

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

9 July 2025

*By email*

Mr Flaherty  
Chief Executive  
Staffordshire County Council

Dear Mr Flaherty

## **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 out 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**

It is disappointing to report that the issues we have raised in previous letters to you have continued this year.

There were four occasions where we had to warn your Council that we would issue a witness summons warrant before we received the information we required. This is not a step we take lightly. In total, 62% of responses to our enquiries were late and in 45% of cases where we made recommendations, there was delay in providing evidence of compliance.

It is the sixth consecutive year we have reported late compliance with our recommendations. I ask that you set out, in writing, what action you propose to take to improve. I encourage you to contact us if there is any support my office can provide.

## **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](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk) 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' followed by a horizontal line.

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