

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

9 July 2025

*By email*

Ms Rowlands  
Chief Executive  
London Borough of Camden

Dear Ms Rowlands

## **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**

I welcome that your Council agreed to and implemented the recommendations we made in 18 cases during the year. However, it is disappointing that in four of those cases the recommendations were not completed within the agreed timescales. While there has been some improvement, with fewer late compliance cases recorded this year, it is still concerning that we have now raised the same issue with you three times since 2022.

Notably, the majority of cases related to complaints about your housing service. Some delays involved straightforward actions such as issuing apologies or making payments to complainants. Such actions should be completed promptly, as delays risk compounding the distress of those affected.

I encourage the Council to engage early in our process where there are concerns about the feasibility of proposed timescales for service improvements. We are open to reasonable discussion at the draft decision stage, but once a decision is finalised, remedies must be completed on time. I invite the Council to review how it monitors and delivers agreed actions to prevent delays.

During the year, we also continued to see significant delays in your Council's responses to our enquiries. Of the 17 enquiries we made, nine responses were late, with three of those requiring additional extension requests. We also received incomplete or inadequate responses on two occasions, requiring further clarification and causing avoidable delays. In one case, we issued a reminder of our powers to summon witnesses - the third consecutive year we have had to take such action. As with late remedies,

the majority of the delayed or inadequate responses to our enquiries arose in cases involving the housing service.

This pattern continues the concerns raised in last year's letter. I ask again that you take meaningful steps to improve your liaison with my office, particularly in ensuring prompt and complete responses to our enquiries. Delays impede our investigations, meaning complainants wait longer than they should for an outcome on their complaint, and undermining trust in the complaints process. If there is any support my office can provide to help address these issues, 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