

Notes to assist interpretation of the Commission's local authority statistics

1. Complaints received

This information shows the number of complaints received by the LGO, broken down by service area and in total within the periods given. These figures include complaints that are made prematurely to the LGO (see below for more explanation) and which we refer back to the council for consideration. The figures may include some complaints which we have received but where we have not yet contacted the council.

2. Decisions

This information records the number of decisions made by the LGO, broken down by outcome, within the periods given. **This number will not be the same as the number of complaints received**, because some complaints are made in one year and decided in the next. Below we set out a key explaining the outcome categories.

MI reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration causing injustice. (The figures for the year 2002/3 may include reports which had a finding of 'local settlement'. For legal reasons, the LGO no longer issues reports with this finding.)

LS (local settlements): decisions by letter discontinuing our investigation because action has been agreed by the authority and accepted by the Ombudsman as a satisfactory outcome for the complainant.

M reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding maladministration but causing no injustice to the complainant.

NM reps: where the LGO has concluded an investigation and issued a formal report finding no maladministration by the council.

No mal: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation because we have found no, or insufficient, evidence of maladministration.

Omb disc: decisions by letter discontinuing an investigation in which we have exercised the Ombudsman's general discretion not to pursue the complaint. This can be for a variety of reasons, but the most common is that we have found no or insufficient injustice to warrant pursuing the matter further.

Outside jurisdiction: these are cases which were outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Premature complaints: decisions that the complaint is premature. The LGO does not normally consider a complaint unless a council has first had an opportunity to deal with that complaint itself. So if someone complains to the LGO without having taken the matter up with a council, the LGO will usually refer it back to the council as a 'premature complaint' to see if the council can itself resolve the matter.

Total excl premature: all decisions excluding those where we referred the complaint back to the council as 'premature'.

3. Response times

These figures record the average time the council takes to respond to our first enquiries on a complaint. We measure this in calendar days from the date we send our letter/fax/email to the date that we receive a substantive response from the council. The council's figures may differ somewhat, since they are likely to be recorded from the date the council receives our letter until the despatch of its response.

4. Average local authority response times 2004/05

This table gives comparative figures for average response times by authorities in England, by type of authority, within three time bands.

Complaints received by subject area	Highways	Housing (not incl. HB)	Housing Benefit	Local Taxation	Other	Planning	Social Services	Total
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	0	14	0	0	1	3	0	18
2003 / 2004	0	10	0	1	4	3	1	19
2002 / 2003	2	6	1	0	1	3	1	14

Note: these figures will include complaints that were made prematurely to the Ombudsman and which we referred back to the authority for consideration.

Decisions	MI reps	LS	M reps	NM reps	No mal	Omb disc	Outside jurisdiction	Premature complaints	Total excl premature	Total
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	0	5	0	0	8	4	1	1	18	19
2003 / 2004	0	2	0	0	6	2	4	7	14	21
2002 / 2003	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	5	7	12

See attached notes for an explanation of the headings in this table.

Average local authority response times 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005

Response times	FIRST ENQUIRIES	
	No. of First Enquiries	Avg no. of days to respond
01/04/2004 - 31/03/2005	10	33.6
2003 / 2004	4	58.8
2002 / 2003	0	0.0

Types of authority	≤ 21 days %	22 - 28 days %	> = 29 days %
District Councils	21	39	40
Unitary Authorities	11	24	65
Metropolitan Authorities	17	44	39
County Councils	12	47	41
London Boroughs	9	21	70
National Parks Authorities	60	20	20

Complaints received by main subject are 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005: Stevenage BC

Ref no	Date rcvd by LGO	Surname	Decision Date	Detailed Category
Housing (not incl. HB)				
04A09979	28/09/2004		08/11/2004	Council housing management other
04A01026	20/04/2004		06/09/2004	Council housing repairs
04A01665	05/05/2004		12/07/2004	Council housing repairs
04A04397	22/06/2004		Still open	Council housing repairs
04A04476	23/06/2004		11/08/2004	Council housing repairs
04A07124	06/08/2004		13/09/2004	Council housing repairs
04A07258	10/08/2004		22/11/2004	Council housing repairs
04A08728	07/09/2004		17/01/2005	Council housing repairs
04A09431	20/09/2004		07/10/2004	Council housing repairs
04A09635	22/09/2004		09/03/2005	Council housing repairs
04A12786	22/11/2004		08/03/2005	Council housing repairs
04A00634	14/04/2004		30/06/2004	Housing grants
04A14804	10/01/2005		14/02/2005	Housing grants
04A07098	05/08/2004		24/09/2004	Housing register/allocations
Group total:				14
Other				
04A01489	28/04/2004		18/06/2004	Land
Group total:				1
Planning				
04A04225	11/06/2004		08/10/2004	Consideration/ neighbour amenity
04A11293	22/10/2004		04/11/2004	Consideration/ neighbour amenity
04A13659	02/12/2004		28/02/2005	Consideration/ neighbour amenity
Group total:				3
Grand total:				18

Decisions - 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005: Stevenage BC

Ref no	Date rcvd by LGO	Surname	Decision Date	Main subject area	Detailed Category
LS (Local Settlements)					
04A01665	05/05/2004		12/07/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
03A12346	14/11/2003		30/07/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A07124	06/08/2004		13/09/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A07258	10/08/2004		22/11/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A09635	22/09/2004		09/03/2005	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
Group total: 5					
Normal (No or insufficient evidence of maladministration)					
04A09979	28/09/2004		08/11/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing management other
04A01026	20/04/2004		06/09/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A08728	07/09/2004		17/01/2005	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A12786	22/11/2004		08/03/2005	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A00634	14/04/2004		30/06/2004	Housing grants	Housing grants
04A07098	05/08/2004		24/09/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Housing register/all locations
03A16741	16/02/2004		19/08/2004	Other	Leisure & recreation
04A04225	11/06/2004		08/10/2004	Planning	Consideration/neighbour amenity
Group total: 8					
Omb disc (Ombudsman's Discretion)					
04A04476	23/06/2004		11/08/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
04A14804	10/01/2005		14/02/2005	Housing (not incl. HB)	Housing grants
04A11293	22/10/2004		04/11/2004	Planning	Consideration/neighbour amenity
04A13659	02/12/2004		28/02/2005	Planning	Consideration/neighbour amenity
Group total: 4					
Outside jurisdiction					
04A01489	28/04/2004		18/06/2004	Other	Land
Group total: 1					
Premature complaints					

Decisions - 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005: Stevenage BC

Ref no	Date revd by LGO	Surname	Decision Date	Main subject area	Detailed Category
04A09431	20/09/2004		07/10/2004	Housing (not incl. HB)	Council housing repairs
Group total:		1			
Grandtotal:		19			

Response times to first enquiry letters: 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005: Stevenage

Ref no	Date rcvd by LGO	Surname	Date enquiry sent to Council	Date response received	Time taken (calendar days)	Detailed Category
Housing (not incl. HB)						
04A01026	20/04/2004		23/04/2004	13/05/2004	20	Council housing repairs
04A04397	22/06/2004		17/09/2004	15/10/2004	28	Council housing repairs
04A07124	06/08/2004		10/08/2004	20/08/2004	10	Council housing repairs
04A07258	10/08/2004		13/08/2004	17/09/2004	35	Council housing repairs
04A08728	07/09/2004		05/10/2004	23/11/2004	49	Council housing repairs
04A09635	22/09/2004		14/10/2004	09/12/2004	56	Council housing repairs
04A12786	22/11/2004		20/12/2004	16/02/2005	58	Council housing repairs
04A07098	05/08/2004		09/08/2004	26/08/2004	17	Housing register/allocations
Group total:		8	Average no. of days to respond for Group:	34.1		
Other						
03A16741	16/02/2004		26/04/2004	18/05/2004	22	Leisure & recreation
Group total:		1	Average no. of days to respond for Group:	22.0		
Planning						
04A04225	11/06/2004		03/08/2004	13/09/2004	41	Consideration/neighbour amenity
Group total:		1	Average no. of days to respond for Group:	41.0		
Grand total:		10	Average no. of days to respond for Group:	33.6		