attack and no longer had data on the carer visits. The LGSCO found that while the Council attempted to rectify the situation, there was no evidence of discussions with the care provider or the Quality Assurance team about the issues or how the Council would ensure accurate invoicing for people during the period in question.

Learning

The Council apologised and provided a financial remedy to the complainant for the distress caused by faulty invoicing. The Council also ensured that the provider issued itemised invoices, reminded the Payments Team to escalate invoicing problems with providers to the Quality Assurance team, and discussed invoicing issues with the care provider to ensure a plan was in place to prevent future delays.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S DIRECTORATE

- 5.37 This year there were 15 complaints for the Chief Executive’s directorate compared to only 1 last year, and therefore no comparative data has been provided.
- 5.38 Of the 15 complaints, 12 were at stage 1 and 3 were at stage 2. No complaints for the Chief Executive’s Office were escalated to the LGSCO this year. Also, the Chief Executive’s directorate responded to 120 Member Enquiries.
- 5.39 Of the 12 stage 1 complaints, 100% were on time. None of the 3 stage 2 complaints was on time.
- 5.40 The complaints were for the following service areas:
 - 5 stage 1 complaints were for Customer Services. 2 of these escalated to stage 2.
 - 1 stage 1 complaint was for the Complaints Team. This escalated to stage 2
 - 6 stage 1 complaints were for Electoral Services. None of these escalated to stage 2 within this reporting year.

Table 9: Types of stage 1 and 2 corporate complaints for Chief Executive’s Directorate 2022-23 and 2023-24

Type of complaints	Times raised 2023-24
Service Delay or Failure	5
Outside Service Procedure	0
Staff Error/Attitude	8
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	0
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	0
Poor/Incorrect Information	2
	15

6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

LGSCO decisions

- 6.1 The LGSCO The LGSCO issued Wandsworth’s Annual Review letter for 2023-24 on 17 July and all Councils’ review letters were published on their website on 24 July 2024.
- 6.2 For most of the reporting year, Paul Najsarek, acted as Interim Ombudsman. In February 2024, Amerdeep Somal was appointed as Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In her Annual Letter, Amerdeep Somal highlighted awareness of the difficult financial and service demands that make continuous improvement from complaints a challenge for local councils. Despite this the Ombudsman will continue to hold organisations to account by recommending actions to remedy injustice and have great confidence in the value contribution that complaints and their swift resolution, provide to improve services for the public.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 6.3 In 2023/24 the LGSCO registered 17,937 complaints compared to 15,488 last year. Of these, 4,003 were investigated and 3,215 were upheld. The LGSCO issued 27 public interest reports which is lower than the 38 public interest reports last year.
- 6.4 Across all Local Authorities, 26% of complaints were for Education & Childrens Services, 16% were for Housing, 14% were for Adult Social Care, 12% were for Highways and Transport, 10% were for Planning and Development, 10% were for Environmental Regulation, 10% were for Planning & Development ,7% were for Benefits and Tax and 5% were for other Corporate Services. A more detailed breakdown is provided in the LGSCO Annual review 2023-24 <https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6627/Annual-Review-of-Local-Government-Complaints-2023-24.pdf> [Annual Review of Local Government Complaints](#)
- 6.5 This year's Annual Letter reflected that in the last 12 months, the key areas of concern were about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision and Adult Social Care which is the same as last year. The LGSCO have acknowledged that the SEND system is not working as monies available are not sufficient and for Adult Social Care, discharging statutory requirements and delivering services that people are entitled to remains a significant challenging for Local Authorities across the country.
- 6.6 When broken down for London Boroughs, 4,187 complaints were made to the LGSCO and 852 were investigated. The most complaints upheld by category were Housing and Education and Children's Services. With regards to Housing the LGSCO recognised that the supply of suitable council housing and supporting people with the risk of homelessness is a theme across the country; however, in London, there is a particular issue with local authorities accepting their duty to provide homelessness relief and placing people and families in unsuitable temporary accommodation.

LGSCO local level decisions

- 6.7 The increase in LGSCO complaints this year as demonstrated on Chart 5, page 11 of this report, is in line with the increase nationally with regards to the number of complaints the LGSCO has received and investigated across all councils.
- 6.8 The LGSCO received 121 complaints for Wandsworth which, following assessment, resulted in 32 investigations. This is a 44% increase on the 84 complaints last year and a 7% increase on the 113 complaints in 2021-22. Investigations have increased to 32 this year compared to 18 last year which is a 78% increase. Fault was found in 27 of the 32 investigations which has led to an 84% upheld rate which is slightly lower than the average upheld rate for all authorities of 85%.
- 6.9 Wandsworth's average upheld rate of 84% equates to **8.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents** and matches the average of 8.2 per 100,000 residents of similar authorities.
- 6.10 The Council is still performing well in relation to similar sized boroughs. The average 'upheld' rate for the three statistical neighbouring boroughs with the closest profile to Wandsworth (Lambeth, Bromley and Enfield) is 86%. Whilst Wandsworth's upheld rate

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

was 84%, the Council received 32 formal investigations compared to an average of 37 across its statistical neighbours.

- 6.11 In 100% of the 22 compliance outcomes, the LGSCO were satisfied the Council had successfully implemented its recommendations. This compares to an average of 99% in similar organisations.
- 6.12 However, The LGSCO is disappointed that in five of the 22 compliance cases recommendations were not completed within the agreed timescales, particularly as some of the delays related to recommendations to make policy changes or carry out review. Services have confirmed that these were mostly due to issues that were out of the Council's control at the time, i.e. waiting for bank details from a complainant in order to provide financial remedy, and in another case the Council's medical adviser had needed time to review one client's medical information before a re-assessment requested by the LGSCO could be completed
- 6.13 With regards to the 121 complaints received by the LGSCO, setting aside the 32 detailed investigations (27 upheld, 5 not upheld), 43 were closed after initial enquiries, 30 were referred for local resolution (premature), advice/signposting was given on 13 cases, and 3 cases were invalid.

Public Report

- 6.14 As Wandsworth received 1 Public Report this year, the number of Public Reports issued by the LGSCO against Wandsworth Council is slightly above the average for its statistical neighbouring boroughs with 3 issued in the last five years (compared to an average of 2.25).
- 6.15 This year the LGSCO Issued a public report about the Council's failure to deal appropriately in a homelessness case including elements of liaison with Children's Services – full details are provided in Paper No 24-172 (Executive 22nd July 2024).

Learning

- 6.16 This year two themes stood out from recurring complaints considered by the LGSCO:
- Housing and Accommodation: Several complaints involve issues with temporary accommodation, unsuitable housing offers, and delays in assessing housing needs.
 - Environmental: Several complaints raised issues about the way the Council issues Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for domestic waste and the LGSCO found that the Council had not considered the full range of powers available before deciding to issue FPNs.
 - Also, whilst only one complaint was made about the Council's response to anti-social behaviour, it did result in significant procedural change which is detailed under 7.18 below.
- 6.17 A summary of 2023/24 LGSCO activity is at **Appendix 5**. Examples of key practice from LGSCO investigations are as follows:

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Housing; interim accommodation

- Officers were reminded to:
 - refer homeless applicants to medical professionals if concerns about temporary accommodation suitability are raised.
 - consider all relevant factors, including health and disability needs, when deciding on placement suitability and accurately record property descriptions to avoid unsuitable offers.
 - consider whether it is reasonable for an applicant to continue residing in the property when a homelessness applicant provides evidence of a court order for possession
 - promptly reach a decision on interim accommodation and record any decisions, including refusals, in writing.
 - Be clear on the circumstances under which a homeless applicant can claim housing benefit, and that any decision must be put in writing
 - to complete a DASH⁸ assessment at the earliest opportunity when an applicant indicates they are at risk of domestic abuse, violence or stalking
- Guidance was reviewed to:
 - ensure officers understand that objections to Council decisions about interim accommodation eligibility should be treated as complaints.
 - Provide clarity on considering reasonable adjustments for service users, including communication adjustments for those with mental health conditions. Decisions on this should be clarified within the guidance and embedded in the Council's guidance on handling complaints, homelessness and housing register applications.

Community Safety

- A Neighbourhood Support Officer has been recruited to lead the case review process from start to finish. This includes being the main contact for the complainant, collating case information, preparing a report for a threshold decision, and overseeing progress on actions.
- An Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) strategic group is being formed, comprising housing providers, Police and Council partners. The group will oversee policy, including the use of ASB tools and powers across the Community Safety Partnership, and will contribute to the new policy.

Environment; Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

- Due to several complaints about the issuing of provide guidance and training relevant Council staff to ensure they are aware of and understand the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs guidance on the use of fixed penalties for domestic waste receptacle offences. The guidance set out when fixed penalties can be issued (fly tipping) and when they should not, for example, leaving bins out for a few hours before collection, or putting something in the wrong bin by mistake.

⁸ Domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour' – based abuse

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

Children's Services

Made further improvements to the EHCP process by:

- Conducting significant work over the last 6 months to review all current processes and procedures related to annual reviews. This included reviewing the SEND structure to increase staffing levels, caseload allocation adjustments, and administrative process improvements. Three distinct review teams have been effective since April 2023.
- Within the Annual Review action plan Including further training on annual reviews, amending the EHCP, and 1:1 support.

Improved the appeals process for school transport decisions by:

- Reviewing the information provided to panel members to ensure accurate records of hearings and decision-making.
- Producing a template letter for appeal decision outcomes to consistently include statutory information and LGSCO contact information.
- Providing further training to staff on actions to take if a child is out of education, such as arranging alternative provision or starting enforcement action.

7 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

7.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) looks at all complaints about social housing, including local housing authorities, housing associations, and other landlords, housing managers and agents. However, some complaints that relate to a council's wider duties, such as its statutory duties around homelessness, are still considered by the LGSCO.

7.2 The HOS is approved by the Secretary of State under Section 51 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act). The Act requires social landlords, to be members of an approved scheme and other landlords can join on a voluntary basis. From 1 October 2023 the HOS were given additional statutory powers, replacing the previous scheme that came into operation from 1 October 2022.

7.3 The purpose of the scheme is to enable tenants and other individuals to have complaints about landlords investigated by the HOS. The role of the HOS is to resolve disputes involving members of the scheme. This may involve making awards of compensation or other remedies, and to support effective landlord and tenant dispute by others.

7.4 Wandsworth Council has a large housing stock with 32,871 properties. The borough is split into 4 localities for management purposes, Central area, Western area, Eastern area and Southern area. Each of these areas has an Area Housing Manager who deals with local issues, such as repairs and maintenance and is also responsible for responding to any formal complaints.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- 7.5 In 2023-24 the HO made determinations on 27 cases (from 33 complaints closed⁹⁹) which resulted in 93 orders (some level of maladministration). This is 238% increase on last year when determinations were made on 8 cases which resulted in 10 orders. The 93 orders is a 230% increase on the 10 orders last year. Orders are made where an investigation has resulted in a finding of some level of maladministration with the intention of putting things right for the resident.
- 7.6 This has resulted in an overall maladministration rate of 65% compared to 33% last year. This compares to a national maladministration rate of 73% when comparing to landlords of a similar size and type. Whilst the 65% maladministration rate is higher than the 33% reported in 2022-23, this is expected due to the significant increase in orders that have been made.
- 7.7 Details of cases closed during the year are attached at **Appendix 7**. The Council recorded a 100% compliance rate with the recommended actions required by the Housing Ombudsman. Some examples of learning are:
- Improved the repairs record-keeping practices to ensure clear and accurate logs of when repairs are raised and what works have been carried out.
 - Improved procedures for assessing mutual exchange applications to ensure clarity around processes for incoming residents requiring adaptations to the property.
 - Provided staff with additional training on record keeping and working with vulnerable residents to enable repair works on their homes to be done.
- 7.8 The Housing Ombudsman has reported in their annual Landlord Report that Wandsworth Council has a slightly lower maladministration rate of 65% in comparison to the national rate of 73% when comparing to landlords of a similar size, which are those with housing units above 10,000.
- 7.9 In the February 2024 the HOS introduced their new **Complaint Handling Code** which all landlords must comply with by 1 April 2024. In June 2024 the Complaints Team and HRD directorate completed a new self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure Wandsworth Council's two stage corporate process is in line with the requirements of the HOS's Code. The self-assessment was approved by the Council's Standing Order (SO) 83/(A) decision-making process and is available at: [HO123 - Appendix 1 for Wandsworth Council's self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman for 2024](#)
- 7.10 From 1 April 2024 the Council's corporate complaints procedure was updated to include the amended timescales set out in the new Code for Housing complaints that fall under the jurisdiction of the HOS: stage 1 is 10 working days (from 20 working days) and stage 2 is 20 days (from 25 working days). The Code stipulates that stage 1 can be extended by 10 working days and stage 2 by 20 working days, for complex cases.

⁹⁹ For this year 23/24, the HOS closed a total of 33 complaints, 2 were outside of jurisdiction and 4 were closed after 1st contact i.e. 27 determinations.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

7.11 At the end of the two stage process, complainants are provided with the contact details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), depending on the subject matter.

8 GOING FORWARD: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023-24 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2024-25

8.1 The Complaints Team have made significant strides in improving our complaints handling process this year by:

- **Creation of a public-facing Adult Social Care complaints policy:** This new policy aims to provide more transparency about how decisions are made by the Complaints Team and how statutory regulations interact with other policies and procedures.
- **Strengthened quarterly reporting:** To foster a positive culture of learning from complaints, we have enhanced reporting to all council's Senior Management Teams. We also plan to produce six-monthly complaints report for the Director's Board in addition to the annual report.
- **Targeted collaborative work with the Housing Directorate:** In response to an increase in housing-related complaints, we have implemented a procedure to identify high-risk issues and themes. We've also strengthened partnership working between housing and social care teams for more cohesive complaints handling.
- **Collaboration with the SEND teams in Achieving for Children:** Fortnightly meetings now take place to discuss current open complaints and provide support and guidance for the most complex cases. This has also significantly improved the number of complaints sent on time.
- **Work to strengthen complaints practice and culture:** In consideration of the LGSCO and HOS aligned Complaints Handling Code, we have begun work to enhance complaints practice. This included amending timescales for Corporate Complaints under the HOS jurisdiction to commence on 1st April 2024, updating staff guidance on effective complaints handling, and updating information on the Council's complaints webpage.
- **Continued comprehensive complaints training for staff:** This has included regular online training including a webinar on complaints handling, face-to-face complaints training at an Adult Social Worker Forum and securing information about the complaint processes on staff induction for all new starters.

8.2 In In 2024-25 our priorities will be:

- **Policy Development:** The establishment of a publicly accessible Statutory Children's Social Care complaints policy. This initiative aims to enhance transparency regarding the decision-making processes of the Complaints Team and the interplay between statutory regulations and other policies.
- The launch of a new Corporate Complaints Policy from 1 April 2025 which is fully aligned with both Ombudsman Complaints Handling Codes.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2023-24

- **Complaints Practice Enhancement:** To maintain our adherence to both Ombudsman Complaints Handling Codes, we will reinforce our robust complaints practice through:
 - Continuous Staff Training: Implementing an ongoing training programme on the requirements of the Code.
 - Performance Management Integration: Collaborating with Human Resources to incorporate complaints handling objectives into staff appraisal documents and job descriptions.
 - Equality and Accessibility: Partnering with the equality lead to refine our approach to recording and monitoring reasonable adjustments for individuals lodging complaints.
 - Contractor Oversight: Enhancing procedures to ensure that contractors and third-party service providers on behalf of the Council manage complaints effectively.
 - Reporting Enhancements: We will introduce biannual complaints reports to Executive Directors and Lead Members, supplementing the existing annual complaints reporting structure.

Further Appendices

Appendix 2 – Full Complaints Data

Appendix 3 – New Corporate Complaints Policy from April 2025

Appendix 4 – Key changes to the new Corporate Complaints Policy

Appendix 5 – LGSCO Upheld Decisions 2023-24

Appendix 6 – LGSCO Annual Letter 2023-24

Appendix 7 - HOS closed cases 2023-24

Appendix 8 – HOS Landlord Report 2023-24

Appendix 9 – Examples of learning from stage 2 complaints across all directorates.

Corporate Stage 1 Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate	1				1
Chief Executive's Office	2	2	4	5	13
Childrens Corporate	13	3	12	16	44
Environment & Community Services	47	26	110	32	215
Finance	34	30	43	32	139
Housing & Regeneration	76	51	82	62	271
Grand Total	173	112	251	147	683

Outcome

	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate	1			1
Chief Executive's Office	5	4	4	13
Childrens Corporate	18	15	11	44
Environment & Community Services	71	84	60	215
Finance	93	10	36	139
Housing & Regeneration	109	77	85	271
Grand Total	297	190	196	683

Complaints completed within timescales

	Y	N	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate		1	1
Chief Executive's Office	13		13
Childrens Corporate	42	2	44
Environment & Community Services	197	18	215
Finance	111	28	139
Housing & Regeneration	210	61	271
Grand Total	573	110	683

% completed in timescale: 84%

Complaint Type

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
101 Service Delay or Failure	1	5	36	148	52	142	384
102 Outside Service Procedure			2	26	39	1	68
103 Staff Error/Attitude		6	5	27	10	90	138
104 Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales				10	2	17	29
105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs				4	17	6	27
106 Poor/incorrect information		2	1		19	15	37
Grand Total	1	13	44	215	139	271	683

Equalities Data

Ethnicity

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
400 White British (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish)		5		17	17	18	57
401 White Irish					1		1
403 White Roma				1	1		2
404 White Other				5	3	3	11
405 Mixed White & Black Caribbean						1	1
406 Mixed White & Black African			1				1
407 Mixed White & Asian		1				1	2
408 Mixed Other				1	1	3	5
409 Indian		1		2		2	5
410 Pakistani			1		2		3
411 Bangladeshi					1		1
412 Chinese				1			1
413 Other				1	1		2
414 Black Caribbean				1	1	8	10
415 Black African		1		1	4	5	11
416 Other Black/Caribbean/African						5	5
417 Arab						1	1
418 Other Ethnicity			1	1		1	3
Not disclosed	1	2	5	124	98	198	428
Prefer not to say		3	36	60	9	25	133
Grand Total	1	13	44	215	139	271	683

Religion

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
Not disclosed	1	2	1	125	102	197	428
Prefer not to say		4	38	74	13	32	161
Christian		3	2	4	13	21	43
No religion		2		6	8	5	21
Muslim		1	1	2	2	11	17
Other			1	1	1	2	5
Hindu		1				3	4
Buddhist				3			3
Jewish			1				1
Grand Total	1	13	44	215	139	271	683

Sexuality

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
Bisexual		1			1		2
Gay/Lesbian		1		2		4	7
Heterosexual/straight		6	2	10	22	41	81
Not disclosed	1	2	1	126	102	199	431
Prefer not to say		3	41	77	14	27	162
Grand Total	1	13	44	215	139	271	683

Status

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
Married/Civil Partnership/Co-habiting		4	2	3	7	17	33
Not disclosed	1	2	5	109	100	198	415
Prefer not to say		3	37	37	12	26	115
Single		4		6	20	28	58
Other						2	2
Grand Total	1	13	44	155	139	271	623

Disability

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
No		6	16	9	17	21	69
Not disclosed	1	2	5	109	99	193	409
Prefer not to say		3	22	34	8	21	88
Yes		2	1	3	15	36	57

Grand Total	1	13	44	155	139	271	623
-------------	---	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Age

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regenerati on	Grand Total
under 18				1			1
18 - 24						3	3
25 - 34		2		2	10	9	23
35 - 44		1	2	6	11	17	37
45 - 54		2	2	1	15	6	26
55 - 64				1	9	11	21
65 - 74		2		6	4	5	17
75+					4	3	7
Not disclosed	1	2	1	110	80	195	389
Prefer not to say		4	39	28	6	22	99
Grand Total	1	13	44	155	139	271	623

Corporate Stage 2 Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate	0	0	0	0	0
Chief Executive's Office	0	1	1	1	3
Children's Services	7	2	7	4	20
Environment & Community Services	3	5	3	3	14
Finance	3	4	3	4	14
Housing & Regeneration	23	37	28	44	132
Grand Total	36	49	42	56	183

Complaint Categories

	Adult Social Care - Corporate	Chief Executive's Office	Childrens Corporate	Environment & Community Services	Finance	Housing & Regeneration	Grand Total
101 Service Delay or Failure	0	0	18	5	4	71	98
102 Outside Service Procedure	0	0			5	1	6
103 Staff error/attitude	0	2	1	2	1	40	46
104 Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	0	0	1	7		8	16
105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs	0	0			3	2	5
106 Poor/incorrect information	0	1			1	10	12
Grand Total	0	3	20	14	14	132	183

Outcome

	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate	0	0	0	0
Chief Executive's Office	0	1	2	3
Childrens Corporate	7	7	6	20
Environment & Community Services	9	3	2	14
Finance	7	5	2	14
Housing & Regeneration	57	38	37	132
Grand Total	80	54	49	183

Timescales Met

	Y	N	Grand Total
Adult Social Care - Corporate	0	0	0
Chief Executive's Office	1	2	3
Childrens Corporate	3	17	20
Environment & Community Services	2	12	14
Finance	4	10	14
Housing & Regeneration	38	94	132
Grand Total	48	135	183

% completed on time: 26%

Statutory Adults Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Learning Disabilities	3	1	2	4	10
Locality West	2	0	4	0	6
Locality North	1	3	1	3	8
Preparation for Adulthood	0	0	3	3	6
Locality South	1	3	0	1	5
Commissioning and Quality Assurance	1	2	1	1	5
Mental Health Assessments	0	1	1	2	4
Financial Assessments	0	1	1	2	4
Hospital social work team	0	1	2	1	4
Mental Health Reviews	0	2	1	0	3
Access	0	3	0	0	3
Financial Payments	0	2	0	0	2
Occupational Therapy	2	0	0	0	2
Reviews	1	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	11	19	16	17	63

Complaint Type

	Primary	Total Issues
Communication	4	15
Lack of Support	7	14
Delays in Service	5	13
Quality of Care / Service	2	5
Quality of Assessment	3	4
Staff Behaviour	0	3
Finance / Charging	1	2
Safeguarding	2	2
Grand Total	24	58

Complainant Type

	Total
Parent/Guardian	18
Child/Young Person	2
Grand Total	20

Outcome

	Total
Not Upheld	8
Partially Upheld	8
Upheld	8
Grand Total	24

Complaints completed within timescales

	Y	N	Grand Total
Grand Total	11	13	24

% completed in timescale: 46%

Statutory Children's Stage 1 Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help	1	4		1	6
Children Looked After Service		2	2	1	5
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service	3	3	7	3	16
Referral & Assessment Service			1		1
Grand Total	4	9	10	5	28

Complaint Type

	Primary	Total Issues
Communication	1	17
Lack of Support	7	16
Delays in Service	4	13
Disputing professional decisions	2	10
Staff Behaviour/Attitude	3	8
Assessment: Quality/Process/Outcome	5	6
Failures in Service/Procedures	2	6
Accommodation/Placement	3	5
Quality of Recording/Minutes	0	3
Contact issues	0	1
Failures in Partnership working	0	1
Finance	0	1
Grand Total	27	87

Complainant Type

	Grand Total
Child/Young Person	4
Parent/Guardian	23
Friend/Family Member	1
Grand Total	28

Outcome

	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help	2	3	1	6
Children Looked After Service	5			5
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service	7	8	1	16
Referral & Assessment Service		1		1
Grand Total	14	12	2	28

Complaints completed within timescales

	Y	N	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help	5	1	6
Children Looked After Service	4	1	5
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service	11	5	16
Referral & Assessment Service	1	0	1
Grand Total	21	7	28

% completed in timescale: 75%

Statutory Stage 2 Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help	2			1	3
Children Looked After Service				2	2
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service				1	1
Grand Total	2	0	0	4	6

Outcome

	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help			1	2	3
Children Looked After Service	1	1			2
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service			1		1
Grand Total	1	1	2	2	6

Complaints completed within timescales (not including withdrawn complaints)

	Y	N	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help	1		1
Children Looked After Service	1	1	2
Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's service	1		1
Grand Total	3	1	4

% completed in timescale: 75%

Statutory Stage 3 Complaint Data

Total completed

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help				1	1
Children Looked After Service		1	1		2
Grand Total	0	1	1	1	3

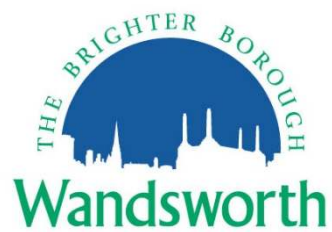
Outcome

	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Grand Total
Advice Support and Help				1	1
Children Looked After Service	2				2
Grand Total	2	0	0	1	3

Complaints completed within timescales (not including withdrawn complaints)

	Y	N	Grand Total
Grand Total	2	0	0

% completed in timescale: 100%
 % completed in timescale across: 76%



Corporate Complaints Policy

Contents Page

	Page number
1. Introduction	3
2. Our approach	3
3. Complaints and service requests (definition)	3
4. What is a complaint?	4
5. Exclusions from the Corporate Complaints Policy	5
6. Who can make a complaint?	6
7. Outsourced Services	6
8. How to make a complaint	7
9. The Corporate Complaints Procedure	6
10. Time Limits	8
11. Remedies	9
12. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)	9
13. The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)	9
14. Further help and support	10
15. Reasonable Adjustments	11
16. Data, Monitoring and Reporting	11
17. Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour	13
18. Appendix 1 Other useful Information	14

1. Introduction

This policy covers Corporate Complaints where recourse is to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).

Thid HOS generally cover some matters relating to housing associations and local housing authorities which are:

- Leasehold services
- Moving to a property
- Rent and service charges
- Occupancy Rights
- Property condition – repairs and improvements
- Tenant behaviour
- Estate management
- Complaint Handling
- Compensation

For any other corporate complaint, recourse will be to the LGSCO.

2. Our approach

At Wandsworth Borough Council we want to provide our residents, businesses and visitors with good quality services delivered in a helpful and efficient way. This document explains how we record and act upon this feedback, listening to the experiences of our customers - positive or negative - to make improvements in services.

We take a positive approach to complaints and value them as an important form of feedback on our services. We want to learn from complaints, and use the lessons learned to review and where necessary improve the services we offer and to help develop and train our staff.

The Council responds to complaints in line with the standards set out in the LGSCO and HOS Joint Complaints Handling Code. We also carry out an annual self-assessment to make sure our complaints handling remains compliant with the code.

3. Complaints and Service Requests

The Council's definition of a complaint

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation/landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual/resident or group of individuals/residents”.

One way to make a complaint is by using the Council's online forms at <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/have-your-say/make-a-complaint/>

The definition of a fault or service request

“a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision ”.

Issues such as missed bin collections, faulty street lights, street cleaning issues or requesting repairs to your property may not, in the first instance, be treated as a formal complaint.

Most contacts about matters such as refuse collections, dog fouling, graffiti, fly tipping, street related issues or minor repairs will be dealt with as faults or service requests.

If you need to raise the same issue more than twice or are dissatisfied with how your service request has been handled, the issue can be dealt with as a formal Stage 1 complaint.

However, we can treat a service request as a Stage 1 complaint straight away if that is your preference.

You can make a service request or report a fault by using the Council's online form at <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/report>, or by calling Customer Services on 020 8871 6000.

4. What is a complaint?

We will take the following points into consideration when assessing your complaint:

- the nature of the issue and whether the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure is appropriate in the circumstances; and
- what you would like to happen next.

A complaint may concern one or more of the following:

- The Council has done something which you consider should not have been done
- The Council has failed to do something that you consider should have been done
- The service provided by the Council was not good enough; you received poor quality of service or there was poor communication
- There has been a failure or a delay in providing a service
- Mistakes were made in the way a decision has been reached
- The Council has given incorrect or misleading information
- Staff have been rude or unhelpful or behaved inappropriately

The above list is not exhaustive, and we will consider each issue individually.

5. Exclusions from the Corporate Complaints Policy

Services for which there is an alternative appeal or tribunal process will not be dealt with using the Corporate complaints procedure. These include for example:

- Refusal of planning permission
- Planning enforcement
- Parking tickets (parking control notices)
- Blue Badge decisions
- School admissions
- School exclusions
- Special Educational Need decisions (including decisions made as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan process)
- Housing Benefit disputes
- Council Tax disputes
- Homelessness decisions

The following matters will **not** be put through the Corporate Complaint Procedure:

- First time requests for services (faults/service requests) e.g. a dripping tap.
- Requests for information (these are dealt with under separate procedures: the Freedom of Information Act and Subject Access Requests)
- Data protection complaints as there is a separate complaints process and final recourse is the Information Commissioner's Office
- Data breach or security incidents as there is a separate reporting process and final recourse is the Information Commissioner's Office
- Matters for which there is a right of review, appeal, or an alternative complaints procedure.
- A complaint that has already been considered by the Council and completed both stages of the Corporate Complaints' Procedure.
- A complaint where a decision has already been reached by a court, an appeal process, or an external independent tribunal
- A complaint where either the customer or the Council has started legal proceedings
- A complaint that is being, or has been investigated, by the LGSCO or HOS
- Any complaints that are made by people or organisations working with the Council in their professional capacity, e.g. another local authority or an external provider or contractor. This complaints process is for complaints made by members of the public.
- Matters that come under the Council's employment procedures
- Complaints about a registered housing provider outside the Council's jurisdiction.
- Complaints against an elected Councillor – there is a separate procedure (Appendix 1)
- Complaints about lawful decisions taken by a Committee of the Council
- Complaints about Children's or Adults Social Care – the statutory complaints procedure should be used for these (Appendix 1)

- Insurance claims against the Council
- **Antisocial behaviour:** You should report antisocial behaviour to the police or your social housing provider. Visit our antisocial behaviour page for more information <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/community-safety/antisocial-behaviour/how-to-report-antisocial-behaviour/>

If we do not accept your complaint, we tell you why the matter is not suitable for the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the right to take this decision to the LGSCO or HOS.

6. Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who uses or is affected by our services can make a complaint, including:

- Our residents
- People who work in the borough, local businesses
- People who visit the borough
- A representative acting on your behalf. This could be a relative, friend, carer, solicitor, or an advocate from an advice agency (please note that we usually require your consent for them to act on your behalf).

Anonymous complaints

We will deal with anonymous complaints on an individual basis and determine whether further action is appropriate. The action we take will be dependent upon the substance of the matter and the amount of information provided.

7. Outsourced Services

Where the Council has outsourced a service, while it no longer provides that service directly, it remains responsible for it and for the actions of the organisation providing that service. We would usually expect you to submit a complaint direct to the organisation delivering the service and allow them to respond to your complaint. If you complete their complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied, you can contact the LGSCO or HOS straight away. You do not need to go through two complaint processes. However, you can contact the relevant service at the Council and ask for your complaint to be addressed under the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure if this is your preference.

8. How to make a complaint

You can raise your complaint in any way and with any member of staff. For example, in order to raise a complaint, you can do one of the following:

- Use the Council's online complaint form on our website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/complaints
- Send an email to the person you have been dealing with or the service that you are not happy with
- Write a letter to, or telephone, the person you have been dealing with or the service that you are not happy with.
- Speak to a staff member face to face, who will provide a summary of your complaint

Details of your complaint

When making your complaint, please:

- Provide your contact details (and the details of the person you are making the complaint on behalf of, if appropriate)
- Include all the relevant points of your complaint.
- Be clear about what you hope to achieve and what will put the matter right. Your desired outcomes should be fair and proportionate to the issue raised
- We understand that you may feel strongly about your complaint but would ask that you are polite and refrain from being aggressive

9. The Corporate Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all eligible complaints except where the subject of complaint is outside the scope of this procedure. Other useful information can be found in Appendix 1.

Stage 1 – Investigation (10 working days)

- When you raise an issue, we will check to see whether we should treat it as a complaint under the Corporate Complaints Procedure.
- We will need clear details of your complaint and to know what outcome is required to assist the service in resolving the complaint.
- In some cases, further information may be needed about the complaint for the service to fully consider the matter. If further details are required, we will contact you and ask for more information. We may not be able to progress your complaint until this information is provided but we will let you know if this is the case.
- In some exceptional circumstances we may need to meet with you to discuss your complaint, or to see evidence in person, but this is not normally required
- We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by email, post or phone within **five (5) working days**.

- A Service Manager from the service being complained about will oversee an investigation and come to a decision about your complaint.
- In some cases, we will contact you to discuss the complaint and explore how it might be resolved to your satisfaction. We will not always be able to take the action you wish but we will do our best to look at all available options.
- If the complaint is about the Service Manager, a more senior person will handle the complaint.
- We will provide a written response to a complaint within **ten (10) working days** from receipt.
- If your complaint is more complex and we are not able to do this, we may need to extend the timescale **for an additional 10 working days** and we contact you to explain why more time is needed.

Stage 2 – Review (20 working days)

- If you remain dissatisfied following receipt of a Stage 1 response, you can request that your complaint is reviewed at Stage 2. Please try to submit your request within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 1 response.
- It is helpful if you can explain why the Stage 1 response has not resolved your complaint and what outcome you are seeking in order to resolve the matter at Stage 2. If we understand why you are not satisfied with the Stage 1 investigation, it will be easier for us to provide the resolution you are seeking.
- We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by email, post or phone within **five (5) working days**.
- We will provide a written response, with a decision on your complaint, following a review at Stage 2 within **twenty (20) working days** from receipt. If your complaint is more complex and we are not able to do this, we may need to extend the timescale for an additional 20 working days and we will contact you to explain why more time is needed.
- Stage 2 will be a review of your complaint and the response you have received – it will not re-investigate the matter.
- This will be the Council's final decision and marks the end of the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

At the end of the Stage 2 response, you will be provided with the contact details of the LGSCO or HOS, as that would be your next and final recourse if you are still unhappy.

10. Time limits

Complaints to the Council should be made within 12 months of a person becoming aware of the issue they want to make a complaint about. This is because it is easier to find out what happened and to put things right when complaints are received as close to the time that something happened. As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate complaints fairly and fully, because staff members may have moved on, recollections may have changed, and records may no longer be available. We may accept complaints outside of this timescale in exceptional circumstances.

11. Remedies

As far as possible, we aim to put you back in the position you would have been in if there had been no fault by the Council. There are a number of actions we can take to put things right. In some cases, the Council may offer financial remedy if you are out of pocket because of our mistakes, or if you have been caused undue hardship, inconvenience, or distress. We follow the remedies guidelines issued by the LGSCO and HOS in deciding the appropriate amount of financial remedy.

12. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If you have been through both stages of our complaints procedure and remain unhappy, you can ask the LGSCO to consider your complaint. The LGSCO will look at what the Council has done to see whether there have been any errors or failures and if so, how this has affected you.

The LGSCO investigates complaints in a fair and independent way, they do not take sides and provide a free service. The Ombudsman expects you to have given the Council a chance to deal with your complaint before you contact them. If you have not heard from us within a reasonable time, the Ombudsman may decide to look into your complaint anyway.

The LGSCO is the final stage for complaints about Councils and some other organisations providing local public services. It also investigates complaints about all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) for people who self-fund their care. The LGSCO will make their own assessment about whether a further investigation is needed and will keep you informed.

Website: <https://www.lgo.org.uk>

Telephone: **0300 061 0614**

13. The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

The HOS looks at complaints about social housing, including local housing authorities, housing associations, and other landlords, housing managers and agents. If your complaint is about Wandsworth Council, as your social landlord and you have completed both stages of our complaints procedure and remain unhappy, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman to review your complaint.

The Housing Ombudsman investigates complaints in a fair and independent way and expects you to have given the Council a chance to deal with your complaint first.

The HOS is the final stage for complaints about social housing provided by Wandsworth Council. The Housing Ombudsman will make their own assessment about whether a further investigation is needed and will keep you informed.

Website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>
Telephone: [0300 111 3000](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/)

13. Further help and support

The following organisation may be able to offer general advice and guidance.

Citizens Advice (CA)

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> or <https://cawandsworth.org>

Citizens Advice Wandsworth Telephone Advice Line: 0800 278 7833 (Lines open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm except public holidays.)

Battersea Centre Battersea Library, Clapham Junction, 265 Lavender Hill, SW11 1JB (Open Mon/Tues/Wed & Fridays 10am-4pm except public holidays).

Roehampton Centre (temporarily relocated), Battersea Library, Clapham Junction, 265 Lavender Hill, SW11 1JB (Open Tuesday and Thursday only, 10am – 4pm except public holidays)

Other Organisations Providing Assistance

Assistance can also be obtained from a specialist advice or advocacy organisation, such as:

- Age UK Wandsworth – <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wandsworth>
- Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster MIND – <https://www.bwwmind.org.uk>
- POHWER (Independent Health Complaints Advocacy <https://www.pohwer.net>: You can also contact on 0300 456 2370 or email pohwer@pohwer.net
- SHELTER, https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help
Open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm. You can also contact on 0344 515 1540 (25+ years) or 0330 053 6091 (under 25 years).

VoiceAbility is a charity which supports people in having a voice through providing professional and independent advocacy support. They offer independent mental capacity advocacy, care and support advocacy, and community advocacy.

Telephone: **0300 303 1660**

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Website: <https://www.voiceability.org>

14. Reasonable Adjustments

We want to make it easy for anyone who wants to complain to do so and in line with the Equalities Act 2010 will consider reasonable adjustments for residents who may need access to the complaints process. For example, if you need an interpreter or sign language interpreter, need information translated into another language, in Braille, on audio tape or in electronic format, or are neurodivergent and require information to be more accessible to suit your needs, please tell us when you first make your complaint, so we can make appropriate arrangements for you. The Council will always do its best to meet customers' needs.

Contact information:

For more help or information, customers can contact the Corporate Complaints Team

Email: corpcomplaints@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

15. Data, Monitoring and Recording

Monitoring and Recording

The Corporate Complaints Team and Council Directorates keep electronic logging sheets of all complaints and associated information such as:

- Complainant's details (and the details of any representatives if the complaint was made on a person's behalf)
- Complaint details (who, what and which service is being complained about)
- A record of any reasonable adjustments or disabilities a complainant or their representative has disclosed which will be kept under active review
- Documentation and correspondence related to the complaint

The Complaints Manager will monitor complaints on an ongoing basis to ensure that records are kept for each complaint received including the type of complaint, the outcome at each stage and whether the timescale was met.

An Annual Complaints Report will be presented to senior managers and elected Councillors through the relevant committee and will be published on the Council's website alongside our annual complaint handling self-assessment (which measures compliance against the LGSCO and HOS Joint Complaint Handling Code 2024).

The Complaints Manager will aim to quarterly complaints performance reports to senior managers and a bi-weekly complaints tracker report.

Confidentiality

The Council will do all it can to respect your privacy and to protect the personal information we acquire about you when you use our complaints service.

You may be asked to provide personal and equalities information when you first make a complaint. Please be assured we will treat this information in confidence. Any personal information you give on the online or paper complaint form you complete, or as part of your complaint, will only be used by the Council to:

- Help address and resolve your concerns
- Check whether our services and our complaints procedure are equally accessible to every member of the community; and
- Improve our complaints procedure.

Data protection law gives you a number of rights to control what personal information we can hold and how it is used by us. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018. For further information on how the Council manages your personal data and your rights, please visit: <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wandsworth-council-privacy-notice>

Information regarding your complaint will only be shared with others within the Council who are directly involved in the matters you have included in your complaint. They may need to be consulted in order to obtain information to assist with providing a full response to the concerns you have raised. You can ask for access to the information we hold on you in connection with your complaint by submitting a Subject Access Request (SAR). More information about the SAR process can be found here: <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/accessing-your-personal-information-subject-access-request>.

Responses to complaints at both stages will be sent in writing to the email or home address you have given us, unless you have specifically requested otherwise.

16. Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

The Council is committed to dealing with all customers fairly and impartially and to delivering high quality services. This includes to those who wish to complain, offer comments, or provide us with feedback.

Normally, people who wish to complain are allowed full access to the Council and all relevant services. However, there are a small number of complainants who, because of their behaviour and the way they approach Officers in the Council in relation to their complaint, may need to have their contact restricted. They may behave unacceptably or be unreasonably persistent in their contact. This can impede investigating their complaint(s) and can have significant resource implications. These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the Council has finished the complaint investigation.

Any restrictions placed on unacceptable behaviour will be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has an Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy which can be found on our complaints webpage <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/the-council/have-your-say/make-a-complaint/>

Appendix 1

Other useful information

Complaints against Councillors

These complaints are handled under a separate procedure. Complaints about Councillors are viewed as breaches under the Councillors' Code of Conduct and are responded to by the Council's Monitoring Officer. Further details on the process and contact details for the Monitoring Officer can be found at <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/make-a-complaint-about-a-councillor/>

Complaints about Children's or Adult Social Care

Most of these types of complaints will be handled under separate, statutory complaint procedures. If you are unhappy about the care or support you or someone you know has received you should let us know as soon as possible. Further information can be found on the Council's website.

Wandsworth Children's Social Care:

<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/childrens-services-complaints-process>

Wandsworth adults' social care:

<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/make-a-comment-complaint-or-compliment-about-adult-social-care>

Complaints about other registered housing providers

Registered Housing Providers have their own individual complaints procedures, so you will need to contact your landlord or housing association if you wish to register a complaint about a housing related issue.

Document Name	Corporate Complaints Policy
Version No.	V4(March 2025)
Owner	Statutory and Corporate Complaints Manager
Approved by	Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Next review date	March 2026

Appendix 4 – Key Changes to the new Corporate Complaints Policy to commence from 1 April 2025

Substantive changes

New definition of a complaint and a service request; Complaints and Service requests (section 3)	Changed to new complaints and service request definition as per the new Joint Complaints Handling Code to assist officers with identifying the correct route for expressions of dissatisfaction.
Changes to timescales; (section 9)	Updated new timescales for stage 1 and 2 complaints, to ensure compliance with the new Joint Code. Updated wording around circumstances when a complaint might be extended.

Best practice changes

Introduction added (section 1)	Provides information on the areas of complaint where recourse is to the Housing Ombudsman Services (HOS) as this is a new separate policy for these types of complaints.
What is a complaint? (section 4)	Updated wording to ensure compliance with new Joint Code.
Exclusions from the Corporate Complaints Policy (section 5)	Removed information not relevant to housing complaints. Added two bullet point to clarify 1) the complaints about committee decisions are not included in this policy and 2) the complaints process is for members of the public, not people working in their professional capacity.
Who can make a complaint (section 6)	Included existing wording on 'anonymous complaints' in this section, previously in Appendix 1.
Outsourced services (section 7)	Updated wording to ensure compliance with new Joint Code to emphasise that Residents can complain directly to an outsourced service if preferred.
How to make a complaint (section 8)	Updated wording to ensure compliance with new Joint Code; added that complainants can speak to a member of staff face to face to make a complaint if preferred.
Remedies (section 11)	Updated terminology to ensure compliance with new Joint Code, information was previously in Appendix 1.

Reasonable Adjustments (section 14)	Updated wording to ensure compliance with Joint Code and Equalities Act 2010.
Data, Monitoring and Recording (section 15)	<p>Added new information about how complaints are recorded and reported on. To ensure compliance with the Joint Code, have set out that the Annual Complaints Report and Self-Assessment will be put on the complaints page on the public website.</p> <p>Included existing information on confidentiality and information governance previously in Appendix 1.</p>
Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour (section 16)	New standalone section, previously part of Appendix 1
Appendix 1 (section 17)	Some information from Appendix 1 in the previous policy has been used to create the standalone information in the new sections as above. Information remaining in Appendix 1 has been updated and removed if not relevant to this new policy (i.e. how to complain about schools has been removed).

Structural changes

Formatting	Contents page added and topics split into numbered sections.
Standalone sections added and contents page	New policy is now more user friendly as information can be located easily.

Appendix 5 : Wandsworth LGSCO complaints upheld 2023-24

Reference	Authority	Category	Decided	Decision	Remedy	Details	Service Improvements
22009120	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services, Public Protection & Regulation	06/06/2023	Upheld	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Reassessment, Provide information/advice to person affected	<p>Complaint: Council failed to carry out a comprehensive noise nuisance investigation after it agreed to do so. The</p> <p>Outcome: LGSCO found that the Council's investigation had not been sufficiently comprehensive and had not obtained sufficient evidence to enable it to reach a professional judgement on whether a statutory noise nuisance existed. The</p> <p>Agreed Action: Council paid £500 for the failings identified, provided advice to Mr B and undertook a comprehensive noise nuisance reassessment. The</p>	N/A
22009518	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	03/04/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: Council's assessment of Ms C's medical needs and the time taken to find her a suitable property. The</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found fault in the assessment of Ms C's medical needs for rehousing, how it communicated with Mx C and in its complaint handling. The</p> <p>Agreed Action: Council apologised and paid £400 for the failings identified and reassess Ms C's medical needs and give appropriate review rights. It also agreed to take action to improve services. The</p>	The Council has agreed to: remind all staff that internal communications should remain professional and polite when referring to users of Council services; remind relevant staff that questions about area preference and safety should be discussed and confirmed with the applicant; remind relevant staff that complaints about housing allocations where the applicant has a reasonable preference should not be directed to the Housing Ombudsman, amending any template letters appropriately; review, and where necessary amend, its policies and procedures to ensure social housing tenants who need to move for reasons giving rise to reasonable preference are told about their statutory right to review decisions.
22009847	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	24/08/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: Council made 4 unsuitable offers of accommodation and placed the family in unsuitable interim accommodation for over a month. The</p> <p>Outcome: LGSCO found the Council delayed in offering accommodation and failed to properly consider the suitability of the placement as well as the Medical Advisor's recommendations. The</p> <p>Agreed Action: Council apologised and paid £900 for the failings identified along with making service improvements. The Council</p>	The Council reminded officers to: consider all relevant factors, including the health or disability needs of the household members, when deciding if a placement is suitable for the applicant and their household; and to accurately record property descriptions on the database to avoid making unsuitable offers of accommodation to applicants.
22010761	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	26/05/2023	Upheld	New appeal/review or reconsidered decision	<p>Complaint: Council did not give Mr V's medical need to move home enough priority and did not make a decision on his homeless application. The</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had delayed in deciding the outcome of Mr V's homelessness application. The</p> <p>Agreed Action: Council made a decision on the homelessness application and backdated that decision to the date of the application. The Council</p>	N/A
22011036	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	14/06/2023	Upheld	Apology by the Council prior to the LGSCO investigation outcome.	<p>Complaint: Council's management of temporary accommodation provided under its homelessness duties, including how it dealt with complaints about noise and anti social behaviour. The</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council took too long to explain its decisions to Miss X about reports she made. The</p> <p>Agreed Action: Council had already apologised to Miss X prior to the investigation outcome which the LGSCO considered sufficient remedy for the injustice caused. The</p>	N/A

22012618	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	16/06/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide services to person affected, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's failure to: give proper information when it advised Mr D to split his housing application into 2 applications; take appropriate action to resolve the noise nuisance and disrepair issues in his temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council failed to make appropriate referrals when Mr D raised concerns about the suitability of his temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £150 for the failings identified and assess the suitability of Mr D's accommodation with a view to making adaptations or rehousing, along with issuing a service reminder to staff.</p>	The Council issued written reminders to relevant staff to ensure they make referrals to medical professionals if appropriate and, when a homeless applicant raises concerns about the suitability of their temporary accommodation on medical grounds.
22013081	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	09/06/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review	<p>Complaint: The Council's response to problems with noise, smells, antisocial behaviour, fire safety, building regulation and planning issues from a café and a restaurant close to Mr X's home.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council failed to properly consider the matters Mr X raised and his complaint about the same,.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid a symbolic £700 for the failings identified and, agreed to properly consider the matters raised, along with taking associated policy and staff training measures.</p>	The Council re-drafted its Community Trigger policy and followed an associated staff training schedule for both Council and relevant partners.
22013334	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	05/06/2023	Upheld	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Procedure or policy change/review, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's handling of a family's housing situation and storage of their belongings.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council did not give appropriate and timely advice or support regarding the Council's prevention duty, and the Council did not take any steps to prevent their homelessness and initially provided unsuitable accommodation. It also delayed in providing access to their essential belongings.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council had apologised and paid £850 for the failings identified and, agreed to reviewing associated processes and provide communication training to staff.</p>	The Council provided staff training on communication and ensuring early contact with homeless applicants to avoid undue delay in the homeless support and prevention processes. It also reviewed how it ensures accommodation offered under its relief duty is suitable to meet the space and bed needs of eligible homeless applicants and their family members.
22013615	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	09/06/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Loss of service, Procedure or policy change/review	<p>Complaint: The Council's hfailure to provide a child the support specified in their Education Health and Care Plan..</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council did not ensure the provision was provided over a significant period and took too long to issue an amended Plan as well as delaying holding an annual review.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council had apologised and paid £2550 for the failings identified review its service with a view to making improvements..</p>	The Council reflected on the issues raised and identified areas of service improvement, including the timeliness of the EHCP process.
22014710	London Borough of Wandsworth	Adult Care Services	27/06/2023	Upheld	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Procedure or policy change/review, Provide information/advice to person affected, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's repeated failure to invoice for homecare.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had failed to discuss the invoicing concerns with the care provider or quality assure their invoices to ensure they were correct.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council paid £500 for the failings and agreed to seek solutions with the care provider.</p>	The Council reminded the payment finance team to escalate invoicing problems to the quality assurance team. It also discussed the invoicing problems with the care provider to ensure there was a plan in place to prevent future delays and how the care provider would ensure the accuracy of invoices for all service users for the period concerned.

22015117	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	14/12/2023	Upheld	Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: Council delayed transferring a child's EHCP to another Council after the family moved to temporary accommodation there and, did not provide assistance with home to school transport for them.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had failed to transfer the EHCP to the new Council and had refused transport assistance for long commute to school each day.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council paid £3800 for the failing and provide training and reminders to staff.</p>	The Council reminded its school transport appeal managers and panel that they should check the latest position regarding Education, Health and Care Plans and remind them of the maximum journey times set out in the statutory guidance.
22015134	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	14/12/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Quantifiable Loss, Procedure or policy change/review, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's delays in dealing with a homelessness application and its failure to provide suitable emergency and temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had failed to consider the family's full circumstances and needs of its members when assessing and offering accommodation. It also found that the Council needed to ensure there was greater communication and liaison with Children's Services and/or receiving LA when families with children with SEN are housed outside the borough.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £10,000 for the failings, provided training and reminders to staff along with reviewing its processes.</p>	The Council reminded staff of: the need to properly consider an applicant's housing needs when carrying out a homelessness assessment, including any medical needs the household has and whether any children have SEN and an EHCP; the need to keep PHPs under review, and ensure that, as a minimum, a review is carried out whenever the housing duty changes; the need to record how it considered whether interim or temporary accommodation is suitable and provide brief reasons in letters to applicants offering accommodation, together with review rights where applicable. The Council also reviewed its processes to ensure that, where appropriate, homeless applicants are given information about who to contact for advice about home to school transport, changing a child's school and about transferring a child's EHCP to another council and, its processes to ensure that where it takes more than one month between the offer of alternative interim or temporary accommodation and it becoming available for occupation, it considers alternative properties for the applicant and provides regular updates.
22017560	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	26/10/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	<p>Complaint: Council delayed in accurately assessing an application to join the Housing Register.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had taken too long to assess Ms X's Housing Register application and reassess her priority and points when she provided further evidence about her family's medical needs and disabilities</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £1,000 for the failings.</p>	N/A
22017841	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/02/2024	Upheld	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council issued a fixed penalty notice (FPN) for leaving rubbish out early but no warning had been given prior to this.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had failed to consider the full range of powers when deciding to enforce a waste offence.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council cancelled the FPN and refunded the FPN payment and provided guidance to staff.</p>	The Council provided guidance to relevant Council staff to ensure awareness and understanding of the DEFRA guidance on the use of FPNs for domestic waste offences.

23000541	London Borough of Wandsworth	Adult Care Services	10/10/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	<p>Complaint: The care provider commissioned by the Council failed to provide adequate care to a vulnerable adult.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council's commissioned care provider had failed to address issues relating to the vulnerable adult's presentation and health and, had failed to keep proper records.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £500 for the failings identified and took action to resolve the issues with the care provider.</p>	N/A
23002260	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	23/11/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Procedure or policy change/review	<p>Complaint: The Council delayed medical assessments and did not act on domestic abuse disclosures when reviewing a housing case.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council delayed in dealing with Miss X's medical assessment and failed to take sufficient action on disclosures that she was at risk of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and made a symbolic payment of £300 for the failings identified and, placed Miss X in band A of its Allocation Scheme. It also reviewed its procedures and templates.</p>	The Council reviewed its procedures for dealing with disclosures of domestic abuse to ensure officers consider all options for safe housing such as management transfers and increased priority under the housing allocations scheme. It also drew up an action plan, with clear timescales, for reducing the delays in dealing with medical assessments and amended its template letters to ensure the Council includes details of how applicants can seek a review of the Council's decision on their housing priority band.
23002843	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	12/09/2023	Upheld	N/A	<p>Complaint: The Council refusal to escalate a statutory children's complaint to the stage 3 panel.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had given some rationale for the refusal that was not allowable in law, the Council would still not have held a stage three panel as Mr X's request was late.</p> <p>Agreed Action: There were no agreed actions as the LGSCO did not find any significant personal injustice had been caused to Mr X.</p>	Staff were reminded of the need to ensure that stage 3 panel refusal letters gave only rationale that was allowable in law.
23005459	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	09/02/2024	Upheld	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	<p>Complaint: The Council failed to take the correct action when rubbish was placed outside earlier than allowed.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council failed to show how it considered all sections, including section 46, of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 when deciding what action to take.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council refunded the FPN fine amount for the fault identified. The service was already taking action to ensure staff adhered to the statutory guidance and regulations when considering such cases.</p>	N/A
23005759	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	01/09/2023	Upheld	The LGSCO were satisfied with the action the Council had said it would take in the Stage 2 complaint response.	<p>Complaint: The Council poorly managed a homelessness application and showed a lack of empathy and consideration of needs.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had investigated and upheld the complaint and has also completed a review of Miss X's housing suitability which found in her favour.</p> <p>Action Taken: The Council apologised and paid a symbolic payment of £1300 for the faults identified and also took internal action such as issuing reminders and guidance to staff and, undertook a service wide consideration of how it could adapt the style of language it used.</p>	N/A

23006005	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	08/11/2023	Upheld	Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's handling of a homelessness application submitted due to fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found the Council had delayed sending Mr X a letter confirming it had accepted a relief duty and issuing a PHP.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised to Mr X for the fault identified and issued guidance/training to staff.</p>	The Council reminded relevant officers of the need to complete a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-based Violence (DASH) assessment at the earliest opportunity where an applicant says they are at risk of domestic abuse, violence or stalking.
23006203	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	22/03/2024	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Loss of service, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	<p>Complaint: The Council's failure to provide the SEN support set out in an EHCP.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found that the Council has failed to ensure child P had the required support for a significant period.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £1000 for the faults identified. There were no service improvements required as the LGSCO acknowledged that some factors in this case were beyond the Council's control.</p>	N/A
23006486	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation (FPN)	23/01/2024	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss, Provide training and/or guidance	<p>Complaint: The Council's issuing of a FPN for littering.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found that the Council had failed to properly inform Mr X of how to challenge the notice and he was therefore denied the right to appeal.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and made a symbolic payment of £100 for the faults identified and refunded the FPN already paid. It also provided staff training.</p>	The Council explored the cause of the errors so these can be addressed through training and increased awareness of its internal enforcement policy.
23006839	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	15/11/2023	Upheld	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide information/advice to person affected	<p>Complaint: The Council's repeated failure to identify and correct the conflicting information it gave Ms X about her housing application</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found that the Council had missed several opportunities to correct inaccurate and conflicting information given to Ms X and that this inappropriately raised Ms X's expectations about her chances of rehousing and when this might happen.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council apologised and paid £1000 for the faults identified and confirmed to Ms X that her priority had not been impacted by the faults identified.</p>	N/A
23008085	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/02/2024	Upheld	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	<p>Complaint: The Council's issuing of a FPN for littering.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found that the Council failed to consider its full range of powers when deciding to enforce a waste offence.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council refunded the FPN amount for the fault identified. The service was already taking action to ensure staff adhered to the statutory guidance and regulations when considering such cases.</p>	N/A

23008190	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/02/2024	Upheld	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	<p>Complaint: The Council's issuing of a FPN for littering due to domestic waste being left out too early.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO found that the Council was not clear on how it had considered its full range of powers before issuing the FPN.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council refunded the FPN amount for the fault identified. The service was already taking action to ensure staff adhered to the statutory guidance and regulations when considering such cases.</p>	N/A
23010153	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	22/11/2023	Upheld	Procedure or policy change/review, Provide services/information to others affected	<p>Complaint: The Council was significantly delaying decisions about whether it owed a main housing duty in homelessness cases.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO identified a number of cases that had experienced significant delays and the Council accepted that it had a considerable backlog of homelessness applications waiting for a main housing duty decision.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council has taken action to reduce the backlog and identify appropriate priority dates and financial remedies for the individual cases affected. Progress in this area is actively being scrutinized by the Council.</p>	The Council was at fault for delay in making main housing duty decisions in homelessness cases. Where the Council's delay has caused an injustice to an individual, it will remedy this in line with the Ombudsman's guidance on remedies. The Council will update the Ombudsman within six months and then within twelve months after the Ombudsman's decision, on its progress in reducing delays in processing homelessness cases.
23011836	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	30/11/2023	Upheld	Procedure or policy change/review, Provide services/information to others affected	<p>Complaint: The Council's Allocations Scheme might wrongly exclude intentionally homeless households from joining the waiting list.</p> <p>Outcome: The LGSCO identified that the Council's Allocations Scheme, as written, implies that applicants found to be intentionally homeless do not qualify to join the scheme unless the Council decides otherwise in individual cases.</p> <p>Agreed Action: The Council amended its Allocations Scheme and reviewed and reconsidered its decisions on households who had been refused entry onto this scheme to ensure it was not on the basis of being found <i>intentionally homeless</i>.</p>	The Council agreed during our investigation into another complaint to review and amend its Allocations Scheme to ensure it is not excluding intentionally homeless households by default.

17 July 2024

By email

Mr Jackson
Chief Executive
London Borough of Wandsworth

Dear Mr Jackson

Annual Review letter 2023-24

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2024. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to ensure effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer valuable opportunities to learn and improve. In addition, this year, we have encouraged Monitoring Officers to register to receive the letter directly, supporting their role to report the decisions we uphold to their council.

For most of the reporting year, Paul Najsarek steered the organisation during his tenure as interim Ombudsman, and I was delighted to take up the role of Ombudsman in February 2024. I look forward to working with you and colleagues across the local government sector to ensure we continue to harness the value of individual complaints and drive and promote systemic change and improvement across the local government landscape.

While I know this ambition will align with your own, I am aware of the difficult financial circumstances and service demands that make continuous improvement a challenging focus for the sector. However, we will continue to hold organisations to account through our investigations and recommend proportionate actions to remedy injustice. Despite the challenges, I have great confidence that you recognise the valuable contribution and insight complaints, and their swift resolution, offer to improve services for the public.

Complaint statistics

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic. This year, we also provide the number of upheld complaints per 100,000 population.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and give credit to organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 24 July 2024. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

Your organisation's performance

During the year, we [issued a public report](#) about your Council's failure to properly act in a homelessness case.

We found the Council did not properly assess the complainant's housing needs, which led to it arranging interim (later temporary) accommodation that did not meet the family's needs. In particular, your Council failed to consider the distance between the temporary accommodation and the children's school. Your Council also delayed making a main housing duty decision, which delayed the right to ask for a statutory review of the temporary accommodation and affected the family's priority on its housing register. We also found the Council's housing team failed to work appropriately with both its special educational needs team and their counterparts in the council area in which it placed the family.

The Council agreed to apologise, make a payment to recognise the complainant was in unsuitable temporary accommodation for many months, and to back-date the priority date on its housing register to the date it should have accepted a main housing duty. We also asked it to review its processes and to share our report with relevant staff.

Outside of this case, I welcome that your Council agreed to, and implemented, the recommendations we made in 22 cases during the year. However, it is disappointing that in five of those cases recommendations were not completed within the agreed timescales.

Some delays related to recommendations to make policy changes or carry out reviews. In one instance, the Council took over seven weeks longer than agreed to make changes to its housing allocations scheme. I would encourage your officers to engage in discussion at the draft decision stage of our process if the timescales suggested for service improvement recommendations are not achievable or realistic.

I invite the Council to consider how it might reduce delays in complying with agreed recommendations in the current year.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February, following a period of consultation, we launched the [Complaint Handling Code](#) for councils, setting out a clear process for responding to complaints effectively and fairly. It is aligned with the Code issued to housing authorities and landlords by the Housing Ombudsman Service and we encourage you to adopt the Code without undue delay. Twenty councils have volunteered to take part in an implementation pilot over the next two years that will develop further guidance and best practice.

The Code is issued to councils under our powers to provide guidance about good administrative practice. We expect councils to carefully consider the Code when developing policies and procedures and will begin considering it as part of our processes from April 2026 at the earliest.

The Code is considered good practice for all organisations we investigate (except where there are statutory complaint handling processes in place), and we may decide to issue it as guidance to other organisations in future.

Our successful complaint handling training programme continues to develop with new modules in Adult Social Care and Children's Services complaint handling available soon. All our courses include practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We delivered 126 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,700 people. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training or get in touch at training@lgo.org.uk.

According to our records we have not delivered complaint handling training to your Council in the last three years. Our courses are highly rated by delegates who consistently report increased confidence in handling complaints. As a result, we often see improved performance in a council's complaint handling, and I encourage you to explore our training offer further.

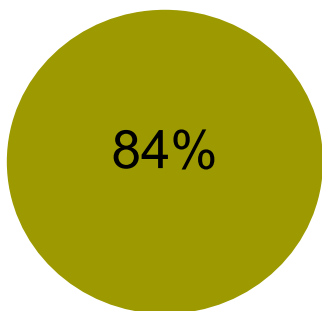
Returning to the theme of continuous improvement, we recognise the importance of reflecting on our own performance. With that in mind I encourage you to share your view of our organisation via this survey: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ombudsman/>. Your responses will help us to assess our impact and improve our offer to you. We want to gather a range of views and welcome multiple responses from organisations, so please do share the link with relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaints upheld



84% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **85%** in similar organisations.

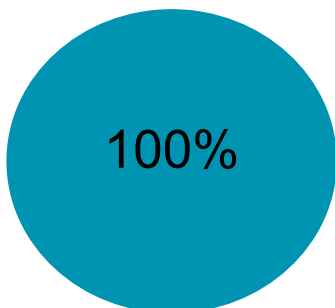
27
upheld decisions

This is 8.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The average for authorities of this type is 8.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

Statistics are based on a total of **32** investigations for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



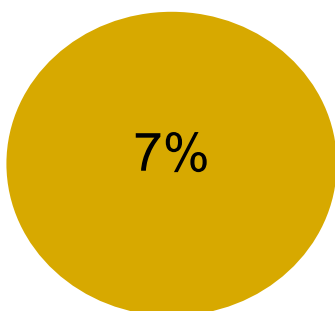
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **22** compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **7%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **12%** in similar organisations.

2
satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **27** upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Appendix 7 : Wandsworth HOS complaints upheld 2023-24

Reference	Landlord	Complaint	Determination & Outcome	Service Improvements
202104702	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of reports of anti-social behaviour and, the resident's request to be rehoused using the landlord's management transfer policy.	Closure: 15/09/2023 Finding: There was maladministration in the handling of the reports of ASB and, a service failure in the handling of the resident's request to be rehoused using the landlord's management transfer policy. Remedy: Paid a symbolic payment of £500.	Action-planning, communication & record-keeping: The landlord did not carry out its own investigations into the ASB & did not provide adequate updates to the resident regarding their reports. There was no clear note applied to the housing application form to show it was intended for use in assessing the resident's management transfer request & no appropriate steps were taken to help the resident understand about the management transfer scheme and to whom the form should be returned.
202105230	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the landlord's response to the resident's reports of ongoing leaks from the roof and handling of roof repairs along with the management and handling of their complaint.	Closure 01/11/2023 Finding: There was maladministration in respect of the response to the reports of ongoing leaks from the roof and handling of roof repairs and maladministration in the management and handling of the complaint. Remedy: Apologised and paid £1,250 and, updated the resident on the works progress. Staff processes and training reviewed.	Communication, complaint handling & record-keeping: The landlord did not show that it considered practical ways to support the resident following repeated episodes of water ingress and, did not show that it was keeping track of outstanding actions. There was an over reliance on the use of insurance claims as a remedy. The landlord unreasonably delayed making an offer of compensation, which was not proportionate to the level of distress and inconvenience caused to the resident.
202115911	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the condition of their accommodation and other associated issues.	Closure: 18/12/2023 Finding: There was service failure in relation to the response to the reports of the kitchen layout and condition of the bathroom and WC walls along with service failure in relation to the complaint handling. There was maladministration in relation to record keeping. Remedy: Paid £700 and, reviewed its record-keeping and relationships with contractors. Staff processes and training reviewed.	Service delays, complaint handling and record-keeping: There were lengthy delays, not all of which could not be explained by the pandemic or any difficulties with access. There was aspects of poor and beneficial complaint handling and there was evidence of gaps in the landlord's record keeping and what it expected as feedback from its contractors. This impacted on its ability to track and explain its actions and to monitor its repairs.

202116457	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of repairs and maintenance to the property, an addition to the tenancy & provision of information on the regeneration of the property.	Closure 29/06/2023 Finding: There is no indication that the landlord unreasonably declined or was unreasonably tardy in seeking to arrange repairs. Action required: Landlord to confirm resident's agreement for any necessary repairs to now be undertaken.	N/A
202118003	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding a request to access the property due to a leak in a neighbouring property and the response to the reports that the windows in their property required renewal.	Closure 30/08/2023 Finding: There was service failure in respect of the handling of its request to access the property due to a leak in a neighbour's property and, maladministration in respect of its handling of the reports that the windows in the property required renewal. Remedy: Paid £400. Reminder to staff.	Staff training & development: If the landlord does require access to the resident's property it should provide adequate notice as per the terms of the tenancy, in writing, explaining clearly why access is required with specific reference to the findings of inspections made by its staff and contractors.
202118127	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding how the resident's reports of ASB were handled and information provided relating to incentive payments for downsizing properties	Closure 06/09/2023 Finding: There was no maladministration in respect of the response to the reports of ASB and in the information provided to the resident relating to incentive payments for downsizing properties. Remedy: Write to the resident setting out what help and advice is available for them. Ensure records of the resident's vulnerabilities are recorded accurately. Reminder to staff.	Staff training and development and record keeping: There is evidence that the landlord did consider the resident's vulnerabilities, albeit without them being recorded on its internal system accurately.
202118894	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding reports of damp and mould at the property and associated decanting of accommodation issues.	Closure 24/11/2023 Finding: There was reasonable redress in the landlord's response to the resident's reports of damp and mould at the property. Remedy Apologised and paid £11,409.46 for decanting costs incurred that were identified by the Council prior to HOS determination. Policy review, Staff training and development.	Policy and process review & staff training and development: This complaint highlights the need to ensure that properties are thoroughly inspected when voided before allocation, especially where there are vulnerabilities recorded for prospective tenants, and the landlord is asked to write a report stating the learning identified and how this has been implemented and what changes to the void and temporary decanting processes have been made.

202119282	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding a requirement for the resident to sign a disclaimer as part of her mutual exchange and, the handling of repair reports and associated complaint handling.	<p>Closure: 19/12/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration by the landlord in its: requirement for the resident to sign the disclaimer; handling of the resident's repair reports; complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologised and paid £700, Reviewed staff procedures. Considered appropriate adaptations to the property.</p>	Policy and process review: The landlord is to review its procedure for assessing mutual exchange applications to ensure clarity around processes for incoming residents requiring adaptations to the property.
202120938	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the: communal cleaning services; resident's service charge account; reports of discrimination and fraudulent activities; complaint handling.	<p>Closure: 06/09/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was service failure in relation to its administration of the resident's service charge account and maladministration regarding the handling of the resident's complaint.</p> <p>Remedy: Paid £200, reviewed staff procedures.</p>	Policy & practice review and, information sharing: The landlord reviewed the system and the case with regards to the delays in pursuing payments for major works to prevent reoccurrence in the future and, considered sharing results of its cleaning inspections with residents to ensure open and transparent processes in relation to its communal cleaning.
202122729	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of the reports of noise disturbance and the response to the related complaint.	<p>Closure: 15/06/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the landlord's response to the related complaint.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologised and paid £250, reviewed staff procedures.</p>	N/A
202127810	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of multiple repairs and the response to the request for a rent rebate for the period the repairs relate to.	<p>Closure: 27/10/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the handling of the resident's reports of multiple repairs to the property.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologies and paid £1,200, completion of all works outstanding within 2 months and, created new staff procedure.</p>	Policy & practice development: The landlord is to utilise a procedure, where there are planned works, to record whether any properties with residents with vulnerabilities have been omitted from the schedule, documenting the reasons why and diarising this for review with the resident periodically

202201050	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of reports of ASB.	<p>Closure: 22/08/2023</p> <p>Finding: The evidence provided demonstrated that the landlord acted promptly and in line with its policies throughout the events described in this report. Whilst it was not always able to achieve the results the resident would have hoped for, the landlord did maintain very regular contact, and demonstrated a commitment to supporting them.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>	<p>Compliment from HOS: <i>The Ombudsman has noted the significant time and effort this individual put in to supporting the resident, and the professional and empathetic way in which they did so.</i></p>
202201207	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding reports of damp and mould in the property.	<p>Closure: 04/10/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was severe maladministration in the response to the resident's reports of damp and mould.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologised and paid £1,500, review of staff procedures.</p>	<p>Policy & practice review: The landlord carried out a review of procedures for: the receipt of reports of damp and mould (including a review of the Ombudsman's Spotlight report and ensured its practices align with the recommendations made within) and, when undertaking technical property inspections, will ensure that appropriate records of methods, findings and recommendations are created and made available to residents as required.</p>
202206505	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the	<p>Closure: 05/12/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the way repairs were handled and maladministration in the associated complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Paid £675, undertook survey to establish cause of repair issues & resolved as appropriate.</p>	<p>Policy & practice review: The landlord is to review its repairs process to ensure a single point of contact for residents where there are multiple repairs going on at the same time. The landlord should also ensure that there is cover when staff are not at work. In addition, it should review its access procedures to ensure contractors take photographs and leave cards when they have not gained access to a property, and proactively follow-up with residents to rebook appointments when access has not been provided.</p>
202209074	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the: handling of repairs for water ingress; the response to concerns about the responsibility for the waste pipe that services the property; and the handling of the associated complaint.	<p>Closure: 29/09/2023</p> <p>Finding: The landlord has offered redress prior to investigation which, in the Ombudsman's opinion, resolves the handling of the issue of repairs for water ingress and, the handling of the associated complaint.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>	<p>Information sharing & progression in repairs: The landlord should undertake a comprehensive assessment of the water ingress in order to determine its cause and, where works are identified set out a timeline for providing a remedy to resolve the water ingress. If the landlord holds any documents or reports not yet issued to the resident in relation to the waste pipe serving the property to issue these to the resident.</p>

202214271	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding reports of damp, mould and outstanding repairs.	<p>Closure: 20/11/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was service failure in the landlord's response to the resident's reports of damp, mould and outstanding repairs.</p> <p>Remedy: Paid £500. Undertook a further investigation for the repairs required & considered of household decant.</p>	<p>Information sharing & progression of repairs: The landlord is to contact the resident as soon as possible to agree suitable dates when operatives can access the property, or to explore whether a decant would be appropriate if access cannot be agreed while the resident and her family are living in the property. The landlord should also provide the resident with a clear and detailed description in writing of the proposed work, and the parts of the property it plans to mould wash first so the resident can make necessary arrangements to clear the relevant rooms.</p>
202218821	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding: repairs to address water penetration from the roof; a compensation request for rental income loss due to incomplete roof repairs, and; the complaint made.	<p>Closure: 26/09/2023</p> <p>Finding: The Ombudsman found reasonable redress was offered by the landlord in relation to its handling of the repairs to address water penetration from the roof.</p> <p>Remedy: Reoffered compensation package previously offered. Reviewed record keeping and staff processes.</p>	<p>Record-keeping & policy and practice: The landlord identified problems evidencing some inspection reports due to turnover of staff. It is recommended the landlord reviews the HOS' Knowledge and Information Management spotlight report to ensure adequate records are maintained.</p>
202221777	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding reported fragments and dust particles and associated repairs along with associated complaint handling.	<p>Closure: 03/11/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was service failure in respect of the handling of: the reported fragments and dust particles in the property along with the associated repairs and, there was service failure in respect of its handling of the associated complaint.</p> <p>Remedy: Paid £150 and further investigated the air quality and repair issues.</p>	N/A
202200519	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding: the condition of the property at the tenancy start and, the communications issued on how to move home during the pandemic along with the associated complaints handling.	<p>Closure: 13/12/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was a service failure by the landlord in respect of its complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologies and paid £50. Reviewed staff procedures.</p>	<p>Record-keeping & policy and practice: It is recommended that the landlord reviews its repairs record-keeping practices to ensure that it keeps clear and accurate logs of when repairs are raised and what works have been carried out.</p>

202208283	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the management and handling of: reports of water ingress; a request for compensation for personal losses; the leaseholder's complaints.	<p>Closure: 04/12/2023</p> <p>Finding: There was reasonable redress in respect of the landlord's management and handling of reports of water ingress into the property. However, there was maladministration in respect of the landlord's management and handling of the leaseholder's complaints.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologiesd and paid £650.</p>	N/A
202127072	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding various repair reports and associated complaint handling.	<p>Closure: 26/02/2024</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in respect of the response to various repair and, maladministration in respect of the associated complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologiesd and paid £750. Further investigation and completion of the required repairs and, ventilation issues. Staff training and development.</p>	Record-keeping and, staff training & development: The landlord should consider training on record keeping for its staff to ensure all customer communications, including complaints, are logged appropriately. The landlord should consider reviewing the Ombudsman's Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management regarding its record keeping.
202206989	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of reports of ASB and noise disturbance from neighbouring properties.	<p>Closure: 12/07/2024</p> <p>Finding: There was severe maladministration in relation to the handling of reports of ASB and noise disturbance.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologiesd and paid £1,000. Completed a management review and created an improvement plan for ASB & noise nuisance reports.</p>	Policy & practice and, staff training & development: The landlord is to complete a management review of this case, identifying learning opportunities and produce an improvement plan that outlines: its intention and a timescale to review its operational process in recording ASB and noise complaints to ensure timely communication and updates; how it handles and records complex ASB or noise cases; and how it will provide the appropriate advice on how to gather acceptable evidence and the actions that the landlord will / will not take in the circumstances.
202203456	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of reports of noise related ASB and the associated complaint.	<p>Closure: 16/02/2024</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the handling of the complaint.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologiesd and paid £150. Reminder issued to staff.</p>	Staff training & development: Ensure that all of customer-serving staff familiarise themselves with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, Dispute Resolution Principles, and Noise Nuisance Spotlight Reports
202300218	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of repairs and the associated complaint.	<p>Closure: 09/05/2024</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the handling of repairs to: flooring; gate; garden and the associated complaint.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologiesd and paid £2,375. Reviewed the monitoring of repairs.</p>	Policy & practice and, repair progression: The landlord should review its approach to managing repairs and communicating with residents about these and, create an action plan for implementing improvements.

202229840	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding handling of an application for rehousing; reports of damp, mould, draughts, and lack of insulation and pests.	<p>Closure: 14/05/2024</p> <p>Finding: There was maladministration in the handling of reports of damp, mould, draughts, and lack of insulation. There was also service failure in the handling of reports of pests.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologies and paid £900. Undertook a risk assessment & notified what works would be undertaken and why.</p>	Repair progression: The landlord must outline what further works it is and is not willing to complete, and its reasoning for these decisions and, complete a damp and mould risk assessment.
202208885	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of reports of repairs and concerns about its temporary construction site along with the consideration of the associated complaint handling.	<p>Closure: 09/04/2024</p> <p>Findings: There was maladministration in the handling of the reports of repairs to: the kitchen units, to cracks in the walls and ceilings, issues with the floorboards, garden and, the handling of the concerns about the temp construction site, as well as the associated complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologised and paid £1,250. Progressed repairs to completion. Staff training.</p>	Staff training & development: The landlord should consider the recommendations made in the Ombudsman's Spotlight reports on Knowledge and Information Management and Attitude, Respect and Rights to identify areas for service improvement which should include the consideration of the individual circumstances of a resident, including their vulnerabilities.
202119164	Wandsworth Council	Complaint regarding the handling of outstanding works, the behaviour of contractors undertaking works and the handling of the associated complaint.	<p>Closure: 28/09/2023</p> <p>Findings: There has been a service failure in relation to the issues arising in relation to the outstanding works/contractor behaviour and, the associated complaint handling.</p> <p>Remedy: Apologised and paid £200. Progressed repairs to completion.</p>	Repair progression: The landlord should meet with the resident to identify the works that remain outstanding and to agree an action plan with timescales for completion of the works.

Housing
Ombudsman Service

**LANDLORD
PERFORMANCE
REPORT**

2023/2024

Wandsworth Council

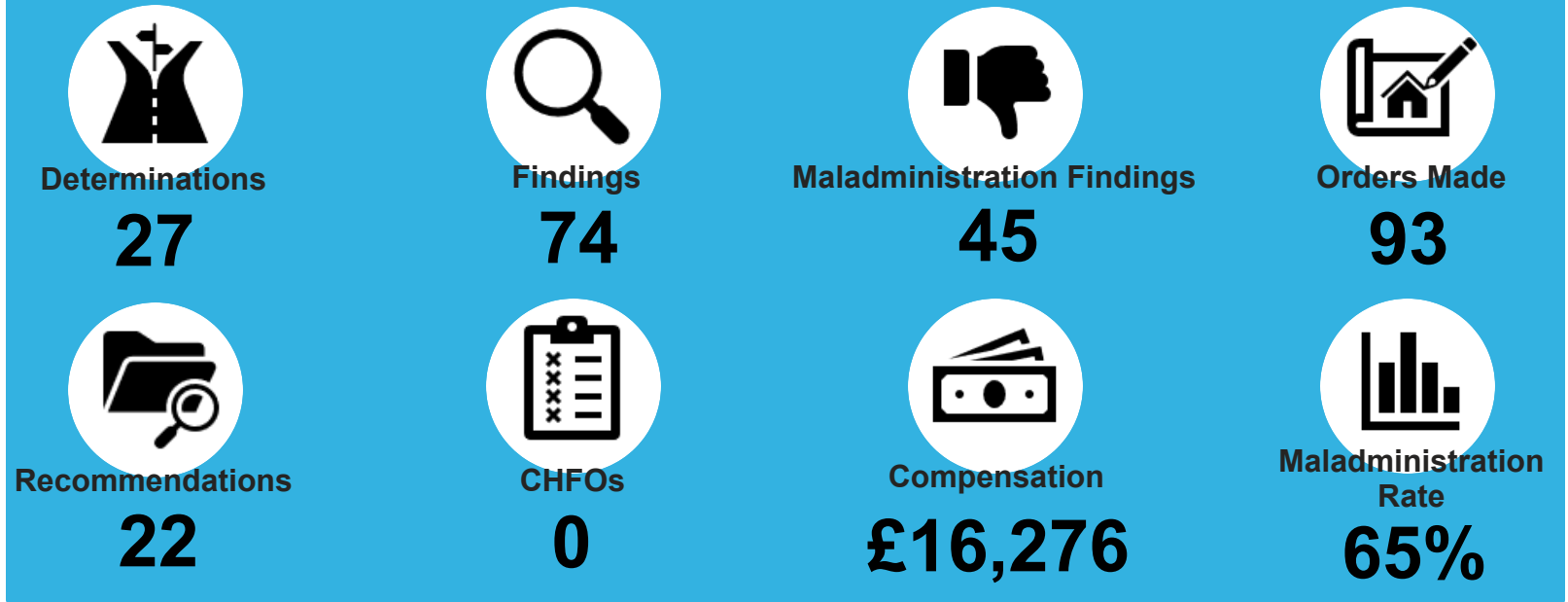
Wandsworth Council

Landlord: Wandsworth Council

Landlord Homes: 32,871

Landlord Type: Local Authority / ALMO or TMO

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE



PERFORMANCE 2022-2023



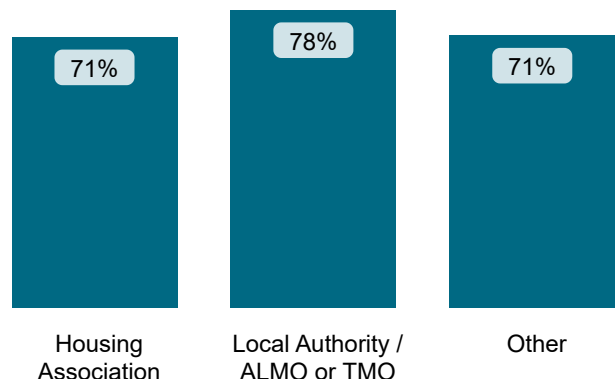
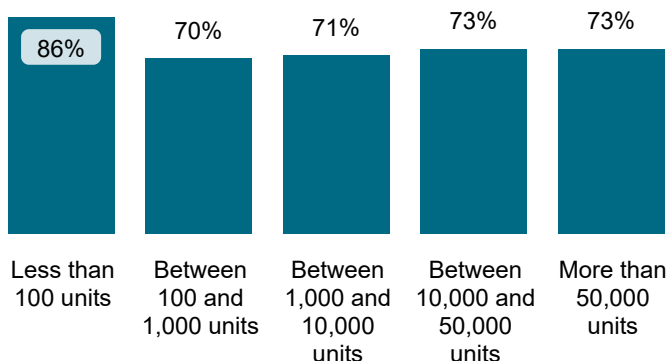
Maladministration Rate Comparison | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

NATIONAL MALADMINISTRATION RATE: 73%

The landlord performed *similarly* when compared to similar landlords by size and type.

National Mal Rate by Landlord Size: Table 1.1

by Landlord Type: Table 1.2



Findings Comparison | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

National Performance by Landlord Size: Table 2.1

Outcome	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	Total
Severe Maladministration	13%	6%	4%	8%	7%	7%
Maladministration	39%	37%	41%	42%	43%	42%
Service failure	17%	18%	20%	18%	19%	19%
Mediation	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Redress	0%	6%	7%	8%	12%	9%
No maladministration	11%	21%	20%	16%	12%	15%
Outside Jurisdiction	20%	11%	8%	7%	5%	7%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Wandsworth Council	
Outcome	% Findings
Severe Maladministration	3%
Maladministration	39%
Service failure	19%
Mediation	0%
Redress	9%
No maladministration	23%
Outside Jurisdiction	7%
Withdrawn	0%

National Performance by Landlord Type: Table 2.2

Outcome	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	Total
Severe Maladministration	6%	9%	6%	7%
Maladministration	41%	45%	37%	42%
Service failure	19%	18%	20%	19%
Mediation	1%	1%	0%	1%
Redress	12%	4%	5%	9%
No maladministration	15%	15%	20%	15%
Outside Jurisdiction	6%	9%	11%	7%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%

Outcome	% Findings
Severe Maladministration	3%
Maladministration	39%
Service failure	19%
Mediation	0%
Redress	9%
No maladministration	23%
Outside Jurisdiction	7%
Withdrawn	0%

Landlord Findings by Category | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Table 2.3

Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Property Condition	1	15	7	0	6	8	0	0	37
Complaints Handling	0	9	4	0	1	1	0	0	15
Anti-Social Behaviour	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	6
Moving to a Property	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	6
Staff	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Charges	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Estate Management	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Information and data management	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Occupancy Rights	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Reimbursement and Payments	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	2	29	14	0	7	17	5	0	74

Findings by Category Comparison | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Top Categories for Wandsworth Council

Table 3.1

Category	# Landlord Findings	% Landlord Maladministration	% National Maladministration
Property Condition	37	62%	73%
Complaints Handling	15	87%	84%
Anti-Social Behaviour	5	40%	68%

National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Size: Table 3.2

Category	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	71%	61%	60%	67%	75%	40%
Complaints Handling	100%	87%	87%	86%	81%	87%
Property Condition	80%	63%	72%	74%	74%	62%

National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Type: Table 3.3

Category	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	68%	70%	67%	40%
Complaints Handling	81%	91%	91%	87%
Property Condition	72%	77%	61%	62%

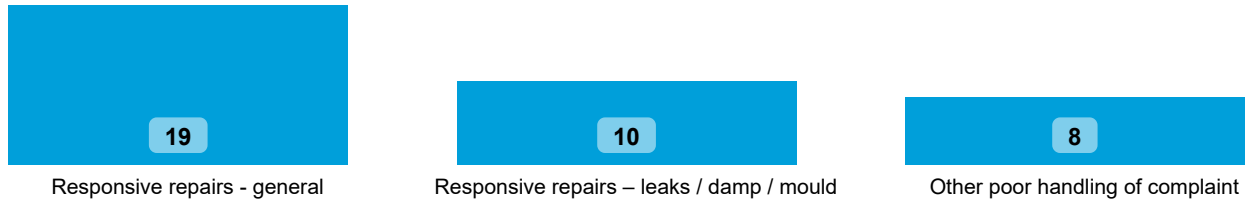
Findings by Sub-Category | Cases Determined between April 2023 - March 2024 Table 3.4

Highlighted Service Delivery Sub-Categories only:

Sub-Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Responsive repairs - general	0	11	4	0	2	2	0	0	19
Responsive repairs – leaks / damp / mould	1	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	10
Staff conduct	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Noise	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Decants (temp. or permanent)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pest control (within property)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Responsive repairs – heating and hot water	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Service charges – amount or account management	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	16	7	0	5	8	0	0	38

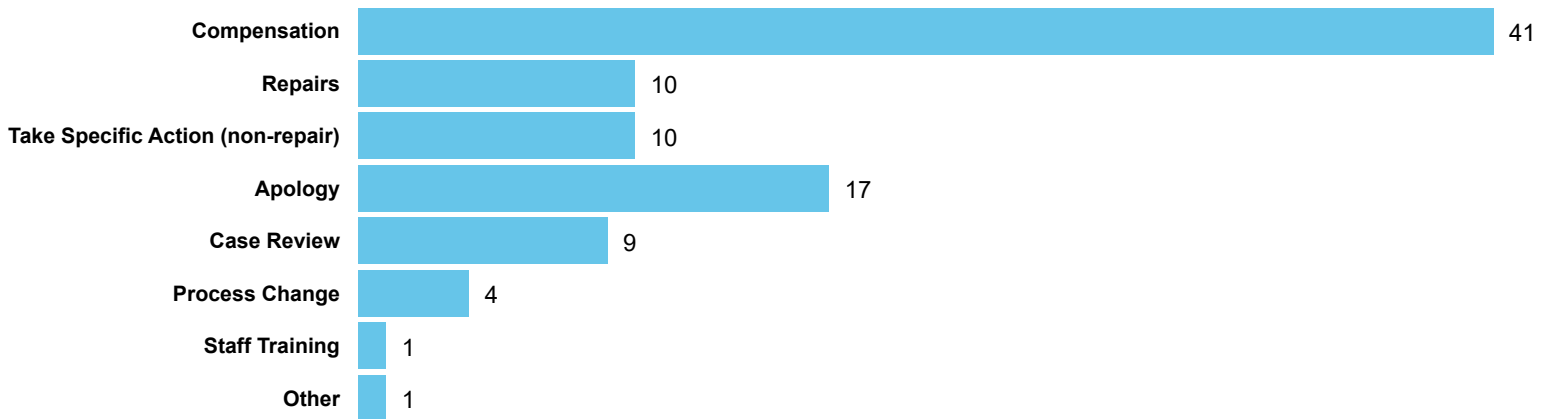
Top Sub-Categories | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Table 3.5



Orders Made by Type | Orders on cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Table 4.1



Order Compliance | Order target dates between April 2023 - March 2024

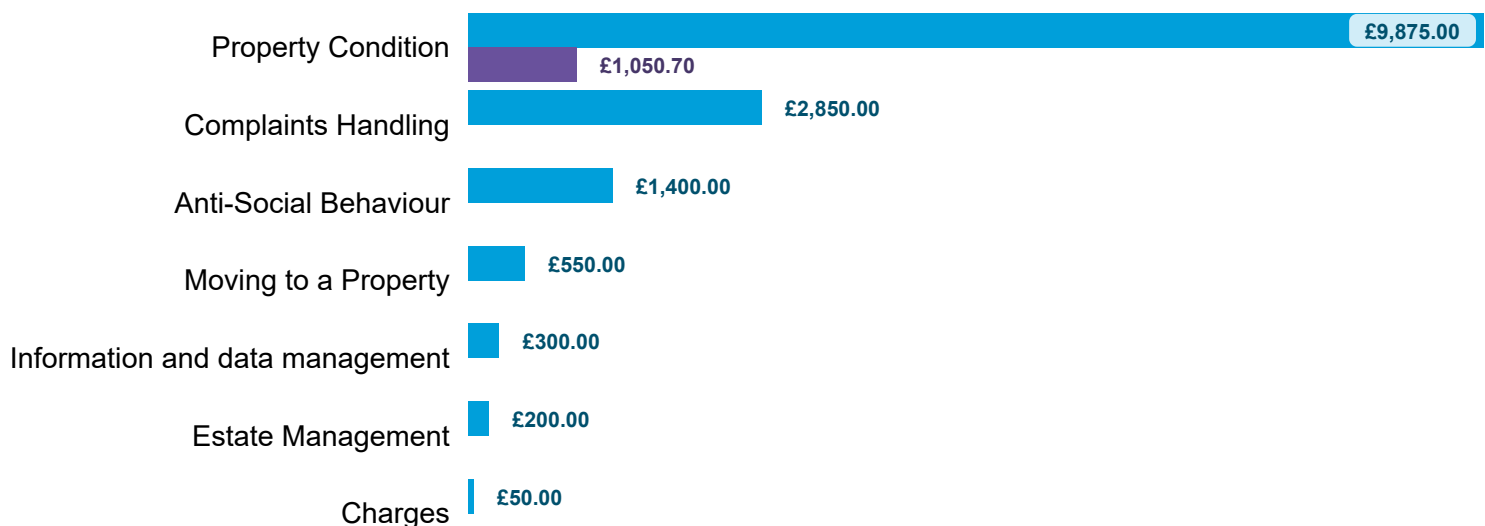
Table 4.2

Order	Overdue	Within 3 Months		
Complete?	Count	%	Count	%
Complied	3	3%	90	97%
Total	3	3%	90	97%

Compensation Ordered | Cases Determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Table 5.1

● Ordered ● Recommended



Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24				Appendix 9
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
CEX Group				
Complaints	Upheld	Complaint regarding councils complaints webpage and options available	Software development to increase accessibility.	The Council is committed to ensuring that its complaints processes are accessible to everyone and this complaint has been helpful in highlighting gaps that are now being addressed.
Complaints	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding errors in the information given, which caused additional frustration as believed that they had repeatedly corrected information given by Council staff and had asked for information to be verified before contact which was not done.	Communication accuracy	The Complaints Team have been reminded that it is important to double check correspondence for factual accuracy before it is sent.
Customer Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding the inability of the service to meet reasonable adjustments when helping them to complete a form in reception and wants to be reimbursed for travel expenses and the distress caused.	Staff training/development	Staff have undergone training so that they have an awareness of hidden disabilities and the requirement to offer an appointment to customers who require assistance.
Children's - Corporate				
Children & Families	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding complainant overhearing a member of staff debriefing their manager about their family's case, following a call with the complainant which had been accidentally left connected.	Correct use of software/Staff training & development.	Practitioners have been reminded of the need to ensure that calls are ended properly following conversations held via Microsoft Teams. This will ensure confidentiality is upheld for all involved.
Pupil Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding the fact that no suitable solution was offered that would ensure that their child would receive their entitlement of full time education.	Internal Communication	There is the a need for improved communication between internal services as referrals to provide additional support were not made in a timely fashion. Internal discussions have taken place between Pupil Services and the SEND and Inclusion teams to agree a protocol in cases such as this to avoid similar experiences for children and their families in the future.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Pupil Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding the service failure to obtain a school placement for their child and the associated lack of support and an extensive delay that they experienced with this along with associated communication failures.	Internal Communication	Pupil Services and the PRU will attend the Education Welfare Service's monthly case review meetings for children who are out of school to provide a joined up approach for each case that will result in improved case communications and positive outcomes.
SEN Transport	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the lack of support and transport arrangements put into place to meet their child's needs.	Process & procedure development.	The SEN Transport Team will review current processes, systems, and resources to improve decision making at the initial stage of application including: a full review of the application form to ensure the holistic needs of the child are taken into account; training by an outside body (for extra scrutiny) for the panel to ensure the correct skills are fully updated annually to identify and understand children more holistically.
SEN Transport	Upheld	Complaint regarding their child's school transport experiences including timeliness of driver along with associated communication issues.	Communication & timeliness of actions.	The service has been reminded that they need to ensure that all communications are acknowledged within two working days of receipt and that all parents need to receive regular updates of the actions being taken to resolve issues with their child's school transport. The service reminded the school transport provider of the importance of directly liaising with the parents when amending pick up/drop off times, so they can ensure parents have suitable time to prepare their children and get them ready for transport, along with their school day ahead.
SEND & Inclusion	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the handling and finalisation of their child's EHCP, along with the requirement for adequate schooling to meet the SEN and issues with the lack of alternative provision made such as a personal budget or commissioning an Educational Psychologist.	Communication clarity	There have been shortcomings in the service provided by the SEND team. To improve, senior managers have restructured the teams, increased the capacity to deal with outstanding work and made changes to internal processes so that this situation is less likely to happen in the future.
SEND & Inclusion	Upheld	Complaint regarding an ongoing dissatisfaction that several elements of their child's EHCP were not being delivered and allegations that the SENCo at the school was not suitably qualified to deliver the SEN support required.	3rd party contracted service delivery	The Local Authority has recently reviewed therapy contracts with its health providers through our Joint Commissioning Strategy and reviewed its Service Level Agreements as part of this work to ensure there are set time limits in delivery once new Plans are agreed.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
SEND & Inclusion	Upheld	Complaint regarding the failure of the Local Authority to ensure that the provision in their child's EHCP (section F) was implemented as they believed the school was knowingly failing to do so for a significant period of time. They also believed that the SEND coordinator had failed to make the appropriate adjustments when communicating with their child, contrary to the Children & Families Act 2014.	Process & procedure development.	The Local Authority has reviewed its SEND structure to ensure there is the requisite staffing capacity to undertake statutory obligations. There has been a review of all the current processes and procedures associated with EHCP annual reviews and, regular monitoring of annual reviews is now in place to ensure timely delivery. An annual review action plan has also been developed.
SEND & Inclusion	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the failure to provide EHCP provision & schooling after the exclusion of their child, which they are additionally unhappy about.	Process & procedure development.	The SEND Service continues to review the processes for those children awaiting an appropriate school placement or those not in school to ensure that consultations are being undertaken and communication remains a high priority
SEND & Inclusion	Upheld	Complaint regarding issues about EHCP provision for their child and timelines of review alongside inaccuracies in information provided.	Process & procedure development.	The SEND Service is reviewing the processes and capacity of work for the Tribunal team to ensure that prompt action is taken to avoid lengthy delays where possible
SEND & Inclusion	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to provide the educational provision set out in their child's EHCP.	Process & procedure development.	The SEND Service has reviewed current processes, systems, and resources to improve the statutory timescales linked to Annual Reviews. Best practice should be to ensure that prompt action is taken to avoid lengthy delays in this process. The SEND Service now has a clear action plan in place to improve the Annual Review process and further training was undertaken throughout the Autumn 2023 Term
SEND & Inclusion	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of their child's EHCP, associated failures in provision and communication matters.	Process & procedure development.	The SEND Service has reviewed current processes, systems, and resources to improve the statutory timescales linked to the statutory process, including Annual Reviews, to ensure that prompt action is taken to avoid lengthy delays in this process. The SEND Service will additionally address the matter relating to therapy handover procedures with our Health colleagues.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
SEND & Inclusion	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the waiting times and administration of the Emerging Needs Pathway and Multi Disciplinary Assessment process for their child.	Clarity & timeliness of information provided.	The service has been reminded of the need for greater timeliness in undertaking the initial Emerging Needs Pathway (ENP) assessment and that greater clarity of reasoning needs to be provided when communicating decisions to parents and, an action plan has been put in place to improve the ENP process.
Environment & Community Services				
Development Management	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the lack of waste disposal facilities outside their accommodation.	Communication delays	Staff have been reminded of the need to respond within the Corporate standards and to update the client when this is not possible.
Inspection & Enforcement	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding their concerns over the legality of a Fixed Penalty Notice for littering.	Communication failures	The 3rd party provider has been asked to have communication contingencies in place so that this does not happen again.
Parking Operations	Upheld	Complaint regarding pedestrian direction sign pointed the wrong way	Communication failures	Contact details for Transport for London (TfL) and other such Authorities will be obtained so they are shareable and up to date with regards to works that come under their remit.
Planning Enforcement	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of a planning application and related enforcement issues	Staff training/development	Staff will be provided with: additional training and reminders for interrogating existing and proposed drawings and views on site during the assessment of planning applications; additional training and signing off protocol for planning appeals; and an updated and refined Validation List will be created..
Waste & Street Cleansing	Upheld	Complaint regarding missed waste and recycling collections	Complaint handling	Whilst missed collections may happen from time to time, it is important that we respond well and on time to complaints about council services and that we provide a full response at each stage of our communication. The refresher training for staff will enable the service to deliver an improvement in this regard.
Finance				

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Council Tax & Business Rates	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding an invoice and associated letters pursuing an overpayment of housing benefit that were sent to a vulnerable person causing unnecessary distress, particularly as they believe the balance quoted as outstanding to be incorrect.	3rd party error and delays	As a result of this case, the Council is liaising with the DWP to put in place measures to ensure cases referred to them for deductions are verified as having been loaded onto their system in a timely manner.
Council Tax & Business Rates	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the issue of a final demand and summons due to late payment of Council Tax.	Administrative oversight	Officers have been reminded of the need to ensure that any agreed course of action is undertaken in a timely manner to avoid escalation.
Parking Compliance & Rent Collection	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of their application for a parking permit.	Website clarity	The Council has reviewed the content of the website to alleviate any areas of potential confusion
Parking Compliance & Rent Collection	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding Blue badge renewal process and why it involves a 2nd questionnaire that asks for the same information but in a different format that is not accessible to vulnerable people.	Process & procedure development.	The Council's Supported Travel management will look to improve assessment procedures for information being requested that has previously provided. The pro forma document will be re evaluated to alert applicants of documents already received. The Council is working on a new system design on information requests to provide more capacity for the officer sending the request to include multiple application options and add free text on a single reply. There will also be an option for email applications which will also speed up the decision making process.
Parking Compliance & Rent Collection	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the continual issue of rent collection arrears letters when in receipt of monthly Universal Credit and therefore can only pay rent monthly in arrears, which is always paid to the Council as soon as the funds to do so are received.	Data Accuracy	Staff have been reminded to ensure that they manually enter/re enter a Rent Collection system code that prevents regular reminder letters being issued for people in receipt of Universal Credit.
Transactional Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding the invoice for outstanding service charges for past years, which they had understood to be part of a Bankruptcy Order and therefore not recoverable from them.	Process & procedure development along with staff training.	Current procedures have been reviewed and additional training provided to staff in respect of bankruptcy situations to ensure greater care is taken as to what is and is not for further recovery in these situations.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Insurance	Upheld	Complaint regarding the level of communication and time taken to address their Public Liability Insurance Claim against the Council.	Communication and complaint handling.	A review of claimant liaison/communications within the Insurance Team is ongoing to ensure that records of correspondence and contacts are kept accurately, and promptly updated and responded to within claim processing time expectations, including notifications of delays. The service will also undertake complaint handling training.
Housing & Regeneration				
Housing Management Animal Welfare Service	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing issues with neighbours' dogs and communal estate grass areas.	Staff training/development	Housing staff have been reminded to ensure: due diligencet when responding to complaints for accuracy with dates: that all reports of ASB and nuisance are recorded accurately on the Housing Management database for ease of reference in the future; when taking a call for a colleague who is not available that they should advise the caller that they will deal with the matter concerned in the absence of their colleague to ensure good customer service practices are maintained. The service will also be advised to ensure that they seek clarification from a caller of the exact location, should this be unclear when taking future reports of nuisance.
Housing Management Central Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing mould and cracks on the walls and ceiling	Monitoring of 3rd party contractors	The housing team have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that repair orders are followed up promptly and monitored to ensure that they are satisfactorily completed without undue delay.
Housing Management Central Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding issues with damp and mould in the property, officer conduct and the handling of their request for housing	Timely communication and monitoring of 3rd party contractors	Contractors will be reminded of the importance of keeping ommunication clear and accurate with the housing teams. Furthermore, housing officers will remind contractors to ensure when orders are raised, that they contact tenants to arrange appropriate dates for visits and ensure their operatives attend properties only on confirmed dates.
Housing Management Central Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding rats entering property, water ingress at property and the handling of complaints.	Timely communication & monitoring of contractors.	Contractors will be reminded of the importance of keeping communication clear and accurate with both the Housing team and residents. Officers in the Housing team will be reminded to respond to correspondence and complaints within the corporate timescales and to advise residents where it is not possible to provide a detailed response within that timeframe.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24		Appendix 9		
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Central Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding repeated back surges in plumbing that led to the flooding of their home along with poor communication.	Effective timely communications	Contractors will be reminded of the importance of effectively communicating with and updating the housing teams where access may be hampered preventing camera surveys taking place and officers have been reminded to adhere to our service standards for responding to correspondence wherever possible.
Housing Management Central Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of complaints of anti social behaviour by a neighbour.	Complaint handling	Housing staff have been reminded of the need to ensure that any complaint received is sent to the Housing and Regeneration department's Business Support team, who monitor and log all complaints. They have also been reminded of the importance of being clear in their responses how complaints are being dealt with and offer clear explanations on how to escalate matters should complainants remain unhappy with their response.
Housing Management Central Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the length of time it has taken to resolve a leak into property from the balcony above.	Monitoring of works	It is accepted that some matters should have been resolved sooner and staff have been reminded of the need to monitor issues involving water ingress closely.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the time taken to complete repairs and issues with communication.	Monitoring of 3rd party contractors	Meetings with our contractors to monitor performance will be continued with a focus on repair orders that have exceeded their target dates.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding repair issues due to water ingress over a significant period in their home	Monitoring of works	The Cooperatives must ensure that effective and permanent repairs are carried out without delay in all instances of water ingress. They have also been reminded of the need to contact tenants immediately after incidents of water ingress into their home to confirm that the ingress has been fully resolved and to arrange for any further repairs that might be required.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding outstanding repairs following water ingress and removal of asbestos found during initial inspection for works to be done.	Communication & monitoring of works	The Council must ensure that repairs are carried out without delay following any instance of damage caused by water ingress and tenants should be advised of any updates in a timely manner, where necessary in writing.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the lift refurbishment in their block and provision of temporary accommodation for members of the household.	Staff training/development	The contents of emails received from residents should be assessed more effectively and urgent situations made a priority for a response to be sent.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24				Appendix 9
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the follow up to water ingress within their home	Monitoring of works	Instances of water ingress should be followed up with the affected resident to ensure all issues and concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing repairs that are yet to be resolved including water ingress into bathroom and kitchen, mould in the bathroom, bedroom and living room, electrical works, plastering and decorations.	Timely communication	The Council will endeavour to ensure that repairs are carried out without delay, communicating effectively with contractors to ensure faults are identified and rectified in a timely manner.
Housing Management Eastern Area Team	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding delays in receiving a payment cheque and not undertaking Housing Ombudsman orders	Service administrative failure	A reminder to staff to keep administration errors to a minimum and provide appropriate apologies when they do occur.
Housing Management Estate Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the Council's waiting list for garages and would like the Council to review it's allocation process and consider providing more storage space generally.	Communication	Officers will be reminded that responses to Councillors should be copied to the complainant with the Councillor's agreement.
Housing Management Estate Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding cleaning of communal areas within their block.	Process & procedure development.	Due to the large volume of enquiries regarding cleaning and graffiti it isn't always possible to post inspect all matters, however, it is expected that areas of anti social behaviour within estates to attract more attention from cleaners and estate services officers alike. Processes have now been put in place to achieve this.
Housing Management Estate Services	Upheld	Complaint regarding access to the allocated storage shed for their leasehold property.	Accuracy of information	Staff will be reminded not to provide advice as to the contents of leases/leaseplans but to direct leaseholder enquiries to the Land Registry.
Housing Management Lift Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding continuing poor lift service at their block.	Tendering of works protocol.	It is unfortunate that only after 10 years of service, major components from the original design have had to be replaced resulting in long term shutdowns. The Council will continue to provide regular updates to residents on the recent shutdown, and once lift service is restored, the lift will be monitored closely by both the Council and the lift contractor.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Lift Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing lift issues at address.	Monitoring of works	In the interim period the Council will continue to monitor the performance of the lifts until the refurbishment commences. All possible measures will be taken to ensure the lifts are returned to service as quickly as possible in the event of a lift breakdown or lift shutdown to minimise the period a lift is out of service for.
Housing Management Property Services Heating Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding poor workmanship by contractors when fitting a radiator and other heating works.	Monitoring of contractors and works.	The Service will monitor the instances of inadequate clearing up by engineers with this contractor as part of the contractual monthly performance monitoring meetings. Furthermore, the Council has instructed all contractors to ensure photographic evidence is provided to demonstrate all areas of work have been left clean and tidy and a highlighted section added to job sheets which residents have to sign to confirm they are satisfied with the results to ensure this area of their service is to a sufficient standard.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding noise nuisance from a neighbour and the handling of the matter by the Council.	Communication & data accuracy.	To ensure that complainants are kept updated when noise nuisance complaints are made, and to also ensure that accurate records are kept in relation to telephone conversations with complainants or perpetrators in noise nuisance cases.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the tree removal in front of a neighbouring property	Timely communication & information quality	Housing staff are to be reminded on the importance of progressing cases such as these in a timely manner, meeting the Council's service standards and of ensuring correct information is provided in response to enquiries.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding mould and pests in their home	Monitoring of 3rd party contractors	It is important that repair orders are monitored to completion.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding repairs and interactions with Housing.	Monitoring of 3rd party contractors	A meeting with the contractors will be arranged to monitor their performance to ensure that works which fall out of target are more closely monitored so that officers can minimise the delays of works not being completed in a timely manner.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing issues with outstanding repairs and poor communication handling such as a lack of response to emails and questions that they have raised about the matter.	Timelienss of communication and monitoring of 3rd party contractors.	The team have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that correspondence is responded to promptly. The need to keep residents informed will be regularly reviewed by the management team to ensure that service standards are improved. The issues regarding the quality of the repairs and attending the property without prior notice have been raised with the works contractors at their respective contract meetings.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding paving in the garden which is unsafe and the associated delays.	Complaints handling & timely repair actions taken.	The team is to be reminded that they need to ensure that complaints are recorded and responded to in line with the Council's corporate complaints process. They will also ensure that requests for repairs to defective paving are carefully considered and the necessary repairs are undertaken in a timely manner.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding repeated mould and ventilation in home due to damp and the impact this is having on an asthmatic child within the household.	Data monitoring.	The housing team have been reminded of the need to ensure that they monitor requests for repeated mould washes as these requests may indicate an underlying defect that requires closer investigation.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint about repairs which have been outstanding for over 12 months. The repairs concern mould, damp, drain in garden, polystyrene in loft, rubbish in garden, uneven floor in a bedroom.	Communication and the monitoring of works.	The estate team have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that repair orders are followed up promptly when contacted by residents and closely monitored where things have gone wrong. They have also been reminded of the importance of keeping residents residents informed and this will be regularly reviewed by the management team to ensure that service standards are maintained.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding a delay in progressing insurance claim following external cracking that affected property	Timely communication.	Officers have been reminded of the need to respond to requests for information relating to insurance claims more promptly.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding health issues caused by mould and damp at property leading to loss/damage of personal possessions.	Complaint handling	Managers have since been asked to provide clear instructions on how complainants can escalate their complaints. Managers have also been reminded of the importance of completing a thorough investigation of each point of issue raised when a formal complaint is logged.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the estate management's poor treatment: neglect of disability needs; attendance failures of requested home visits; requests for home disability adaptations being ignored; failure to address reported ASB issues of neighbours.	Delays in carrying out adaptations.	There have been delays in providing the adaptations to kitchen units to accommodate the household needs and housing staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring such adaptations are carried out promptly.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding management transfer request	Communication and complaint handling.	Officers have been reminded of the importance of responding to complaints and that they are followed up where necessary
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding issues & delays surrounding a number of repairs including water ingress and having to move out of their home.	Staff training/development	Officers have been reminded of the need to seek specialist reports earlier for repairs that are ongoing where the Council's contractors are unable to identify and resolve the defect.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding roof leaks and water ingress into the property.	Accuracy of information given & monitoring of works.	The housing team has been asked to monitor requests for repeated roof repairs as there may be an underlying defect that requires closer investigation and inclusion into the council's cyclical maintenance programme at an earlier stage.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding various repair issues including tiles off the roof, broken window and poor communication.	Timely communication	The housing team discussed communication with residents at a team meeting. Managers will also ensure that correspondence is monitored to ensure that responses are sent in a timely manner.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing repair issues for mould and damp that have been occurring for over 10 years with no resolution in sight	Monitoring of repairs	The housing team has been reminded of the importance of monitoring the progress of repairs to ensure they are satisfactorily completed, particularly when there are staff changes.
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding repairs at complainants address that has impacted on the family's safety and well being in their home due to a serious electrical supply fault & a ceiling falling down with no warning.	Attention to detail when monitoring works	Building Maintenance Inspectors have been reminded to ensure that they remember to check ceilings in the Council's older stock when the property becomes vacant and again just before they sign off the works as being completed.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24				Appendix 9
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing bathroom repairs.	Staff resourcing	Although the staffing issues impacting the service received have been resolved, managers looked at ways that vacancies within teams can be more effectively managed to limit the impact on email correspondence .
Housing Management Southern Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding severe damp and mould, outstanding repairs and lack of engagement on concerns raised.	Timely communication	The housing team discussed communication with residents at a team meeting so that it was ensured that all officers were aware of the importance of communicating with residents promptly.
Housing Management Technical Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the incomplete major roof repairs on their block of flats and that the work done has caused the communal landings to be in a worse state with: water pooling when it rains; resurfacing of balcony not fit for purpose; new leaks to first floor landing.	Communication	The project team have been reminded to ensure that the residents are informed when a major works contract is delayed.
Housing Management Technical Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding issues with various matters surrounding the maintenance of the block of flats including damp and water ingress, woodworm etc. Concerned that section 20 was not followed & that demands for payment towards the cyclic fund have been made.	Timely communication	The Council operates a robust and efficient response service to all reported leaks and reported water ingress and will continue to improve this service. The Council will also look to improve its communications through timely and helpful responses to all queries from residents.
Housing Management Technical Services	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding ongoing issues with outstanding repairs to the property and delays experienced.	Communication and complaint handling.	The Council will look to improve its communication with tenants in regard to the options available within the requirements of the decent homes standard upgrade. In addition, colleagues in the Major Works team have been reminded of the importance of following the corporate complaint procedures.
Housing Management Technical services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to take into account their disability and to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate this when dealing with kitchen and bathroom works within their home.	Staff training/development	Further training in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the need to make reasonable adjustments has been implemented for staff in the major works team.
Housing Management Technical Services	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the front door at their address.	Monitoring of 3rd parties	The Council has taken steps to ensure that contractors act promptly on instructions relating to these types of orders.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24				Appendix 9
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Western Area Team	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding outstanding bathroom repairs that despite visits by contractors are still not satisfactorily completed. There are also issues with mould, internal and external leaks, water damage and a neighbour's CCTV.	Communication timeliness	The service will be reminded of the importance of ensuring residents' concerns are responded to in a timely manner in line with the Council's Service Level Agreements. This will be regularly reviewed by managers to ensure that service standards are maintained.
Housing Management Western Area Team	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to resolve the water ingress issue into their property from a neighbouring flat and concerns regarding fire safety and compartmentation.	Timely communication	Staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that repair orders are followed up promptly and monitored to ensure that they are satisfactorily completed. Where things do go wrong or there are unavoidable delays, it is important that these are clearly communicated to residents.
Housing Management Western Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of repairs to the flooring within their home, contractor delays, missed appointments and repairs to the patio.	Timely communication and monitoring of 3rd party contractors	Contractors have been reminded of the importance of keeping residents informed about the progress of their repair, particularly if delays occur. The Council will continue to undertake review meetings with contractors to discuss any issues and the steps that can be taken to minimise delays and disruption to residents. This will be regularly reviewed by managers to ensure that service standards are maintained
Housing Management Western Area Team	Upheld	Complaint regarding the ongoing delays experienced regarding outstanding repairs	Timely communication and monitoring of 3rd party contractors	The Housing team have been reminded of the importance of clear communication to ensure that repair work is actioned as quickly as possible, that there are no undue delays and if there are, that these are explained to residents. The Council will continue to undertake contract meetings with its contractors to discuss any issues and what steps can be implemented to minimise delays and disruptions to residents. This will be regularly reviewed by managers to ensure that service standards are maintained.
Housing Management Western Area Team	Upheld	Complaint about an ongoing leak causing water ingress to their property, personal possessions which has had an impact on their mental health.	Timely communication and monitoring of works	The Area Housing teams will be reminded of the importance of clear communication to ensure that repair work is actioned as quickly as possible and if there is any anticipated delay, that this is explained to residents at the earliest opportunity. The Council will continue to undertake contract meetings with its contractors to discuss any issues and what steps can be implemented to minimise delays and disruptions to residents. This will be regularly reviewed by managers to ensure that service standards are maintained.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Management Western Area Team	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding outstanding window works and delays in communications.	Timely communication	Officers from the housing team and contractor have been reminded that clear communication is paramount, and responses are given in accordance with corporate policy. Contractors have been advised of the importance of notifying residents at the earliest opportunity if delays are likely, or if they are unable to attend an appointment. They have also been asked to ensure that they record and provide evidence of when they have attended a property and not been provided access.
Housing Management Western Area Team	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding outstanding issues with damp/mould, decorative repairs and overcrowding	Timely communication and monitoring of works	The housing team will be reminded of the importance of clear communication to ensure that repair work are actioned as quickly as possible, that there are no undue delays and if there is, that these are explained to residents and, residents are kept regularly updated.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the assessment of their housing application.	Staff resourcing	The Housing Assessment team is experiencing a very high ongoing demand on its service and this unfortunately results in some delays with reassessments. The Council has expanded the team within the last year to assist with managing this demand and to minimise delays in the future.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Upheld	Complaint regarding the assessment of their housing application.	Staff training/development	This complaint highlights the importance of carrying out accurate housing register assessments and these errors will be highlighted with the Housing Assessment Team.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding their ongoing issues with their Housing transfer application, medical assessment & delays experienced in responding to their communications & complaints which they feel is grossly negligent.	Timely communication	The Council notes that it is essential that there is transparency in communication and will ensure that officers are reminded of both the requirement to adhere to deadlines wherever possible or to agree an extension where circumstances mean that it is not possible to meet an existing deadline.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Upheld	Complaint regarding re housing application	Staff training/development	We will ensure that Housing Assessments Officers are reminded of the importance of composite assessments and escalation of cases to managers, for consideration for discretionary action where the assessment requires this under the provisions of the Allocation Scheme

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Services Assessment and review	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding housing application position within Homeless Queue	Staff training/development	The complaint highlighted the importance of ensuring that Band dates on the Council's housing register are correct and this will continue to be an area of training for relevant staff.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Upheld	Complaint regarding their rehousing application within the Homeless Queue	Timely communication	This complaint highlights the importance of both responding to applicants within a timely manner but also meeting the deadlines that it itself has advised the applicant of.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding their housing assessment and failure to refer to Housing Improvement Agency after an Occupational Therapy assessment	Data Accuracy	This complaint highlights the importance of ensuring that correct information is input into recording systems. The Council strives to ensure this is done and will continue to monitor the information on our systems to minimise errors.
Housing Services Assessment and review	Partially Upheld	Complaint regarding handling of their housing assessment and position in housing queue.	Staff training/development	For accurate Housing Register assessments, it is important that the Council has adequate information. In the absence of any information required, further information needs to be requested promptly so that an informed assessment can be made. The importance of requesting additional information at the right time will be emphasized to the Housing Assessment team during the next team meeting.
Housing Services Housing Assessment & Housing Options	Upheld	Complaint regarding the continuing unsuitability of their current home and the Housing Medical Officer's assessment of their family's needs.	Staff training/development	The Assessment team have been reminded that they have previously been provided with appropriate guidance to ensure all documents are fully reviewed and all elements of applications are considered
Housing Services Homelessness Prevention & Solutions	Upheld	Complaint regarding issues with temporary accommodation (its safety and suitability and the impact this was having on them. In addition, failures in the handling of the complainant's communication requirements and the failure of Housing staff to understand their vulnerabilities and the mental health impact their experience of domestic abuse had had on them.	Staff training/development	Staff will be sent/given: training on the importance of ensuring they have a factual grasp of a clients' circumstances so that they can demonstrate understanding and act accordingly; a reminder of the procedures to follow when carrying out relevant enquiries.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24				Appendix 9
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Services Homelessness Prevention & Solutions	Upheld	Complaint regarding the handling of an applicant's homelessness application	Staff training/development	Housing Officers will be reminded that they need to explain the homelessness application process and agree regular contact times with homelessness applicants at the point of receipt of the application so that applicant's expectations are managed, thus promoting confidence in the process and service provided. Staff will also be reminded of the need to ensure that they follow up on referrals and any reported change of circumstances in a timely manner.
Housing Services Homeless Prevention & Solutions	Upheld	Complaint regarding their homelessness application.	Staff training/development	Caseworkers were reminded of the need to explain the homelessness application process and agree regular contact times with applicants to both manage expectations and promote confidence in the process
Housing Services Homeless Prevention & Solutions	Upheld	Complaint regarding their homelessness application.	Staff training/development	The Council has commenced regular refresher trainings for its staff to ensure that applicants are assessed accurately.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the continued harassment from a neighbour and disagrees with banding position.	Quality of communications	So that the level of response can be improved in the future, Managers will be reminded of the need to ensure that they make sure that they have addressed each and every point in a complaint response, regardless of how it will affect the decision.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Upheld	Complaint regarding issues with ongoing repairs and installations requested in the property to resolve the damp and other problems that have not been completed. Along with the lack of communication around the repair bookings that has caused them mental anguish and distress, along with the loss of possessions due to the damp.	Timely communication	We will discuss the case at team meetings to remind staff about contact and following up on repairs. We will also speak to the repair contractor about their processes when calling to book appointments, and arriving with the correct equipment.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding their current temporary accommodation: repairs, conditions, space and suitability and, delays in providing alternative housing options.	Monitoring of works	The property management team will be reminded of the importance of monitoring and following works required through to completion.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding repair issues, kitchen living space and size of their temporary accommodation.	Timely communication	This complaint highlights the need for better communication where a third party is involved. It is preferable for the Council to provide as much feedback and information, regardless of where we are in the process, and it should not be reliant on the tenant to make contact and chase.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Upheld	Complaint regarding how they have felt ignored by the Housing Allocations Team and the mismanagement of their accommodation needs by the Homeless Persons Unit.	Monitoring of 3rd parties	Where a property of ours has a managing agent responsible for work, and an absent officer, it is paramount that the duty team pick up emergency enforcement. This case will be discussed at the next team meeting and used as an example of what can happen if we do not make sure external partners are properly managed.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Upheld	Complaint regarding repair issues due to a leak in the room and offers of alternative accommodation	Staff training/development	Where an offer of private lease accommodation is made, it is necessary for the housing officer to make sure that the lease is in date and long enough to make a reasonable available offer. Managers have been reminded of the importance in escalating complaints formally as soon as they are made to avoid any delay in residents receiving their formal response.
Housing Services Property Management & Housing Allocations	Upheld	Complaint regarding the lack of clarity around the landlord rental scheme and compensation arrangements for private landlords, and the lack of officer inspections when properties are handed back to the landlord.	Process & procedure development.	This will be an exercise for the team to show that they are completing the procurement of properties to completion including a signed lease. This will need to involve developing an improved record keeping system..
Housing Services Temporary Accommodation and Procurement	Upheld	Complaint regarding their current temporary accommodation and the failure to take into account medical and special education needs of children in the household when assessing accommodation suitability.	Accuracy of information held	What is evident that when dealing with queries of this type in the future, medical reports and details of any special educational needs are clearly noted. The relevant teams will ensure each are fully appraised of what the client's needs are, not only in terms of health, but also where access is required for specialist schooling. If accommodation cannot be provided on the day which meets the needs of the client, it is important that clients are made aware of the plan to transfer them when suitable accommodation becomes available.

Wandsworth Borough Council - Annual Complaint Report 2023-24			Appendix 9	
KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD CORPORATE COMPLAINTS at Stage 2 2023-24				
Service complained about	Outcome at S2	Complaint Summary	Learning/Issue needing addressing	Management response
Regeneration & Development (Housing Development)	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the design team's incorrect identification of the layouts of existing properties, was extremely slow in acknowledging this and presented wrong information during the consultation.	Accuracy of publication material	This feedback is very much welcomed and serves to highlight the importance of an open and transparent consultation process.
Regeneration & Development (Housing Development)	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the first consultation event about the redevelopment of an existing estate and whether sufficient opportunity was offered for residents to provide feedback.	Website development	An additional category has since been added to the drop down menu on the Council's online complaints form, which has facilitated improvements to the Council's complaints handling process
Regeneration and Development Projects	Upheld	Complaint regarding a photo appearing in a publication associated with the Council when complainant had not given permission.	Process & procedure development.	A full review is being undertaken to better ensure that people featured in photographs taken at Council led community events understand that these images may be used for the purposes of publicity, and staff will also be reminded of the importance of seeking written consent prior to any images being shared with third parties and the potential harm in releasing a photo without it.