



Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 November, 2025

Place

Diamond Room 1 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the Minutes from the meeting held on 17 March, 2025.
 - b) Any matters arising.
4. **Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25** (Pages 7 - 32)

Report of the Chief Executive
5. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.
6. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry
Tuesday, 4 November 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is
Asher Veness Tel: 02476 976114 Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillor G Duggins (Cabinet Member)

By Invitation: Councillor G Ridley (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Public Access

Any member of the public who would like to attend the meeting in person is encouraged to contact the officer below in advance of the meeting regarding arrangements for public attendance. A guide to attending public meeting can be found here: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/publicAttendanceMeetings>

Asher Veness

Tel: 02476 976114 Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership held at 1.00
pm on Monday, 17 March 2025

Members Present: Councillor G Duggins (Cabinet Member)
 Councillor G Ridley (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance: S Bennett, A West

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December, 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

9. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to the private report referred to in Minute 13 below headed “Nominations for the Coventry Award of Merit” on the grounds that the report involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as it would reveal the identity of individuals to be considered for the Awards and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

10. Nominations for the Coventry Award of Merit

The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which indicated that the Coventry Award of Merit was established by the City Council in the 1960s as a means of acknowledging and honouring personal behaviour reflecting the highest ideals of citizenship or outstanding performance in any field of human endeavour which enhances the good name of Coventry and affords inspiration to its citizens.

Any person, company or other organisation shall be eligible for consideration for the Coventry Award of Merit who has:-

- Rendered outstanding service to the City of Coventry in service to the local community.

- By outstanding personal effort in the field of sport, industry, government or the arts, brought particular renown to the City of Coventry.
- Made an outstanding contribution to the national life or in international affairs in any field of human activity in a manner which has brought credit upon the City of Coventry.
- By personal example of courage or devotion to duty and service to others, demonstrated the highest ideals of citizenship.

The Award has previously taken the form of a citation under the Common Seal together with a presentation of a gold medallion pendant from a ribbon in the City's colours. The motif on the medallion is the phoenix, symbolising the resurgence of Coventry from the flames of the Blitz. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Terms of Reference for the Award and Appendix 2 detailed the list of former recipients.

Nominations for the Award were considered by the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel at their meeting on 13 March, 2025 and a corresponding private item on the agenda (Minute 13/24 below) provided details of the unanimous Advisory Panel's recommendations in relation to those nominations.

RESOLVED that, having considered the unanimous recommendations of the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel, the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership recommends that Council grants the Coventry Award of Merit to the following recipients:-

- 1) **Pauline Black OBE DL**
- 2) **Professor Stuart Croft DL**
- 3) **Sybil Hanson**
- 4) **Councillor AS Khan**
- 5) **Mark Robins**
- 6) **Jon Sharp**

(Note : Citations for the nominees are appended to these Minutes)

11. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

12. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

Private Business

13. **Nominations for the Coventry Award of Merit**

Further to Minute 10/24 above, the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership considered unanimous recommendations from the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel held on 13 March, 2025 in relation to nominations received for the Coventry Award of Merit.

RESOLVED that, having considered the unanimous recommendations of the Coventry Award of Merit Advisory Panel, the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership recommends that Council grants the Coventry Award of Merit to the following recipients:-

- 1) Pauline Black OBE DL**
- 2) Professor Stuart Croft DL**
- 3) Sybil Hanson**
- 4) Councillor AS Khan**
- 5) Mark Robins**
- 6) Jon Sharp**

14. Any Other Items of Urgent Private Business

There were no other items of urgent private business.

(Meeting closed at 1.15pm)

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Coventry City Council

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

12 November 2025

Audit and Procurement Committee

24 November 2025

Ethics Committee

8 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership – Councillor G Duggins

Director approving submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is the final stage for complaints about Councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It is a free service that investigates complaints in a fair and independent way and provides a means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure.

Coventry City Council's complaints policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council will handle their compliments, comments and complaints. The Council also informs individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they are not happy with the Council's decision once they have exhausted the Council's complaints process.

The LGSCO issues an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with relating to that Council that year. The latest letter, issued 21 July 2025, covers complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council between April 2024 and March 2025 (2024/25).

This report sets out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council in 2024/25. It focuses on upheld complaints, service areas with a high number of complaints, compliance with Ombudsman's

recommendations, learning from complaints, comparisons with prior years, and how we compare to other local authorities.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership is recommended to:

1. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO.
2. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.
3. Request the Audit and Procurement Committee to review and be assured that the Council takes appropriate action in response to complaints investigated and where the Council is found to be at fault.

The Audit and Procurement Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO.
2. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.
3. Review and be assured that the Council takes appropriate actions in response to complaints investigated and where the Council is found to be at fault.

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Comment on the findings.
2. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO complaints that were upheld.
3. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.

List of appendices included:

Appendix 1: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2025

Appendix 2: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigation Decisions in 2024/25 for Coventry City Council

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

[Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2024-25](#)

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes – Audit and Procurement Committee on 24th November 2025 and Ethics Committee on 8th January 2026.

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:**Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25****1 Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is the final stage for complaints about Councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It is a free service that investigates complaints in a fair and independent way and provides a means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure.
- 1.2 Coventry City Council's complaints policy, published on the Council's website at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/, sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council will handle their compliments, comments and complaints. The Council also informs individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they are not happy with the Council's decision once they have exhausted the Council's complaints process.
- 1.3 The LGSCO issues an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with relating to that Council that year. The latest letter, issued 21 July 2025, covers complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council between April 2024 and March 2025 (2024/25). The letter can be found in Appendix I.
- 1.4 This report sets out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council in 2024/25. This report focuses on upheld complaints, service areas with a high number of complaints, learning from complaints, comparisons with prior years, and how we compare to other local authorities.
- 1.5 The Council has a robust and transparent policy for handling complaints. In addition to this annual report, the Council also produces formal reports on complaints about adult social care and children's social care, to Cabinet Member Adult Services and Cabinet Member Children and Young People respectively.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Across all Councils, the LGSCO received 20,773 complaints and enquiries in 2024/25, up 2836 (+16%) from 17,937 the previous year. The areas receiving the greatest number of detailed investigations were Children's Services (5,652), Housing (3,621), and Adult Services (2,777).
- 2.2 For Coventry City Council, the LGSCO received 101 complaints and enquiries in 2024/25, which is 21 more (+26%) than the previous year (80).

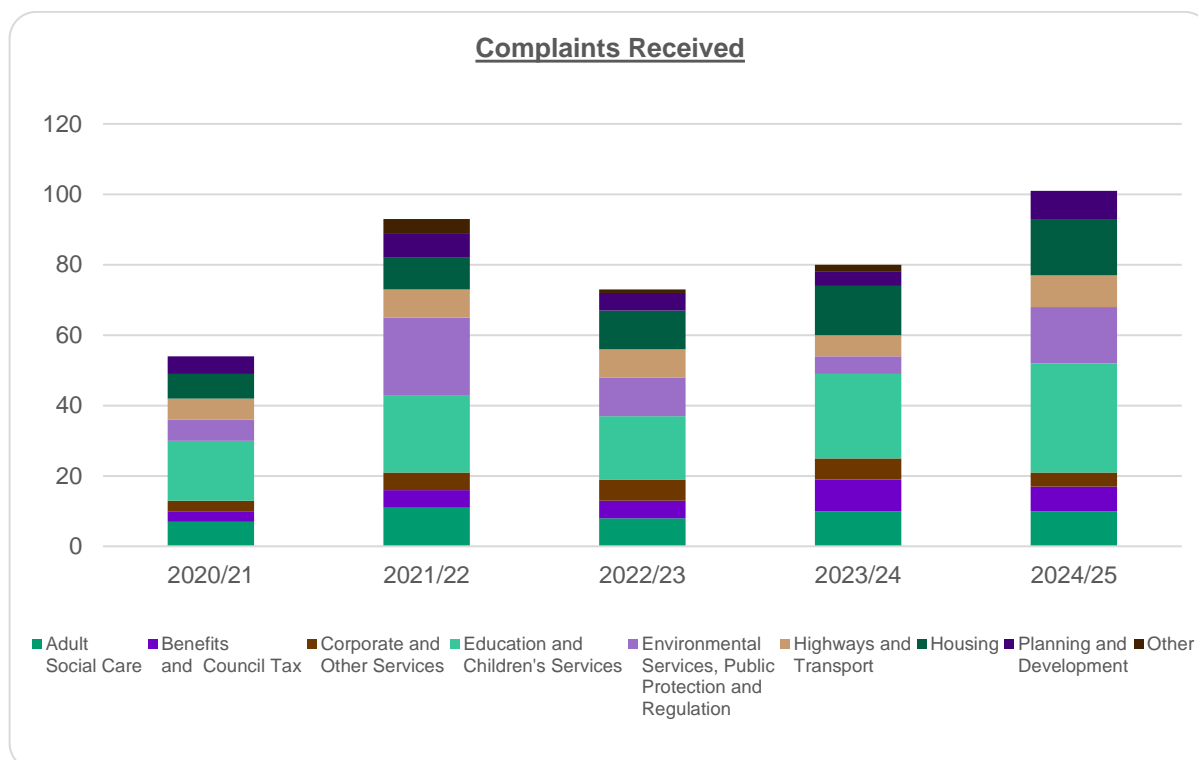
2.3 Figure 1.

Figure 1: Complaints and enquiries received by category

Category (as defined by LGSCO)	Complaints in 2023/24	Complaints in 2024/25	Change in Year
Adult care services	10	10	0
Benefits and Council tax	9	7	-2
Corporate & other services	6	4	-2
Children's and Education services	24	31	7
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	5	16	11
Highways & transport	6	9	3
Housing	14	16	2
Planning & development	4	8	4
Other	2	0	2
Total	80	101	21

2.4 Figure 2 sets out how the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO in last 7 years.

Figure 2: Complaints and enquiries received in last 5 years



2.5 In 2024/25 the LGSCO received 21 more complaints and enquiries relating to Coventry than in 2023/24 (**101 in 2024/25** compared to **80** in 2023/24). The category with the highest number of complaints and enquiries remained Children's and Education Services with 31 (up 29% from 24 in 2023/24), while the service with the greatest percentage increase was Environmental Services, up 320% (up from 5 to 16 in 2024/25). However, there was a decrease (33%) from 6 to 4 complaints in Corporate and Other Services in 2024/25. Benefits and Council Tax also saw a decrease in complaints from 9 to 7 (22%).

2.6 It is not possible to comment on the Council's overall performance based solely upon the number of complaints or enquiries to the LGSCO. Interpretation is challenging in relation to number, as a high number of complaints may indicate that a Council has been effective at signposting people to the LGSCO through their complaints handling process. Equally it could be argued that a high number of complaints may highlight that a Council needs to do more to resolve issues through its own complaints process and so save customers from needing to escalate their complaints to the LGSCO.

2.7 When dealing with an enquiry, the LGSCO can choose to investigate cases where it sees merit in doing so. Following an investigation, the LGSCO can decide if a complaint is:

- **upheld** – where a council has been at fault and this fault may or may not have caused an injustice to the complainant; or where a council has accepted it needs to remedy the complaint before the LGSCO makes a finding on fault; or
- **not upheld** – where, following investigation, the LGSCO decides that a council has not acted with fault.

2.8 In 2024/25 the LGSCO made **101** decisions relating to Coventry City Council, an increase of **32** from the previous year:

- **4 x** incomplete/invalid.
- **0 x** advice given.
- **22 x** 'referred back' for local resolution.
- **53 x** closed after initial enquiries; and
- **22 x** complaints investigated, of which **17** were upheld and **5** were not upheld.

2.9 The number of complaints investigated (**22** in 2024/25) was up on 2023/24 (just 8) but on a par with 2022/23 (20).

- The LGSCO upheld 77% of complaints investigated in 2024/25 (17 out of 22). Excepting 2023/24's unusually low figures (33%, 3 out of 8), 2024/25's total is the same in absolute case numbers (17) as investigated in 2022/23, while percentage-wise it is slightly lower overall (77% 2024/25 compared to 85% 2022/23). It is also not too dissimilar from the preceding years (71% 2021/22; 77% 2020/21).
- This compares to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) statistical neighbours' upheld rate of 79%, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) upheld rate of 83% and a national upheld rate of 83% for 2024/25.
- The tables below, set out how Coventry compares to its CIPFA statistical peers (Figure 3) and with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) constituent authorities (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Complaints investigated: Comparison with CIPFA peers 2024/25

Overall, 79% of complaints were upheld among Coventry and its 15 statistically equivalent peers. The authority with the highest percentage of complaints upheld in 2024/25 was Kirklees (94%), followed by Derby (93%), with Medway the lowest (63%). Coventry ranked 10th, with 77% upheld.

Local Authority	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	% Upheld
Kirklees	17	1	16	94%
Derby	14	1	13	93%
Sandwell	16	2	14	88%
Wolverhampton	8	1	7	88%
Rochdale	13	2	11	85%
Bristol	46	8	38	83%
Salford	11	2	9	82%
Bolton	10	2	8	80%
Blackburn and Darwin	9	2	7	78%
Coventry	22	5	17	77%
Bradford	34	8	26	76%

Leicester	23	6	17	74%
Sheffield	22	6	16	73%
Oldham	11	3	8	73%
Medway	24	9	15	63%

Figure 4: Complaints investigated: Comparison with WMCA constituent authorities 2024/25

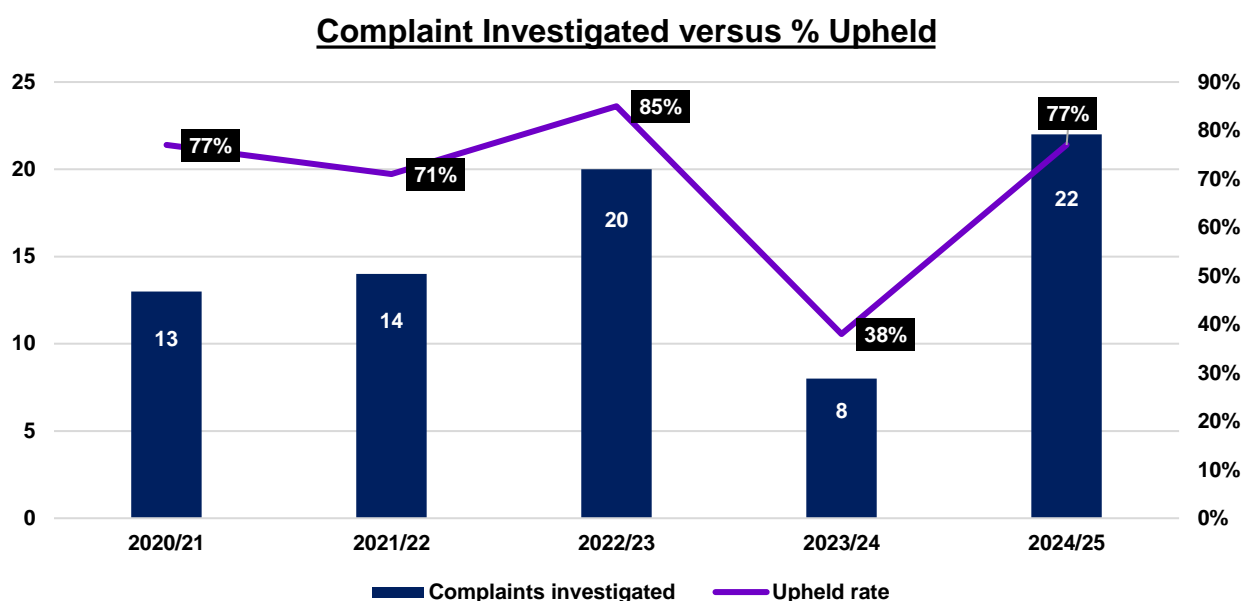
Of 204 complaints investigated across the seven constituent areas of the WMCA, 169 (83%) were upheld and 35 were not upheld. The authority with the highest percentage of complaints upheld in 2024/25 was Solihull (89%), followed closely by Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell on 88%. while the lowest was Coventry had the lowest upheld percentage across the WMCA (77%).

The Ombudsman has made us aware that they are being more selective about the complaints they consider in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. Because the Ombudsman is now less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, they are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

Local Authority	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	% Upheld
Solihull	18	2	16	89%
Walsall	8	1	7	88%
Birmingham	114	20	94	82%
Wolverhampton	8	1	7	88%
Sandwell	16	2	14	88%
Dudley	18	4	14	78%
Coventry	22	5	17	77%

Figure 5: Complaints investigated, and percentage upheld over the last 5 years

Figure 5 sets out how the number of Coventry's complaints investigated, and the percentage of complaints upheld by the LGSCO for the last 5 years.



2.10 Following an investigation, the LGSCO will typically issue a statement setting out its findings and decision. If the LGSCO decides there was fault or maladministration causing an injustice to the complainant, it will typically recommend that a council take some action to address it. Wherever possible the LGSCO will publish decision statements on its website, except where the content of the report could identify the individual complainant. In some cases, where the LGSCO upholds a complaint, the LGSCO may choose to issue a formal report of maladministration.

2.11 In 2024/25, the Ombudsman reported that the Council agreed to, and carried out, the recommendations made in fourteen cases during the year. Of all cases that required remedies from the Ombudsman, the Council completed 100% of these within the given timescales.

2.12 There were 12 complaints that resulted in some form of financial redress or reimbursement (£10,875)

2.13 The following table, Figure 6, sets out details about the complaints that the LGSCO investigated by service area.

Figure 6: Complaints investigated by service area in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25

Service area	2023/24				2024/25			
	Upheld	Not upheld	% upheld	Response time (days)	Upheld	Not upheld	% upheld	Response time (days)
Adult social care	2	0	100%	22	4	1	80%	30
Bereavement Services				0	0	1	0%	3
Children's services	0	2	0%	33	5	0	100%	16

Education Services	0	0	0%	0	3	0	100%	16
Corporate & Other Services	0	1	0%	9	1	2	0%	7
Highways	1	0	100%	5				
Housing services	0	1	0%	7	3	1	80%	4
Planning	0	1	0%	2				
Regulatory Services				0	1	0	100%	22
Total	3	5	33%	13	17	5	77%	14

2.14 This year saw an increase in the number of detailed investigations completed: 22 in 2024/25 compared to 8 in 2023/24. These related to Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing Service, Regulatory Services and Blue Badges.

2.15 The LGSCO typically expects Councils to respond to investigation enquiries within 20 working days. In 2024/25 Coventry averaged 14 working days.

2.16 Satisfactory remedy decisions are complaints where the Ombudsman has decided that while the authority did get things wrong, the authority had offered a satisfactory way to resolve it before the complaint was referred to the Ombudsman. In 2024/25 the LGSCO found that in 12% (2 of 17) of upheld cases Coventry had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This compares to 13% in similar authorities nationally.

Figure 7: Satisfactory remedy provided before the complaint reached the Ombudsman comparison with other WMCA constituent authorities

Of 169 complaints upheld in WMCA area the Ombudsman considered that in only 16 cases the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached them (9%).

Local Authority	Upheld cases where the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman		Total Number of complaints upheld
	%	Number	
Coventry	12%	2	17
Dudley	0%	0	14
Birmingham	5%	5	94
Sandwell	14%	2	14
Walsall	14%	1	7
Solihull	25%	4	16
Wolverhampton	29%	2	7

2.17 The LGSCO Annual Review Letter recognises compliance with Ombudsman's recommendations, which is published on the [interactive data map of council performance](#) which shows performance data for all councils in England. In 2024/25

the Ombudsman was satisfied we successfully implemented all their recommendations 100%, which matched the national average. This was based on 14 compliance outcomes - 4 Adult Care Services, 7 Children and Education Services, 2 Housing Service and 1 Corporate and Other Services.

2.18 Following their investigations, the LGSCO recommended some changes be made to the Council's processes and procedures. A summary of the recommendations is set out in the Learning from complaints table (Figure 8). Further details about the outcomes of each of the complaints investigated this year and the actions taken are set out in Appendix 2.

2.19 Figure 8: Learning from complaints

Service Area	Summary of actions agreed
Adult Social Care (ASC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff in its ASC service about the importance of taking proactive steps to consider suitable support at the earliest opportunity in cases where there are reports of domestic violence, to try to prevent the situation escalating. Remind relevant staff of the duties in safeguarding adults who have mental capacity to make decisions. Deliver training to staff in the initial contact team around recognising when parents need support. Remind staff responsible for responding to complaints to have regard to the potential injustice identified faults and failures may have had on individuals, or those acting on their behalf, acknowledge this, and consider whether any additional remedy is appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Remind ASC and its safeguarding staff to respond to reasonable questions and enquiries without delay or acknowledge receipt and inform individuals of when the Council can respond. This includes circumstances where the Council may be experiencing an increase in demand which limits its ability to respond as soon as it aims to.
Children Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff are aware that once a complaint has entered Stage 1 of the Children's statutory procedure the Council is obliged to ensure that the complaint proceeds to Stages 2 and 3 of the procedure if the is the complainant's wish. The Council must complete Stage 2 investigations within the required timescales of the Children's statutory complaints procedure.
Education Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what steps the Council needs to take to ensure it has access to information relating to its actions and decision-making around a child's education when a member of staff leaves their role. Provide guidance to staff of its duty to reassess and produce Education and Health Care Plans within the correct timescales. This includes issuing notification letters to parents about the Council's intention to maintain, amend or discontinue Education and Health Care Plans within four weeks of an annual review meeting, and to produce a final Education and Health Care Plan within 12 weeks of an annual review meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and guidance to staff about the Council's statutory duty to provide educational provision within a child's EHC Plan, including that this duty does not end if a child is not accessing education in a school setting. • Provide guidance and training to staff about the Council's responsibility to provide education for children who are missing school, through illness or otherwise, when a child has been absent for 15 cumulative or consecutive days. • Produce an action plan to demonstrate how the Council will meet statutory timescales for annual reviews for Education, Health and Care plans. • Review its out of school procedures to ensure it meets its duties to secure alternative provision.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is to draw up procedures or guidance for considering homelessness applications where children might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant when domestic abuse is a factor. This is to ensure officers appropriately consider if there is good reason to seek information from an alleged perpetrator and assess the risks to the applicant of doing so. The Council should also ensure officers appropriately record such decisions.
Corporate and Other Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the Council has taken action - including making changes to appeal decision letter templates if needed - to ensure that officers deciding on Blue Badge applications and appeals clearly explain how evidence has been considered, the reasons for their decisions, and how their decisions have been made in line with the guidance.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None identified or undertaken.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision.

4.1 The LGSCO Link Officer function is now part of the Council's Customer Service Team. All communication between the local authority and the LGSCO, such as complaints, enquiries, investigations, and remedies, all go via the Ombudsman Liaison Officer.

4.2 The Council's guidance and process for dealing with LGSCO complaints is set out in our Complaint Handling Guidance and the [LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code](#). This includes a requirement that Ombudsman investigations, particularly for upheld complaints, are properly communicated to elected members. Based on this:

- complaints to the LGSCO are formally reported to the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and the Audit and Procurement Committee every year (this report). In addition, this report is also considered by the Ethics Committee.
- complaints about Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, including cases investigated by the LGSCO, are reported through an annual report to the

Cabinet Member Adult Services and Cabinet Member Children and Young People respectively.

- where an investigation has wider implications for Council policy or exposes a more significant finding of maladministration, the Monitoring Officer will consider whether the implications of that investigation should be individually reported to relevant members; and
- should the Council decide not to comply with the LGSCO's final recommendation following an upheld investigation with a finding of maladministration or should the LGSCO issue a formal report (instead of a statement), the Monitoring Officer will report this to members under section 5(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

5 Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Financial remedies resulting from any complaints are typically paid out of service budgets. In 2024/25 there was 1 complaint which resulted in some form of financial remedy or reimbursement, totalling £10,875. This is detailed in Appendix 2 and was paid out of the budget of the relevant service areas. There was a case which required the Council to pay £400 a month to the complainant until satisfactory education provision was made, however, this matter was resolved by the Council without payment.

5.2 Legal implications

The statutory functions of the LGSCO are defined in the Local Government Act 1974. These are: to investigate complaints against Councils and some other authorities; to investigate complaints about adult social care providers from people who arrange or fund their own adult social care; and to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice. The main activity under Part III of the 1974 Act is the investigation of complaints, which it states is limited to complaints from members of the public alleging they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration and/or service failure.

The LGSCO's jurisdiction under Part III covers all local Councils, police and crime bodies, school admission appeal panels and a range of other bodies providing local services; and under Part IIIA, the LGSCO also investigate complaints from people who allege they have suffered injustice as a result of action by adult social care providers.

There is a duty under section 5(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for the Council's Monitoring Officer to prepare a formal report to the Council where it appears that the authority, or any part of it, has acted or is likely to act in such a manner as to constitute maladministration or service failure, and where the LGSCO has conducted an investigation in relation to the matter.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)

The Council Plan sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the city. The vision:

One Coventry – Working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here. Effective management and resolution of complaints, as well as learning from complaints, will help ensure that Council services meet the needs of residents and communities and helps build a foundation of trust in order for the Council to have new conversations with residents, communities and partners to enable people to do more for themselves as active and empowered citizens.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

It is important that the Council takes action and learns from the outcome of complaints. Appendix 2 sets out the actions the Council has taken; for example, providing training, instruction and guidance to staff and improving communications between services to help to reduce the likelihood of the same fault happening again.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The co-ordination and management of complaints to the LGSCO often involves considerable officer time at all levels of seniority. It includes collecting a significant amount of data, preparing and writing formal responses, and chasing to meet timescales set out. It may also require liaison with and external input from partner organisations and commissioned services.

It is therefore preferable (and beneficial) for complaints to be resolved informally at first point of contact wherever possible, or resolved through the Council's internal complaints procedures, adult social care complaints procedures, or children's social care complaints procedures, as appropriate. This would improve satisfaction for residents and communities, as well as save Council time and resources.

6.4 Equalities/EIA

We welcome all feedback and encourage members of the public to let us know if they have anything to say about Council services, whether that be for us to take action to put things right if something has gone wrong, or to let us know when we are doing something well.

The Council is committed to making it easy for everyone to submit compliments, comments or complaints to us, and we offer several different pathways to do so. As well as our [Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#) web page and our online [Speak Up](#) form, we also offer contact by telephone, email, social media, letter or via face-to-face contact. We also advise people that they can ask somebody else to act on their behalf, for instance, a friend or relative or Citizens Advice.

Where necessary and appropriate, translation and interpretation services, correspondence in large print, audiotape, or braille, or the services of an advocate (for instance, Barnardo's) are also available. Should a complainant remain dissatisfied following the conclusion of the Council's complaints process, they are able to refer their complaint to the LGSCO. Both the Council's complaints policy and individual complaint response letters set out the escalation process and make it clear how members of the public can do so.

In February 2024 the LGSCO launched the Complaint Handling Code for councils, setting out a clear process for responding to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by individuals promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It will also help to create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

The LGSCO issued the Code as “advice and guidance” for all local Councils in England under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. This means that Councils should consider the Code when developing complaint handling policies and procedures and when responding to complaints. If a Council decides not to follow the Code, the LGSCO expects it to have a good reason for this. Otherwise, it is expected that all Councils should adhere to the Code from April 2026.

The Code only applies to complaints where there is no statutory process in place. This means that some complaints about children’s services, adult social care and public health are not covered by the expectations set out in the Code. The Code does not apply to complaints about the behaviour of locally elected officials.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment
None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?
Investigations by the LGSCO may involve not only services directly provided by Coventry City Council, but also commissioned or outsourced services. In such cases, the Council will liaise with partner organisations and third-party contractors to comment or provide information as part of an investigation.

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Clare Boden-Hatton	Director of Planning and Performance	Planning and Performance	17/10/25	19/10/25

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Jaspal Mann	Policy, Equalities & Diversity Officer	Public Health	17/10/25	22/10/25
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Alison Duggal	Director of Public Health and Wellbeing	Public Health	17/10/25	22/10/25
Pete Fahy	Director of Care, Health and Housing	Care, Health and Housing	17/10/25	22/10/25
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Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	22/10/25	23/10/25
Julie Nugent	Chief Executive		22/10/25	27/10/25
Councillor G Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership		28/10/25	29/10/25

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21 May 2025

By email

Dr Nugent
Chief Executive
Coventry City Council

Dear Dr Nugent

Annual Review letter 2024-25

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 2025. 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. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, 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.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



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

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Appendix 2 Decisions in 2024/25 (detailed investigations carried out)

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
17 - Complaints Upheld: Fault and injustice		
Adult Social Care 4 complaints upheld	<p>1. Ms X, a representative for Ms Y, complained that the Council failed to carry out a social care assessment in August 2022 or January 2023 when Ms Y requested care and support as she was struggling to look after herself and her child T due to illness. Ms X said the assessment completed by adult social care in January 2023 was a contact assessment (not a full needs assessment) and did not consider Ms Y's caring responsibilities. As a consequence, Ms Y was without support when she was unwell, and this caused avoidable distress and a decline in her mental health.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written apology • A symbolic payment of £250 to reflect the avoidable distress and to recognise the avoidable uncertainty around entitlement to support caused by the failures set out. • Provide a copy of the practice guidance it is developing around the whole family approach and • Written evidence it has delivered training to staff in the initial contact team around recognising when parents need support. <p>2. Miss X complains on behalf of Miss Y who has died. Miss X says the Council failed to properly support Miss Y in the months before her death. She says the Council failed to carry out a full enquiry into safeguarding concerns. Miss X says the Council started a safeguarding enquiry about her and prevented her from visiting Miss Y in hospital, just before her death.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind relevant staff of the duties in safeguarding adults who have mental capacity to make decisions. <p>3. The complainant, Ms X, complained on behalf of her mother (Mrs Y) and herself. She said the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed to keep Mrs Y safe in an accommodation with an independent living provider it had commissioned, which resulted in her being groomed and assaulted. • Completed a flawed safeguarding investigation, caused delay in sharing the outcome with her, and did not share some information she asked for; and • Communicated with her poorly, which included not responding to some communication and a social worker making inappropriate comments. 	£250

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<p>Ms X also said the independent living provider failed to respond to her complaint when it said it would and did not comply fully with the police investigation. Ms X said, as a result, she and Mrs Y experienced distress and uncertainty, and Mrs Y experienced harm or risk of harm.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise in writing to Ms X and Ms Y for failure to keep her safe from harm or risk of harm. • Pay Mrs Y a symbolic payment of £250 to acknowledge failure to keep her safe from harm or risk of harm; • Pay Ms X a symbolic payment of £250 to acknowledge the preventable distress and uncertainty she experienced as a result of failure to keep Mrs Y safe from harm or risk of harm, and some delayed communication with her. • Remind staff responsible for responding to complaints to have regard to the potential injustice identified faults and failures may have had on individuals, or those acting on their behalf; acknowledge this; and consider whether any additional remedy is appropriate on a case-by-case basis; • Remind adult social care and safeguarding staff to respond to reasonable questions and enquiries without delay, or acknowledge receipt and inform individuals of when the Council can respond. This includes circumstances where the Council may be experiencing an increase in demand which limits its ability to respond as soon as it aims to. <p>4. Ms X complained about failings by the Council's Adult Social Care (ASC) service. She said the Council did not respond to her reports of concerning behaviour and violence from her son, Mr Y, made prior to his arrest, and did not provide the family any support. Ms X also complained the Council did not provide an emergency respite placement for Mr Y when he was due to be released from police custody. Mr Y's care provider found him a hotel, but Ms X said the Council left him at risk. Ms X said Mr Y's social worker did not understand the risks of Mr Y living at home. They also did not understand his communication needs and used long words, causing him distress. Ms X said the Council's ASC service let the family down and considers Mr Y's arrest could have been avoided if the Council had acted on her reports.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Mr Y and Ms X for the identified failings. • Pay Mr Y and Ms X £250 each (£500 in total) in recognition of the uncertainty and distress caused by failure to follow up on respite care options and failure to properly consider suitable support when Mr Y's behaviour escalated. 	£500

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff in ASC service about the importance of taking proactive steps to consider suitable support at the earliest opportunity in cases where there are reports of domestic violence, to try to prevent the situation escalating. 	£500
Education Services 3 complaints upheld	<p>1. Ms X complains the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not provide adequate education to her daughter Y and the provision listed in her Education, Health and Care plan when she was out of school. Delayed in issuing a final Education, Health and Care plan following an annual review. <p>Ms X said her daughter has missed out on education and has fallen behind in her education.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologise to Ms X for not providing adequate education to Y or the special educational provision in her EHC plan and for the time taken to produce a final EHC plan following Y's annual review. Pay Ms X £3,600, for the benefit of Y's education, to recognise the loss of education and special education provision to Y between February 2023 and March 2024. This is calculated at being £1,200 a term for three terms. Make an ongoing payment of £400 a month to Ms X. The Council should start this from April 2024 until either Y reintegrates back into school in accordance with her EHC plan, or the Council puts in place what it sees as an appropriate package of education alongside all parts of the special educational provision it is able to deliver while Y is not at school. Pay Ms X £300 to recognise the distress and uncertainty she experienced as a result of the delays in issuing Y's final EHC plan following the annual review. <p>2. Ms X complained the Council failed to provide education for her child Y, who was medically signed off from school since January 2023. Ms X says Y had an Education and Health Care Plan which the Council failed to provide provision for when they were out of school. Ms X also complained the Council delayed in finalising Y's Education and Health Care Plan which delayed her right of appeal.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an apology to Ms X and a pay her £300 for the distress and frustration caused through the Council's delays and handling of this matter. Provide an apology and pay Ms X £2,625 to acknowledge the impact on Y of the lost educational provision from 15 February 2023 until 11 September 2023. 	<p>£3900</p> <p>£2925</p>

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
Children's Services 2 complaints upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance to staff of its duty to reassess and produce Education and Health Care Plans within the correct timescales. This includes issuing notification letters to parents about the Council's intention to maintain, amend or discontinue Education and Health Care Plans within four weeks of an annual review meeting, and to produce a final Education and Health Care Plan within 12 weeks of an annual review meeting. • Provide training and guidance to staff about the Council's statutory duty to provide educational provision within a child's EHC Plan, including that this duty does not end if a child is not accessing education in a school setting. • Provide guidance and training to staff about the Council's responsibility to provide education for children who are missing school, through illness or otherwise, when a child has been absent for 15 cumulative or consecutive days. <p>3. Mrs X complained the Council did not put alternative provision in place for her child Y, when Y became too unwell to attend school. Mrs X said this impacted on Y's quality of life and development and caused her and Y's father stress and difficulty.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Mrs X for the frustration and upset she experienced due to the Council's failure to properly consider if it should arrange alternative provision for Y and the delay in issuing Y's EHC Plan. • Pay Mrs X £500 in recognition of her injustice. • Identify what steps the Council needs to take to ensure it has access to information relating to its actions and decision-making around a child's education when a member of staff leaves their role. <p>1. Ms X complains that in early February 2023 her son, Mr Y's social worker failed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell her quickly her son was attacked and injured: and • get Mr Y to seek medical advice. <p>Ms X said the Council did not consider her complaint properly. It relied on altered reports and investigated the wrong incident. It then refused to investigate her complaint at stage three of its procedure because it considered her behaviour towards staff unacceptable. Ms X would like the Council to apologise for its failings and support Mr Y as it should have done from the beginning.</p> <p>Ms X also complained in August 2023 s that since September 2022 the Council failed to provide Mr Y with support he was entitled to under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, as well as raising other concerns, which were not investigated.</p>	£500

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apologise to Ms X for failure to tell her quickly of the attack on Mr Y, and the distress and frustration this has caused Ms X. pay Ms X £300 it offered to remedy the distress, frustration and unnecessary time and trouble she experienced; agree a statement of complaint and, if Ms X still wants the Council to consider her complaint, fully investigate the complaint Ms X made to it in August 2023 about the quality of services to Mr Y under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and other matters; and pay an additional £150 to Ms X for the avoidable uncertainty the delay in investigating her complaint from August 2023 has caused her. <p>2. Mrs Y complained about the Council's response to her concerns about Children's Services' engagement with her sister, Ms Z, and her nephews. She was unhappy with the Council's response to her complaint.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council agreed to respond to Mrs Y's complaint at Stage 2. 	£450
Housing 1 complaint upheld	<p>1. Mr X complained that the Council continued to auto-bid for properties advertised on Coventry Homefinder which are unsuitable for his housing needs. As a result, he was not considered for other properties which would have been suitable. He says this caused him stress and had a detrimental impact on his mental health. He would like the Council to apologise and pay a financial remedy.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for a manager to make a direct written apology to Mr X; Pay £300 as a symbolic payment to recognise the distress caused by its fault. 	£300
Corporate and Other Services 2 Complaints upheld	<p>1. Mr X complains the Council did not remove a flag on display at a community centre, which he reported as inappropriate due to its political nature. He also complains about the Council's handling of his complaint. Mr X says the presence of the flag is discriminatory and the Council's decision not to remove it causes him distress.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p>	

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within four weeks of this decision the Council has agreed to make a new decision with reference to the relevant government guidance and with full consideration of the services at the community centre. The Council will communicate its decision in writing to Mr X. • Alongside this, within four weeks of this decision the Council has agreed to provide a written apology to Mr X for the inconvenience and frustration caused by its handling of his complaint. <p>2. Ms X complained the Council wrongly declined her Blue Badge application for her son. Ms X said this has affected her and her son, as he needs a Blue Badge so they can get to the car quickly if he is having a seizure.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Ms X and pay Ms X £150 to recognise the uncertainty and missed opportunity caused by the fault in this case. • Demonstrate that it has taken action - including making changes to its appeal decision letter templates if needed - to ensure that officers deciding on Blue Badge applications and appeals clearly explain how evidence has been considered, the reasons for their decisions, and how their decisions have been made in line with the guidance. 	£150
1 – Complaint Upheld: Fault and No Injustice		
Housing Services 1 Complaints upheld	<p>1. Mr X complains that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council wrongly refused to include his child as part of his homelessness application. As a result, the Council provided interim and temporary accommodation which was unsuitable as it could not accommodate his child. • that the Council's decision to discharge the main housing duty was incorrect as the permanent accommodation offered was not suitable as it could not accommodate his daughter. <p>Mr X considers the Council's actions have caused him considerable distress and financial hardship.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council will draw up procedures or guidance for considering homelessness applications where children might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant when domestic abuse is a factor. This is to ensure officers appropriately consider if there is good reason to seek information from an alleged perpetrator and assess the risks to the applicant of doing so. The Council should also ensure officers appropriately record such decisions. 	
4 Complaints Upheld: no further action – organisation already remedied.		

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
Children Services 3 Upheld	<p>1. Ms X complained about a social worker's judgement and a section 7 report prepared for court action, which she considered was inaccurate and about which the judge was critical. She also complained about the way the Council handled the child in need process and said her child, Y, should have had a child protection plan from 2022. Ms X said the Council's failings meant she incurred additional legal costs and was unable to claim Legal Aid. She also said she was caused distress and uncertainty and was put to avoidable time and trouble pursuing the Council.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council agreed to pay £800. 	£800
	<p>2. Ms X complained about the actions of the Council's children's services. The Council accepted her complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure but had not completed the stage two investigation within the required timescales.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 65 working days of the final decision, the Council will complete its investigation of Ms X's complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure. Within one month of the stage two adjudication letter, the Council will pay Ms X a financial remedy for the distress caused by the delay. This should be calculated at £50 per month of delay, from 20 May 2024 to the date Ms X is sent the stage 2 adjudication letter. 	£350
	<p>3. Mr X complained about the actions of a children's social worker. The Council accepted his complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure but has not completed the stage two investigation within the required timescales.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 65 working days of the final decision, the Council will complete its stage two investigation of Mr X's complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure. Within one month of the stage two adjudication letter, the Council will pay Mr X a financial remedy for the distress caused by the delay. This should be calculated at £50 per month of delay, from 11 May 2024 to the date Mr X is sent the stage 2 adjudication letter. 	£250
Housing Enforcement 1 Upheld	<p>1. Mr X, complained about the way the Council responded after he reported disrepair in his home, which he rents from a private landlord, in late August 2023. He also complained about poor complaints handling. Mr X said this caused him distress and physical health impacts on him and his family.</p>	
Total		£10,875

Service Area	Decisions Not Upheld (5)
Adult Social Care 1 Complaint	The complainant, Ms X, complains the Council failed to deal properly with safeguarding concerns about her adult son.
Housing Services 1 Complaint	Mr X complained about how the Council handled his homelessness application, after he moved to the area following a domestic abuse incident. He said he was unable to manage shared accommodation due to his mental health, and the Council did not consider this when offering interim accommodation.
Bereavement 1 Complaint	<p>Mr X complains the Council did not take appropriate care of a cemetery where he visits his parents' graves. He said it is always untidy, and complained of recent specific examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tree near his parents' graves had an untidy pile of sticks and leaves at its base despite him raising concerns about it. • The Council allowed the grass to grow too long. When the Council cut the grass his parents' headstones were covered in grass cuttings and mud. <p>Mr X says the condition of the cemetery caused him distress and frustration when he visited his parents' graves. He would like the cemetery to look tidier and more respectful for its use</p>
School Appeals 2 Complaints	<p>1. Mrs X complained the appeal panel failed to properly consider her school admission appeal for her child. Mrs X said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were technical difficulties affecting her participation in the appeal. • The panel made prejudicial comments. • The panel did not properly consider her evidence or give the chance to present additional information. • There were discrepancies about the pupil numbers presented. • The panel used inaccurate measurements about the distance Mrs X lived from the school. <p>As a result, her child is attending a school they are unhappy with and does not provide them the support Mrs X wants.</p> <p>2. Mrs X complained the appeal panel failed to properly consider her school admission appeal for her child. Mrs X said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were technical difficulties affecting her participation in the appeal. • The panel made prejudicial comments. • The panel did not properly consider her evidence or give the chance to present additional information. • There were discrepancies about the pupil numbers presented. • The panel used inaccurate measurements about the distance Mrs X lived from the school. <p>As a result, her child is attending a school they are unhappy with and does not provide them the support Mrs X wants.</p>