

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

9 July 2025

*By email*

Mr Whiting  
Chief Executive  
Leeds City Council

Dear Mr Whiting

## **Annual Review letter 2024-25**

I wrote to you in May with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. In that letter I explained that where we had concerns about your organisation's complaint handling or to highlight exceptional performance I would write again, and I have set our experience of your organisation's complaint handling below.

As a reminder, [your annual statistics are available here](#).

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

This letter will be published on our website on 16 July 2025.

## **Your organisation's performance**

In last year's letter, I raised concerns about your Council's delayed responses to our investigation enquiries. It is therefore disappointing that we have experienced similar issues this year where we recorded ten extension requests. In addition to the delays, there were instances of poor-quality, incomplete responses, which meant my staff spent time chasing additional information.

The Council agreed to and implemented the recommendations we made in 54 cases during the year. However, it is disappointing that in 17 of those cases the recommendations were completed outside of agreed timescales. In particular, we saw a significant four-month delay in processing a payment to a complainant. This action should be simple to administer, and such delays only cause further frustration to complainants.

I ask that you take action to improve response times to our enquiries and ensure timely compliance with agreed recommendations. It is important we are provided with the information we have asked for promptly, and that, where you anticipate delays, you tell us and keep us informed. If there is any support my office can provide to help improve the situation, please do let me know.

## **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. We issued the guides alongside free

[training resources](#) councils can use to make sure front line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact [training@lgo.org.uk](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amerdeep Somal', followed by a horizontal line.

Amerdeep Somal  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England