
Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Joint Assistant Mayor Briefing: 28th August 2025

CMB: 11th September 2025

Audit and Governance Committee: 17th September 2025

Assistant Mayor: Cllr Vi Dempster/ Cllr Elly Cutkelvin
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: ALL

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1. Summary

1.1 Leicester City Council serves around 368,000 citizens and manages high levels of customer contact. During 2024/25 the Council received 1,559 formal complaints from customers in relation to contact and service delivery. As the Council takes its responsibility for managing complaints seriously, this annual report sets out how these complaints have been handled and makes recommendations around future service improvements.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Complaints Service for 2024/25. Members are recommended to review the report and provide any comments for consideration.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 This report will be subject to scrutiny at Audit and Governance Committee.

4. Main report

4.1 Complaint handling

The Council operates a corporate complaints policy which can be found at [Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy](#)

This policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the council about matters that are covered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

It also sets out what is not covered by this policy. This includes the following:

- Complaints about adult social care, such as a delay in the Council making arrangements with a care agency following an assessment of social care needs, or if some information has not been taken into account as part of a care review. We have a dedicated process and team in place to handle these complaints.
- Complaints about children's social care by or about children, such as where a social worker may have failed to progress actions recommended at a child protection conference within the specified timeframe, or a child who is looked after by the local authority has requested contact with family members on a number of occasions and this has not been progressed. We also have a dedicated process and team in place to handle these complaints.
- Complaints about elected officials are handled by the Council's Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee.

- Complaints about school matters, such as those that relate to bullying, discipline, uniform or school outings, or the educational provision at school, should be lodged with the school leadership team, usually the headteacher.

The Council is also unable to deal with complaints that are considered outside of our control. This includes matters of law or central government policy, where the customer or the council has started legal proceedings on the matter, complaints that have already been decided by a court, independent tribunal or Ombudsman, or where another organisation is the key decision-maker in respect of a matter. Because of that policy provision, complaints about these matters are also outside the scope of this report.

4.2 Complaints definition and procedures

Corporate complaints covered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The council currently defines a corporate complaint as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of our services; or lack of resolution by the council, its staff, contractors or volunteers that requires a response that you have been unable to resolve with the service directly in the first instance.”

This may include but is not limited to such things as unreasonable behaviour or conduct by a council employee towards an individual, poor quality service provision, or where a stated policy or procedure has not been followed correctly.

Generally, issues brought to the council for the first time are dealt with as a service request and are not processed as a complaint. However, these are escalated to a formal complaint if the customer remains unsatisfied. It is important to note that when considering service requests the vast majority of these are dealt with successfully resolving the issue raised with no requirement for further intervention. This is reflection of the high standards of service delivered across the Council. Only a small minority of issues raised go on to be dealt with as complaints.

For these complaints we have a one-stage process in place. However, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is introducing a requirement that a 2 stage complaints process must be introduced by April 2026. Work is taking place to implement this changed approach.

For the current one stage approach we:

- Acknowledge the complaint within five working days and advise how we will deal with it.
- Allocate the complaint to a complaints officer independent of the service in question.
- An investigation will take place, conducted by the complaints officer, who will investigate with the service concerned.
- Usually seek to conclude our investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint.
- Inform the complainant if we need to extend the response deadline where there is good cause to do so.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our investigation and explain what we have done to resolve the matter.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can escalate their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Housing complaints covered by the Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman specifically deals with complaints made by tenants of social housing, which includes complaints from our Council tenants. The council currently defines complaints of this nature as:

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

For these complaints we have a two-stage process in place. At stage one we:

- Acknowledge the complaint within five working days and advise how we will deal with it.
- Allocate the complaint to a complaints officer independent of the service in question.
- An investigation will take place, conducted by the complaints officer, who will investigate with the service concerned.
- Usually seek to conclude our investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint.
- Inform the complainant if we need to extend the response deadline where there is good cause to do so.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our investigation and explain what we have done to resolve the matter. We also advise tenants that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint they can escalate it to stage 2.

At stage two we:

- Acknowledge that it will be handled in line with our second stage procedure.
- Allocate it to another independent complaints officer within three working days.
- Liaise directly with the Head of Service concerned.
- Aim to conclude a full stage two investigation within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.
- Write to the complainant with the findings of our stage two investigation and, where necessary, explain what we have done to resolve the matter.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the stage 2 process has concluded, they can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

4.3 2024/25 Complaints overview

Of the 1,559 complaints received in 2024/25 664 (43%) were Housing Ombudsman related matters and 895 (57%) were Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related matters. Of the 664 stage 1 Housing Ombudsman complaints received, 116 of these progressed onto stage 2 of the process.

The council further groups these complaints as follows:

	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints	Housing Ombudsman complaints
Anti-social behaviour	17	18
Blue badges	0	1
Bus passes	1	1
Cemetries	34	0
Council premises	12	22
Council vehicles and drivers	1	0
Culture, leisure centres, and library services	3	0
Customer services	14	0
Housing applications and homelessness	114	0
Housing Benefit and Council Tax support	54	5
Housing rent	0	9
Housing repairs	0	381
Member of staff	23	35
Parking and permits	15	0
Parks and green spaces	5	0
Pest control	3	2
Planning	32	1
Plants, trees, verges	11	0
Right to Buy	5	8
Roads, pavements and street lights	15	2
Street cleaning and litter collection	5	0
Vehicle fines and enforcement	3	0

Waste collection, rubbish and recycling	7	0
Reason not recorded	521	179

The council aims to have investigated and responded to all stage 1 complaints within 10 working days, or by the agreed extended deadline. For stage 1 complaints dealt with in 2024/25 76.28% of these were responded to within the deadline.

For Housing Ombudsman complaints, the council aims to have investigated and responded to these complaints within 20 working days, or by the agreed deadline. For stage 2 complaints dealt with in 2024/25 79.3% of these were responded to within the deadline.

It is worth noting that complaint handling was impacted by the cyber attack in the spring of last year whilst services were re-established.

4.4 Complaints upheld

Our current case management IT system means we are not able to reliably report on the number of complaints upheld. An example of this is that we are not currently able to identify households who make multiple complaints and to drill down on reasons for complaints, outcomes and learning. In the case of vexatious complainants, it is particularly important to have access to this data to effectively manage multiple complaints. In one recent case multiple services are dealing with a resident who has made over 200 separate complaints.

Measuring upheld complaints is important as it will allow the council to be more focused and targeted in directing improvement actions where service faults have been identified. To address this we have started a project to enhance our IT systems to enable us to learn from upheld complaints and report on this in future annual reports.

4.5 2024/25 Ombudsman complaints overview

The Local Government and Social Care and Housing Ombudsman are independent organisations providing impartial reviews of complaints. Whilst most corporate complaints come under the Local Government's remit, the Housing Ombudsman deals with social housing related complaints. The Ombudsman will only review complaints once our internal complaints process has been exhausted. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this internal process, they have the right to request a review of the complaint by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's decision is final, bringing the complaint to a close. There are 2 stages for the Ombudsman complaints process:

Stage 1 – Preliminary Enquiry: The Ombudsman will request details of the complaint and our responses to this. Through this stage they will determine whether the case is within their jurisdiction to review. If this is the case the complaint will move to stage 2 in their process.

Stage 2 – Investigation Request: The Ombudsman conducts a full investigation of the complaint, reviewing actions taken to resolve issues. Where it is found there are complaint handling errors the Ombudsman can make orders or recommendations to local authorities to rectify matters for the complainant. This can include requests to deliver a service, review of a policy or the award of compensation to the complainant.

Between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman dealt with 118 complaints in relation to the council. Of these, 28 were closed because they did not fall under the remit of the Ombudsman or were not ready for the Ombudsman to investigate. Through the preliminary enquiry stage a further 67 complaints were closed. The remaining 23 complaints were taken forward for investigation.

Of the 23 complaints investigated 17 were upheld in favour of the complainant. Complaints upheld related to school transport, Special Educational Needs, the allocation of council homes, care home charges, Disabled Facilities Grants and Homelessness. A total of nearly £7,000 was ordered to be paid in compensation.

Further information about cases investigated by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25 can be found at [Leicester City Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

Housing Ombudsman complaints 2024/25

Determinations made by the Housing Ombudsman during 2024/25 can be found [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#)

The Housing Ombudsman has published the outcome of 4 investigations for 2024/25, 1 case finding no maladministration.

The 3 cases published where maladministration was found related to parking, anti-social behaviour and district heating. For these cases a total of £2,250 compensation was ordered to be paid to the complaints.

Across both Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman levels of maladministration are extremely low compared to other authorities again reflecting that the first majority of complaints are successfully resolved.

4.6 Self-Assessment and Improvement plans

Each year the Housing Ombudsman requires social landlords to carry out a self- assessment of their approach to dealing with complaints to see how this meets the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which can be found at [The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

The findings from our 2025 self-assessment can be found in Appendix A.

Over the next 12 months we will be carrying out a more in-depth analysis of our approach to dealing with complaints. This will take into account our Housing Ombudsman self-assessment findings, but will also be widened out to include our approach to dealing with Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints as well.

Actions already identified as being required through this work include:

- Creating the stage 2 process for Local Government and Social Care complaints
- Developing a new IT complaints management system
- Undertaking a review of our Complaints Policy
- Reviewing information we publish on our website in relation to complaints
- Undertaking a review of staffing resources required to manage the complaints process
- Developing enhanced reporting on complaints to monitor themes and trends, to include improving the internal governance of complaints reporting
- Developing a more effective process to learn from complaints, to include the identification of service improvements required as a result of complaints and a tracking system to ensure these are completed.

- Undertaking a review of responses sent following an investigation of a complaint to ensure these are comprehensive
- Reviewing our Vexatious Complaints Policy
- Improving the internal governance of our complaints reporting
- Deliver complaints training to staff

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, if the Council accepts fault for any complaints, this may include making a financial compensation payment to the complainant. Similarly, where either Ombudsman finds the Council at fault, compensation may also be required. In 2024/25, the Housing Ombudsman required payments totalling £2.25k and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman £7k. It is therefore essential that we learn from any mistakes and service delivery failings to minimise the need for such payments. Notably, total Ombudsman-related compensation has reduced from £15.5k in 2023/24 to £9.25k in 2024/25, indicating fewer issues flagged and, we hope, a continuing trajectory of improvement.

Jade Draper, Principal Accountant
12/08/2025

5.2 Legal Implications

No legal comments
Mannah Begum
7th August 2025

5.3 Equalities Implications

Public authorities have a continuing Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their activities (including designing and operating complaints procedures), they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report provides an update to Members on the delivery of the Complaints Service for 2024/25. There are no direct equality implications arising from the report. Complaints are a valuable source of information which can help to identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements. Having a transparent, accessible complaints process provides a mechanism for people to hold the council accountable for its decisions, actions, and the services it delivers (or fails to deliver).

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated: 8 August 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated directly with this report.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2246
12 August 2025

