Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

8 July 2026

By email

Mr Perry
Chief Executive
South Gloucestershire Council

Dear Mr Perry

Annual Review Letter 2025–26

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 2026. 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 details of the decisions we have made about your organisation, read the reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your organisation 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 15 July 2026.

Your organisation's performance

Last year, I raised concerns about the timeliness of your Council's responses to our investigation enquiries and its provision of evidence of compliance with our recommendations. It is disappointing that we have experienced similar issues this year.

While the average response time has improved, deadlines for responding to our requests for information were still missed in 40% of cases. More concerningly, in two cases the delays were such that we took the unusual step of threatening to issue a witness summons before we received the information we needed.

We recorded your Council's compliance with our recommendations in 13 cases. It is disappointing that in nine of those cases, compliance was delayed. These delays affected both personal remedies such as apologies and payments, resulting in unnecessary waiting and added frustration for complainants, as well as service improvement actions. Where timescales for recommendations are not achievable, the Council should raise this at the draft decision stage of the process. We aim to set realistic timeframes but cannot accept indefinite deadlines given the continued risk of similar issues affecting others.

I again ask you to take action to ensure responses to our requests for information are provided promptly and that there is effective oversight of agreed recommendations, so they are delivered without delay.

Supporting complaints and service improvement

We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our Complaint Handling Code, in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact training@lgo.org.uk for more information.

Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published next week, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,



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