

Appendix 2

Extract from www.lgo.org.uk on the interpretation of complaints data

Received cases

This is the number of complaints and enquiries we received within a given period. You should be cautious when using these statistics to monitor the performance of organisations within our jurisdiction. This is because the number of new cases we receive doesn't simply depend on the number of problems people have with local services. There are lots of other factors to consider. For example:

- **Demographics.** An organisation that serves a large population is likely to see more complaints reach us. This could also influence the kind of complaints that are made to us. For example, a community that includes a high proportion of older people may raise more complaints about adult social care services.
- **Local conditions.** Sometimes, one-off events can generate multiple complaints about the same organisation. For example, we might receive several complaints from people who oppose a council's decision to grant planning permission for a large housing development.
- **Expectations.** Not everyone who receives a poor service goes on to raise a complaint with us and some people are less likely to complain than others. So, a fall in the number of received complaints may reflect lower expectations rather than an improvement in services.
- **Signposting.** A high number of received complaints might reflect an organisation that is good at letting people know they can ask us for an independent investigation.

Decided cases

This is the number of decisions we make on the cases we see. It is important to know that not all complaints and enquiries are appropriate to investigate. We report our decisions by the following outcomes:

- **Invalid or incomplete.** We were not given enough information to consider the issue.
- **Advice given.** We provided early advice or explained where to go for the right help.
- **Referred back for local resolution.** We found the complaint was brought to us too early because the organisation involved was not given the chance to consider it first.
- **Closed after initial enquiries.** We assessed the complaint but decided against completing a full investigation. This might be because the law says we're not allowed to investigate it, or because it would not be an effective use of public funds if we did.
- **Upheld.** We completed a detailed investigation and found evidence of fault, or we found the organisation accepted fault early on.
- **Not upheld.** We completed a detailed investigation but did not find evidence of fault.

Our uphold rate shows how often we find organisations get things wrong. It is expressed as a percentage of the detailed investigations we complete.

Remedy and Compliance Outcomes

When we find fault in the way an organisation carries out its duties, we consider whether this caused an injustice to the person who was affected. If so, we make recommendations about what the organisation should do to put things right.

- **Authority provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.** This is the number of cases in which we decided that, while it did get things wrong, the organisation offered a satisfactory way to resolve it before the complaint came to us.
- **Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations.** These are cases where we recommended a remedy to put things right for the person affected. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault. We monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. The compliance rate records the percentage of cases where the organisation provided satisfactory evidence of their compliance with our recommendations.

Where we provide the average uphold rate, satisfactory remedy rate and compliance rate of similar authorities, we group together the following types of authority to calculate the average rates:

- Metropolitan districts
- London boroughs
- Unitary authorities
- County councils
- District councils