

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – LOCAL AUTHORITY COMPLAINT
STATISTICS**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) Annual Review Letter 2014 containing the annual summary of statistics on complaints made to the LGO about North Lincolnshire Council for the year ending 31 March 2014.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Local Government Ombudsman looks at maladministration complaints made by service users and members of the public about councils and other bodies acting on their behalves, such as school appeals panels.
- 2.2 The LGO 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 2014 attached as appendix A to the report summarises (i) the complaints and enquiries received by the LGO about North Lincolnshire Council and (ii) decisions made by the LGO following any investigations or informal resolutions.
- 2.4 For the first time this year the Annual Review Letter also provides complaint statistics for all local councils in one place through the following e-link [Local Gov 14.07.2014 final watermark.pdf](#)
- 2.5 Comparable statistics for neighbouring councils are attached as appendix B.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Standards Committee should consider the Annual Review Letter and its statistics for North Lincolnshire Council.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Annual Review Letter and its statistics for North Lincolnshire Council provide the committee with valuable information on the complaints made by service users and the public to the LGO.

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

5.1 There are no resource implications associated with this report for Information.

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 Information and consultation with key officers and members is being carried out in accordance with the LGO's Annual Review Letter.

7.2 There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2014, and accompanying statistics for North Lincolnshire be noted.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Richard Mell
Date: 14 November 2014

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2014.

APPENDIX A

Local Government OMBUDSMAN

7 July 2014

By email

Mr Simon Driver
Chief Executive
North Lincolnshire Council

Dear Mr Simon Driver

Annual Review Letter 2014

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2014. This is the first full year of recording complaints under our new business model so the figures will not be directly comparable to previous years. This year's statistics can be found in the table attached.

A summary of complaint statistics for every local authority in England will also be included in a new yearly report on local government complaint handling. This will be published alongside our annual review letters on 15 July. This approach is in response to feedback from councils who told us that they want to be able to compare their performance on complaints against their peers.

For the first time this year we are also sending a copy of each annual review letter to the leader of the council as well as to the chief executive. We hope this will help to support greater democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and ensure effective local accountability of public services. In the future we will also send a copy of any published Ombudsman report to the leader of the council as well as the chief executive.

Developments at the Local Government Ombudsman

At the end of March Anne Seex retired as my fellow Local Government Ombudsman. Following an independent review of the governance of the LGO last year the Government has committed to formalising a single ombudsman structure at LGO, and to strengthen our governance, when parliamentary time allows. I welcome these changes and have begun the process of strengthening our governance by inviting the independent Chairs of our Audit and Remuneration Committees to join our board, the Commission for Administration in England. We have also recruited a further independent advisory member.

Future for local accountability

There has been much discussion in Parliament and elsewhere about the effectiveness of complaints handling in the public sector and the role of ombudsmen. I have supported the creation of a single ombudsman for all public services in England. I consider this is the best way to deliver a system of redress that is accessible for users; provides an effective and comprehensive service; and ensures that services are accountable locally.

To contribute to that debate we held a roundtable discussion with senior leaders from across the local government landscape including the Local Government Association, Care Quality Commission and SOLACE. The purpose of this forum was to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist to strengthen local accountability of public services, particularly in an environment where those services are delivered by many different providers.

Over the summer we will be developing our corporate strategy for the next three years and considering how we can best play our part in enhancing the local accountability of public services. We will be listening to the views of a wide range of stakeholders from across local government and social care and would be pleased to hear your comments.

Yours sincerely

dco.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr Jane Jane Martin

Local Government Ombudsman

Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Local authority report — North Lincolnshire Council

For the period ending — 3110312014

For further information on interpretation of statistics click on this link to go to <http://www.lcio.org.uk/publications/annual-report/note-interpretation-statistics/>

Complaints and enquiries received

Local authority	Adult care services	Benefits and tax	Corporate and other services	Education and children's services	Environmental services and public protection and regulation	Highways and transport	Housing	Planning and development	Total
North Lincolnshire C	7	4	4	7	5	4	1	6	38

Decisions made

Detailed investigations carried out

Local authority			Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Total
	Upheld	Not upheld					
			1	11	3	17	41

North Lincolnshire C		
----------------------	--	--

COMPARABLE STATISTICS – NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

APPENDIX B

Complaints and enquiries received

Local Authority	Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and other services	Education and children's services	Environmental services and public protection and regulation	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and development	Total
East Riding of Yorkshire	11	5	10	23	7	12	4	18	90
Kingston Upon Hull	4	16	7	17	12	11	8	6	81
Lincolnshire County Council	30	0	8	28	4	15	0	2	87
North East Lincolnshire	3	12	3	6	7	3	6	8	48
Nottinghamshire County Council	33	0	2	40	4	16	2	1	98
North Lincolnshire	7	4	4	7	5	4	1	6	38

Decisions Made

Detailed investigations carried out							
Local Authority	Upheld	Not Upheld	Advice Given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Total
East Riding of Yorkshire	10	15	3	29	1	40	98
Kingston Upon Hull	7	11	3	29	2	36	88
Lincolnshire County Council	11	18	1	31	3	28	92
North East Lincolnshire	2	8	1	15	1	24	51
Nottinghamshire County Council	15	15	0	33	2	33	98
North Lincolnshire	5	4	1	11	3	17	41