

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN – LOCAL  
AUTHORITY COMPLAINT STATISTICS 2018**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To present the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LG&SCO) Annual Review Letter 2018 containing the annual summary of statistics on complaints and enquiries made to the LG&SCO about North Lincolnshire Council for the year ending 31 March 2018.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman considers and may investigate maladministration complaints made by service users and members of the public about councils and other bodies acting on their behalf, such as school appeals panels.
- 2.2 The LG&SCO aims to resolve cases informally where it can and determine the reasonableness of decisions of bodies being complained about. Its recommendations aim to provide redress in cases of service failure and puts complainants back in the position they were in if any maladministration was found.
- 2.3 The Annual Review Letter 2018 attached as appendix A to the report summarises (i) the complaints and enquiries received by the LG&SCO about North Lincolnshire Council and (ii) decisions made by the LG&SCO following any investigations or informal resolutions.
- 2.4 The LG&SCO makes clear that the volume of complaints does not necessarily reflect local performance. Relatively high numbers of complaints may be an indication of an organisation that is open to learning and user feedback.

**3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 That the Standards Committee considers the Annual Review Letter for North Lincolnshire Council.

#### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 The Annual Review Letter for North Lincolnshire Council provides the committee with valuable information on the complaints made by service users and the public to the LG&SCO.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 There are no resource implications associated with receipt of the LG&SCO's Annual Letter

#### **6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 The Chief Executive and the council's senior leadership have been made aware of the report. The council regularly monitors both local performance and complaints. It is also proposed that a copy of this report be referred to the Cabinet Member for Public Participation and Culture for consideration.

7.2 There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Local Government and Social Care's Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2018 for North Lincolnshire be noted by the Standards Committee.

8.2 That the Local Government and Social Care Ombudmsan's Annual Review Letter 2018 for North Lincolnshire be referred to the Cabinet Member for Public Participation and Culture for consideration.

#### **DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Civic Centre  
Ashby Road  
SCUNTHORPE  
North Lincolnshire  
DN16 1AB  
Author: Janet Stopper

Date: 31 August 2018

**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report**

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2018.

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

18 July 2018

*By email*

Denise Hyde  
Head of Paid Service  
North Lincolnshire Council

Dear Denise Hyde,

## **Annual Review letter 2018**

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2018. The enclosed tables present the number of complaints and enquiries received about your authority and the decisions we made during the period. I hope this information will prove helpful in assessing your authority's performance in handling complaints.

### **Complaint statistics**

In providing these statistics, I would stress that the volume of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of the council's performance. High volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. Low complaint volumes can be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback, rather than always being an indicator that all is well. So, I would encourage you to use these figures as the start of a conversation, rather than an absolute measure of corporate health. One of the most significant statistics attached is the number of upheld complaints. This shows how frequently we find fault with the council when we investigate. Equally importantly, we also give a figure for the number of cases where we decided your authority had offered a satisfactory remedy during the local complaints process. Both figures provide important insights.

I want to emphasise the statistics in this letter reflect the data we hold, and may not necessarily align with the data your authority holds. For example, our numbers include enquiries from people we signpost back to the authority, some of whom may never contact you.

In line with usual practice, we are publishing our annual data for all authorities on our website, alongside an annual review of local government complaints. The aim of this is to be transparent and provide information that aids the scrutiny of local services.

### **Future development of annual review letters**

Last year, we highlighted our plans to move away from a simplistic focus on complaint volumes and instead turn focus onto the lessons that can be learned and the wider improvements we can achieve through our recommendations to improve services for the many. We have produced a new corporate strategy for 2018-21 which commits us to more comprehensively publish information about the outcomes of our investigations and the occasions our recommendations result in improvements to local services.

We will be providing this broader range of data for the first time in next year's letters, as well as creating an interactive map of local authority performance on our website. We believe this will lead to improved transparency of our work, as well as providing increased recognition to the improvements councils have agreed to make following our interventions. We will therefore be seeking views from councils on the future format of our annual letters early next year.

### **Supporting local scrutiny**

One of the purposes of our annual letters to councils is to help ensure learning from complaints informs scrutiny at the local level. Sharing the learning from our investigations and supporting the democratic scrutiny of public services continues to be one of our key priorities. We have created a dedicated section of our website which contains a host of information to help scrutiny committees and councillors to hold their authority to account – complaints data, decision statements, public interest reports, focus reports and scrutiny questions. This can be found at [www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny](http://www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny) I would be grateful if you could encourage your elected members and scrutiny committees to make use of these resources.

### **Learning from complaints to improve services**

We share the issues we see in our investigations to help councils learn from the issues others have experienced and avoid making the same mistakes. We do this through the reports and other resources we publish. Over the last year, we have seen examples of councils adopting a positive attitude towards complaints and working constructively with us to remedy injustices and take on board the learning from our cases. In one great example, a county council has seized the opportunity to entirely redesign how its occupational therapists work with all of its districts, to improve partnership working and increase transparency for the public. This originated from a single complaint. This is the sort of culture we all benefit from – one that takes the learning from complaints and uses it to improve services.

### **Complaint handling training**

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. In 2017-18 we delivered 58 courses, training more than 800 people. We also set up a network of council link officers to promote and share best practice in complaint handling, and hosted a series of seminars for that group. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

Yours sincerely,



Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

**Local Authority Report:** North Lincolnshire Council  
**For the Period Ending:** 31/03/2018

For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our website:  
<http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/interpreting-local-authority-statistics>

## Complaints and enquiries received

Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and Other Services	Education and Children's Services	Environment Services	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
9	6	11	12	3	6	0	7	0	54

## Decisions made

Decisions made				Detailed Investigations			
Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	Total
4	0	18	18	5	6	55%	51

### Notes

Our uphold rate is calculated in relation to the total number of detailed investigations.  
 The number of remedied complaints may not equal the number of upheld complaints. This is because, while we may uphold a complaint because we find fault, we may not always find grounds to say that fault caused injustice that ought to be remedied.

### Complaints Remedied

by LGO	Satisfactorily by Authority before LGO Involvement
4	2

Reference	Authority	Category	Received
17000380	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	07/04/2017
17000412	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	10/04/2017
17000573	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	11/04/2017
17001070	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	21/04/2017
17001168	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	27/04/2017
17002044	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	09/05/2017
17002226	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	11/05/2017
17002315	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	12/05/2017
17002987	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	24/05/2017
17003158	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	15/06/2017
17003346	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	31/05/2017
17003567	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	05/06/2017
17004699	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	22/06/2017
17004902	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	30/06/2017
17005085	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	29/06/2017
17005117	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	29/06/2017
17005320	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	04/07/2017
17005411	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	04/07/2017
17005996	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	13/07/2017
17006054	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	14/07/2017
17006131	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	17/07/2017
17007945	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	15/08/2017
17008383	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	22/08/2017
17008765	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	29/08/2017
17009237	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	07/09/2017
17009388	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	07/09/2017
17009434	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	08/09/2017
17009610	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	12/09/2017
17009878	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	15/09/2017
17009945	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	19/09/2017
17010190	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	21/09/2017
17010405	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	02/01/2018
17011009	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	05/10/2017
17011887	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	20/10/2017
17012511	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	01/11/2017
17012965	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	09/11/2017
17013101	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	13/11/2017
17013816	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	24/11/2017
17014088	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	29/11/2017
17014314	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	04/12/2017
17014320	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	04/12/2017
17014416	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	06/12/2017
17014440	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	17/01/2018
17014647	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	11/12/2017
17014653	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	11/12/2017
17015635	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	05/01/2018
17015733	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	08/01/2018
17016959	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	30/01/2018
17017330	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	05/02/2018
17017714	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	09/02/2018
17018275	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	21/02/2018
17019726	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	19/03/2018
17019753	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	19/03/2018
17020218	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	27/03/2018

DECIDED

Reference	Authority	Category	Decided	Decision	Remedy
16015625	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	03/07/2017	Not Upheld	Null
17000380	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	07/04/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17000412	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	10/04/2017	Incomplete/Invalid	Null
17000573	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	11/04/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17001070	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	05/06/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17001168	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	18/05/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17002044	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	30/05/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17002226	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	11/05/2017	Incomplete/Invalid	Null
17002315	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	12/05/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17002987	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	07/09/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17003158	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	04/10/2017	Not Upheld	Null
17003346	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	14/09/2017	Not Upheld	Null
17003567	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	31/07/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17004699	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	31/08/2017	Upheld	New appeal/review
17004902	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	30/06/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17005085	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	26/07/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17005117	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	06/09/2017	Upheld	New appeal/review, Other Remedy
17005320	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	30/08/2017	Upheld	New appeal/review
17005411	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	04/07/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17005996	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	31/07/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17006054	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	14/07/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17006131	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	01/09/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17007945	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	15/08/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17008765	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	19/09/2017	Not Upheld	Null
17009237	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	06/10/2017	Upheld	Null
17009388	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	08/09/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17009434	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	18/12/2017	Upheld	New appeal/review or reconsidered decision
17009610	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	23/10/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17009878	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	15/09/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null



17009945	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	19/09/2017	Incomplete/Invalid	Null
17010190	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	27/10/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17010405	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	01/02/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17011009	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	22/03/2018	Not Upheld	Null
17011887	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	11/11/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17012511	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	02/11/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17012965	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	01/12/2017	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17013101	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	13/11/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17013816	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	04/01/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17014088	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	09/01/2018	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17014314	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	08/01/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17014320	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	16/01/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17014416	North Lincolnshire Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	11/12/2017	Upheld	Null
17014440	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	09/02/2018	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17014647	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	11/12/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17014653	North Lincolnshire Council	Adult Care Services	19/12/2017	Referred back for local resolution	Null
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17016959	North Lincolnshire Council	Planning & Development	05/03/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17017330	North Lincolnshire Council	Corporate & Other Services	13/02/2018	Closed after initial enquiries	Null
17017714	North Lincolnshire Council	Highways & Transport	09/02/2018	Incomplete/Invalid	Null
17018275	North Lincolnshire Council	Education & Childrens Services	21/02/2018	Referred back for local resolution	Null
17019753	North Lincolnshire Council	Benefits & Tax	26/03/2018	Referred back for local resolution	Null