



## Briefing Note

### Annual Report: Local Government Ombudsman.

The Council has just received its annual review letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Office (LGO) which gives a numerical appraisal of the Council's performance in terms of upheld complaints which have failed to find a resolution via the internal 'Corporate Complaints Procedure.' The number of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of the council's performance. The LGO does state that high volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. Conversely, low complaint volumes can be a sign that an organisation is not responsive and open to user feedback, rather than always being an indicator that all is well.

The period in question is for the financial year 2018/19. The LGO responded to 10 customer complaint referrals during that period. These are the cases where they believe it to be necessary to either investigate the complaint or inform us that there would be no further action. The LGO received an additional referral which was not notified to HDC. There have been no further contacts from any complainant regarding that additional case.

The table below gives an indication of the relative numbers of complaints received and investigated by the LGO for neighbouring authorities. The % upheld is calculated against the number of cases they investigate rather than the number of complaints which are referred to them i.e. HDC has 10 but we were only informed of 9 only 3 of which were actually investigated.

Between 01/04/2017 and 31/03/2018								
	Number of Cases	Upheld	Not Upheld	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Advice Given	No LGO Investigated	% Upheld (LGO Terms)
Harborough	10	1	2	5	1	1	3	33
Blaby	2	0	0	2	Unknown	Unknown	0	0
Hinckley	4	0	0	4	Unknown	Unknown	0	0
North West	3	2	0	1	Unknown	Unknown	2	100
Charnwood	12	2	3	7	Unknown	Unknown	5	40
Oadby	5	1	0	4	Unknown	Unknown	1	100
Melton	4	1	0	3	Unknown	Unknown	1	100
<i>Neighbouring authority figures taken from the LGO's website 25/07/2019 (this only compares published outcomes)</i>								
The Council does not get informed of these cases other than at the annual review stage.								

### Comparison with Last Year:

2017/18: 13% = 1 case.

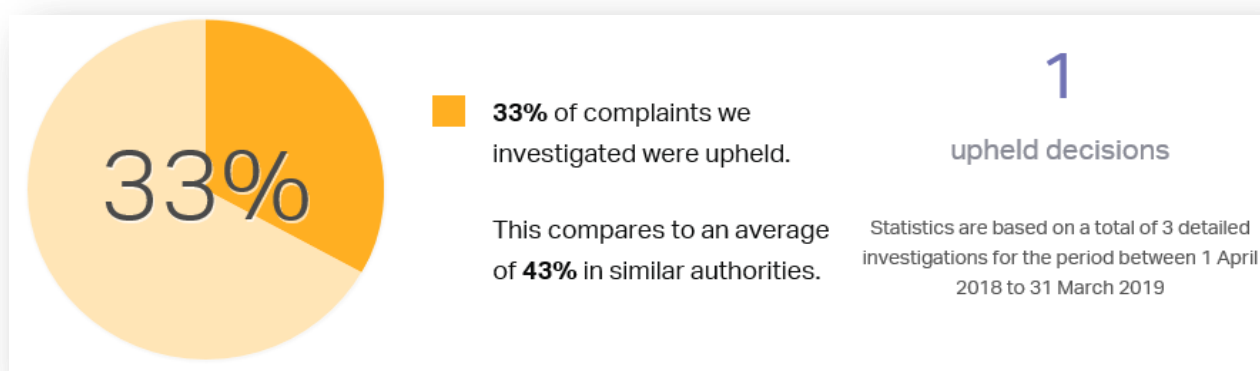
2018/19: 33% = 1 case.

The 33% uphold rate looks poor in comparison to the position in 2017-18 which was 13%, but this is attributable to a reduction in the number of referrals to the LGO and subsequent detailed investigations. If the LGO had investigate all referrals, the uphold rate would have been 10% for 2018/19 and 6% for 2017/18. The method used to calculate performance, allows the figures to be skewed to show a higher failure rate than if the outcomes were based on the number of complaints actually received.

### The National Context:

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual report shows a total of 17452 complaints and enquiries from the public in 2017/18.<sup>1</sup> Of those cases it decided, 4020 resulted in a detailed investigation. The Ombudsman upheld 57% of detailed investigations, which is up from 54% the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

### HDC's Position:



Given the context suggested above, HDC is still in a better than average position in terms of both overall referrals and the number of upheld complaints, (especially when based on the way in which the figure is calculated, 33% arises from a single complaint.) This is indicative that the Council is reasonably accessible to public scrutiny of process and decision making and is on the whole, responsive to customer demands. These figures also demonstrate that current processes for accepting and responding to internal complaints is fairly robust.

Upon conclusion of a Stage 2 complaint, that is a complaint that is responded to at Joint CEO level, the Complainant is always given leave to refer the matter to the LGO if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint. For the period in question, the LGO decided to investigate only 3 out of 45 internally logged Stage 2 complaints. As all 3 LGO cases were previous HDC Stage 2 complaints, this represents a 7% referral rate. However, as only 1 case was substantiated upon investigation this demonstrates that HDC responded to 98% of logged Joint CEO level complaints without fault.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing these were the latest figures available.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/local-government-complaint-reviews>

<sup>3</sup> In the same period, HDC handled 154 formal Stage 1(109) and Stage 2(45) complaints

## Information: HDC LGO Summary from Report: 2018-19

Decisions made				Detailed Investigations			
Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate (%)	Total
0	1	1	5	2	1	33	10
<b>Note:</b> The uphold rate shows how often we found evidence of fault. It is expressed as a percentage of the total number of detailed investigations we completed.							