

**Wiltshire Council**

**Standards Committee**

**26 September 2018**

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**Local Government and Social Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter 2017 – 2018**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform the Standards Committee of the Annual Review Letter for 2017-18 published by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in respect of Wiltshire Council.

**Background**

2. Under the Council's Constitution the Standards Committee has responsibility for the oversight of complaints handling, including complaints to the LGSCO.
3. The LGSCO is required to provide an annual overview of complaints received. The LGSCO issues its findings in the form of an Annual Review Letter which goes out to all authorities at the same time, providing a breakdown of the number of complaints received against each authority.

**Main considerations**

4. A copy of the LGSCO's report for Wiltshire Council for 2017-18 is attached at Appendix1.
5. The number of complaints referred to the LGSCO fell from 73 in 2017 to 64 in 2018. The number of complaints upheld during detailed investigation by the LGSCO fell from 12 in 2017 to 8 in 2018. This equates to a fall in the uphold rate from 50% in 2017 to 40% in 2018.
6. Whilst there is no ability to control whether customers of the Council decide to pursue their complaint further with the LGSCO, the fact that the numbers continue to fall may in part be attributed to the approach taken by the Council's complaints team, in collaboration with services, and the efforts which are undertaken within the Council's own complaints procedure to engage with the customer and ensure that a full response and explanation are provided, together with a clear plan of action. Rigorous monitoring of LGSCO investigations ensures that the Council engages constructively with the LGSCO and contributes to providing the customer with a detailed and reasoned outcome.
7. In terms of the number of complaints upheld by the LGSCO these remain relatively low. The Council continues to work in collaboration with the LGSCO in addressing any recommendations made.

8. The complaints handling function is currently under review. A new case management system has been introduced with greater use of workflows to deliver increased efficiency and enhanced working practices.
9. The Complaints Team is working collaboratively with services teams with the development of a complaints dashboard being integral to their interrogation of developing trends in the complaints process. The complaints dashboard is a monthly overview of complaints received and those being progressed by each service team. It assists client teams to identify developing trends and manage the progression of complaints through their service

### **Safeguarding Implications**

10. There are no safeguarding issues arising from this report.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

11. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

### **Risk assessment**

12. There are no significant risks arising from this report.

### **Financial Implications**

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Public Health Impact of the Proposals**

15. There are no public health impacts arising from this report.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposals**

16. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

### **Recommendation**

17. The Standards Committee is asked to note the outcome of the LGO's Annual Review Letter 2017-18.

**Ian Gibbons**  
**Director, Legal and Democratic Services, and Monitoring Officer**

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**Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: NONE

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 Local Government Ombudsman Review Letter for 2017-18