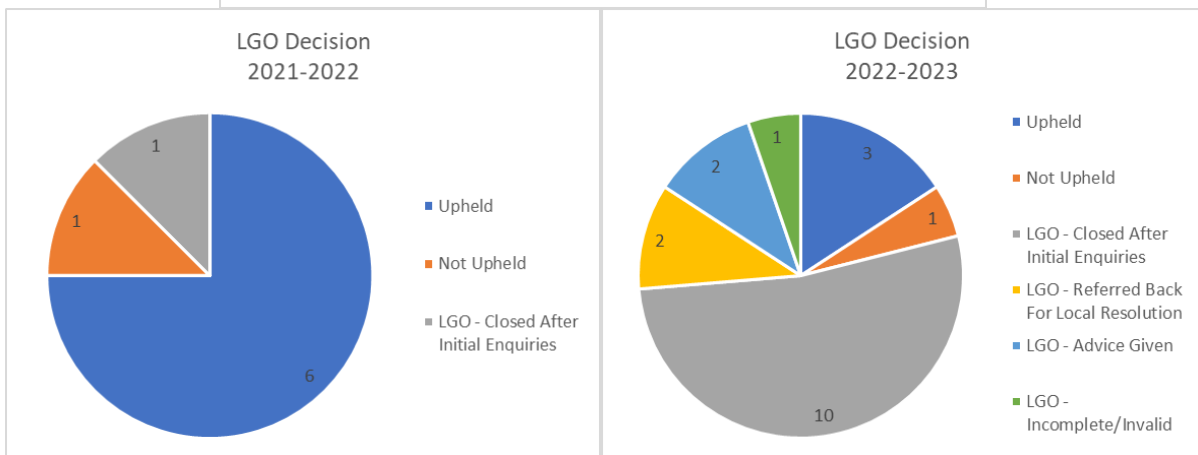
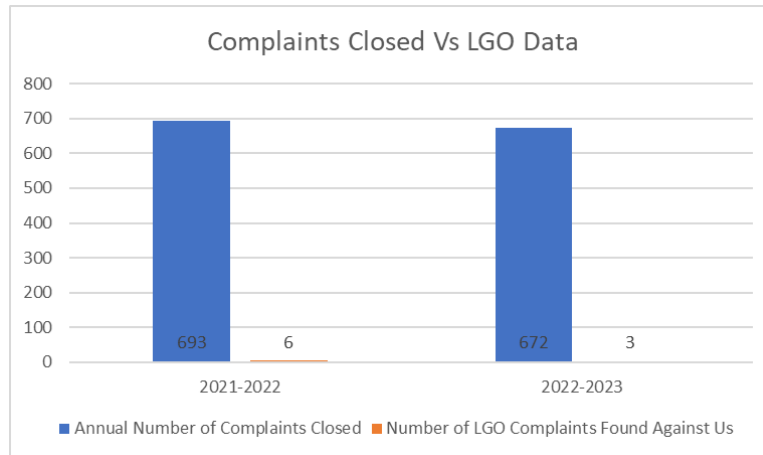


Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) Annual Complaints Data 2022/2023

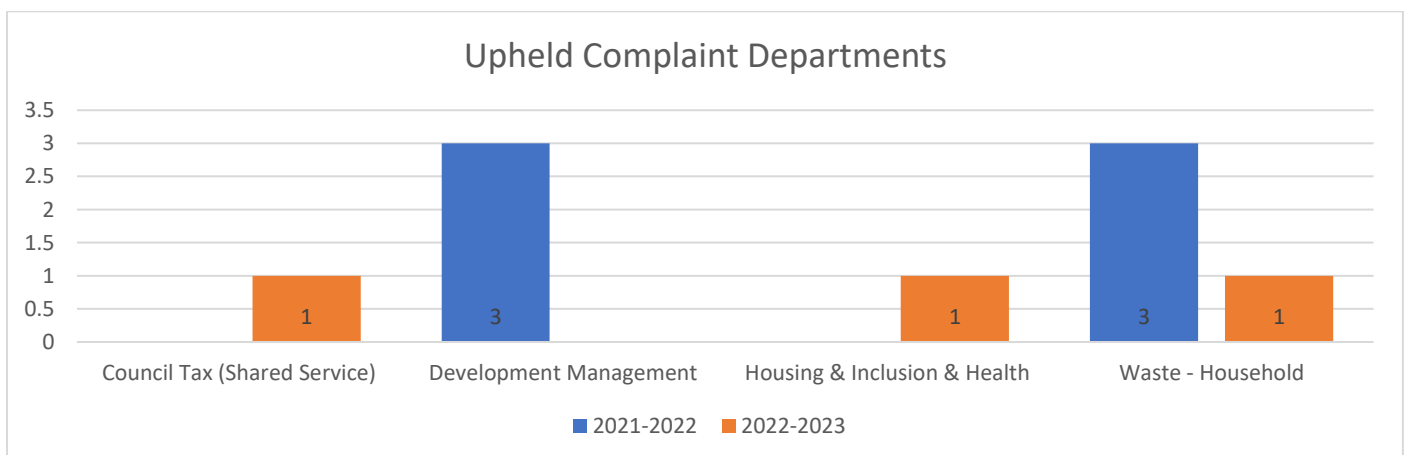
Summary

In 2022-2023 the LGO received 22 complaints for the Council and decided 23 complaints (5 complaints resolved in the year were from 2021-22). Of the complaints received in 2022-2023, 3 are awaiting a final decision. The remaining 18 relate to 2022-2023 and, of these, 14 were closed without our involvement, or knowledge. In total, the LGO upheld 6 complaints against us in 2021-2022 (out of 693) and 3 in 2022-2023 (out of 672). This equates to 0.87% and 0.45% respectively.



Upheld Complaints

The revised data for 2021-2022 shows 6 complaints were upheld; 3 for Development Management and 3 for Waste – Household. At the time of the LGO report 3 complaints had been upheld in 2022-2023; covering Council Tax, Housing & Inclusion & Health and Waste - Household. All remedies have been completed and the LGO have confirmed they are satisfied. A summary of the upheld complaints is provided in Appendix 1.



Findings

There is no discernible trend or re-occurring theme in the complaints both received and decided by the LGO. It is expected that a greater number of complaints for Development Management and Household Waste will be referred to the LGO as they are the departments with the highest levels of complaints and have a high level of customer contact.

We have identified in the past year from reviewing stage 1 responses that a refresher session on responding to complaints would be of benefit to those writing responses. This has been raised with L&D and discussions on identifying training are ongoing.

The LGO have updated the [Manual for Councils](#). Based on this, it is prudent for a review of the complaints policy and procedures to ensure it reflects the following:

- The LGO have made some changes to their decision reasons to cover both maladministration and service failure. As a result, they have replaced the word maladministration with fault in all relevant decision reasons. This needs to be reflected in our stage 2 assessments, investigations and policies.
- Authorities can have up to two link officers. We will add an additional contact which uses a shared inbox to ensure continuous access.
- We need to update the text at the end of stage 2 complaint responses to reflect the revised wording provided for requesting the LGO to review the complaint.

Quality Assurance

The data provided to use from the LGO is limited and this restricts our ability to interrogate the data further. There is no opportunity to challenge the data or review it before publication. As a result, there are discrepancies in the data published by the LGO for the Council, which does not reflect our engagement with both the LGO and customers. In particular, the following should be noted:

- One of the upheld complaints was resolved at stage 1, however because the complaint was escalated to the LGO and they agreed with our response, it is considered to be upheld.
- There were 14 complaints logged and actioned by the LGO in 2022-2023 that we had no knowledge of. The decisions for these vary, and we are unable to establish the root cause as we do not have any way to identify which complaints they relate to.
- When compared to our overall number of complaints, the volume that progress to this stage is less than 1%. This is not reflected in the headline figures published by the LGO.

Appendix 1

Year	Department	Summary	Remedy
2021-2022	Development Management	Mr B complained about how the Council dealt with a planning application for development in the street where he lives, and his communications about the matter. We find no fault in how the planning application was dealt with. While there was some fault in subsidiary matters, Mr B was not caused significant injustice as a result.	None as no significant injustice as a result of any fault by the Council.
2021-2022	Development Management	Mrs C complained about the Council's handling of a planning application. We find Council was at fault for the delay in publishing the independent assessor's report on its website. However, this did not cause Mrs C a significant injustice. The Council was also at fault for failing to respond to Mrs C's queries. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mrs C for the injustice caused.	Apology
2021-2022	Waste - Household	Mr B says the Council failed to act when his neighbours continued to place refuse bins outside his property. There is no fault in how the Council dealt with that issue. However, the Council gave Mr B and his MP incorrect information and failed to respond to an email from Mr B. An apology and reminder to officers is satisfactory remedy.	Apology, Provide training and/or guidance - The Council will send a copy of my final decision statement to officers dealing with waste complaints so they are aware of the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act.
2021-2022	Development Management	Mr X complains that the Council failed to take enforcement action against his neighbour when their development was not permitted development. The Council is at fault as it delayed investigating Mr X's complaint of an increased roof height and delayed making a decision as to whether it was expedient to take enforcement action. The delay caused avoidable uncertainty and frustration to Mr X which the Council should apologise for.	Apology
2021-2022	Waste - Household	Mr X complained the Council have repeatedly failed to return his bins in accordance with its assisted waste collection service. Mr X is disabled and has difficulty moving his bins himself. Mr X says the Council's failure to return his bins often prevents access to and from his drive. Based on the information available, I have found fault in the Council's repeated failure to return Mr X's bins to their collection point. This fault has caused Mr X an injustice, and the Council have agreed to our proposed recommendations.	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial redress: Loss of service, Procedure or policy change/review - Explain what the Council will do to improve how it monitors properties on its monitoring list, it should ensure the monitoring is both meaningful and proactive. The monitoring should at least record whether any required actions at a property have or have not been successfully completed.
2021-2022	Waste - Household	Mrs B complained about how the Council handled its green bin service. There were missed collections, the Council failed to correct the information it holds on its website about the collection day and the Council	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble and provide services to person affected

		delayed extending Mrs B's subscription for the green bin service to reflect the issues she had experienced. An apology, payment to Mrs B, a change to the information on the Council's website about the bin collection day, an investigation into the issues with continuing missed collections and an action plan to deal with those is satisfactory remedy.	
2022-2023	Household Waste	Mr X complained he paid for a garden waste collection service which the Council failed to provide several times. He said this matter has caused him significant stress and inconvenience. The Council was at fault for consistently neglecting to provide the service Mr X paid for and providing unclear responses to Mr X's complaints about this. This caused Mr X avoidable distress and financial loss. The Council has agreed to provide an apology and provide a £150 goodwill award.	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble.
2022-2023	Housing & Inclusion & Health	Mrs X complained the Council failed to properly consider her housing application and supporting evidence, told her incorrect information and failed to deal with her application for a Discretionary Housing Payment. Mrs X also said it has prevented her from moving to suitable accommodation. We find fault with the Council for misfiling Mrs X's Discretionary Housing Payment application however this did not cause a significant injustice. We do not find fault with the Council for how it considered Mrs X's housing application.	Council was at fault for misfiling application find this did not cause a significant injustice No fault was found for how the Council considered the housing application.
2022-2023	Council Tax (Shared Service)	We will not investigate this complaint about money taken from the complainant's bank account in error, by the Council, for council tax. This is because the Council provided an appropriate response and there is insufficient evidence of injustice.	Injustice remedied during organisations complaint processes. We do not have any further details on this as we were unaware this was under investigation.