

Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Title: Combined Complaints, Member Enquiries, Freedom of Information Request and Ombudsman Annual Report 2020 - 2021

Report authorised by: Andy Briggs, AD Corporate and Customer Services

Lead Officer: Mick Tighe, Customer Experience Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/Non Key Decision:

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report summarises Member Enquiries, complaints, Ombudsman caseload and FOI activity alongside performance from the 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

2. Recommendations

It is requested that Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of the report.

3. Reasons for decision .

The Annual Feedback Report is required to be considered by Committee every year

4. Alternative options considered

N/A

Introduction

This report summarises Member Enquiries, complaints, Ombudsman caseload and FOI activity alongside performance from the 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

To provide some context to the report, it is estimated that we have nearly 1 million interactions with or enquiries from residents and businesses throughout Haringey council in any given year. Below provides a breakdown on how many customer interactions were had across some of the services where our residents interact with us the most.

Revenues & Benefits

- 128, 679 incoming documents for Council Tax in the financial year Apr 2020 to March 2021.
- 13, 649 Business Rates customer interactions

Customer Services & Libraries

- 24, 899 customers served in the face-to-face contact
- 327, 120 telephone calls answered
- 192,557 processing correspondence this was either online or email enquiries

E&N

- 34, 287 Our Haringey customer interactions for Parks, Waste Enforcement and Highways
- 471 Clinical waste service requests

Adults

- 94, 691 calls handled
- 4, 007 referrals
- 2, 321 assessments completed
- 1, 471 re-enablement completed

Therefore, the number of complaints and concerns received accounts for less than <1% of our customer interactions.

5. Complaints

- Haringey Council welcomes feedback and complaints and has set challenging targets to respond to 95% of Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days and 80% of Independent Reviews (second stage complaints) within 25 working days.
- The Corporate Feedback Team administers complaints at the first stage as well as administering and investigating Independent Reviews. The team sits under the Customers, Transformation and Resources directorate.
- Most complaints are received electronically through email or via an online form. In order to encourage channel-shift, hard copy paper forms have been removed from public access points and the direct email/postal address for the complaints team is not publicised. However, we are able to provide paper forms if the customer is unable to make a complaint through other means.
- Our aim is to continue to drive the use of the e-form online as it is the preferred method to receive complaints which allows the request to be directed to the appropriate place to enable a timelier response.

e.

Method	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Email	60%	58%	58%	40%
Online form	30%	35%	38%	58%
Letter	6%	4%	3%	1%
Phone Call	3%	3%	1%	1%

- The table below shows there has been a very slight decrease in the number of stage one corporate complaints and it is pleasing to see a 4% increase in the amount responded to within target compared to last year.

	Volume and % Replied to on time 2017/18	Volume and % Replied to on time 2018/19	Volume and % Replied to on time 2019/20	Volume and % Replied to on time 2021/20
Stage 1 Complaints	1,396 85%	1,516 87%	1326 83%	1319 87%
Children's Social Care Complaints	21 71%	31 68%	17 53%	50 26%
Adults Social Care Complaints	56 96%	72 93%	72 89%	72 75%

- Children's Social Care complaint volumes increased in 2020/2021 by 194% compared to those received in 2019/20 with those responded to within target decreasing by 49%. Adults Social Care received the same number of complaints as the previous year with a decrease in performance in responding on time compared with the same period of 14%.
- Where it is accepted that the authority is at fault in some way, the complaint is "upheld". 34% of first stage complaints were upheld in 2020/21 compared with 43% of first stage complaints 2019/20.
- The table below shows the upheld rate of corporate complaints across the different service areas. The majority of upheld complaints were for the two council services that received the most complaints, those being Corporate and Customer Services and Environment and

Neighbourhoods and relate to non-collection of rubbish, poor standard of service, lack of timely response, communication and staff behaviour.

- j. There were 99 complaints made around staff behaviour with 27 of these complaints being found to be upheld. This is a reduction of 42% in the total amount of complaints received of this nature and a reduction of 27% of those upheld compared to 2019/2020. Key themes across the services were poor attitude and being rude or unhelpful on the telephone or in a face to face setting.

Service Area	% of Complaints Upheld
Corporate and Customer Services	61%
Environment and Neighbourhoods	29%
Children's Services – Early Help and Prevention	3%
All other Services	7%

- k. The following table shows the five service areas that received the most complaints in 2020/21. As expected, they are also the service areas that interact most with residents.

Service Area	No. of Complaints	% of Total Complaints Received
Contact Centre	342	26%
Commissioning & Client (including on street waste)	207	16%
E and N Operations	193	15%
Revenues	122	9%
Community Safety & Enforcement	111	8%

- l. The following table shows the top five reasons why people submit complaints. 2020/21 data shows a shift from 2019/20. Poor standard of service remains the top reason for complaints and has increased by 7% when compared to last year's data. It is pleasing to observe that inadequate / inaccurate communication has decreased by 25% on last year's figures but failure to provide a service has risen by 14% from 2019/20.

Complaint Reason	%
Poor standard of service	34%
Dissatisfaction with Policy or Decision	22%
Failure to Provide a Service	22%
Inadequate or Inaccurate Communication	12%
Employee Behaviour	6%

Independent Reviews (Stage 2 Complaints)

- m. The Corporate Feedback Team reviews Stage One complaints for both the Council and Homes for Haringey. The following table shows a decrease in volumes for 2020/2021 whilst still performing above the target of 80%.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Volume	280	358	282	230
% responded to on-time (Target 80%)	87%	92%	88%	87%

- n. All first stage responses give the complainant details on how to escalate their complaint if they remain dissatisfied, a total of 17% took their complaints to the next stage. Of the 230

investigated, a total of 34% were upheld or partially upheld. This is an increase of 5% on the previous year. The following table below breaks this information down across Service Areas.

Service Area	No of IRs	% of Total IRs received	No. upheld / partly upheld	% of total upheld / partly upheld cases
Homes for Haringey	112	48.70%	45	40%
Environment & Neighbourhoods	48	20.87%	12	25%
Corporate and Customer Services	39	16.96%	11	28%
Children's Services - Early Help & Prevention	9	3.91%	3	33%
Planning, Building Standards and Sustainability	6	2.61%	2	33%
Children's Services – Safeguarding and Social Care	4	1.74%	3	75%
Adult Social Services	4	1.74%	1	25%
Commissioning	3	1.30%	1	33%
Capital Projects and Property	2	0.87%	1	50%
Regeneration and Economic Development	1	0.43%	0	0%
Children's Services – Schools and Learning	1	0.43%	0	0%
Housing	1	0.43%	0	0%
Total	230	100%	79	

Complaints Next Steps

- o. A Customer Experience Manager joined the Corporate Feedback Team in August 2021 and will be managing the team and providing advice on good complaints handling across the Council
- p. Invites to all staff were sent in August of this year to attend one of five "Back to Basics" complaints handling training sessions held in August and September. The sessions were attended by a total of 172 people and feedback was excellent. Similar sessions are planned in November of this year for those staff that were unable to attend. Training centred on the importance of the timeliness and quality of responses, learning from upheld representations, root cause analysis and the role of the Ombudsman.
- q. The work to upgrade the Respond IT system to the latest version to support with logging and managing cases will remain in focus this year. The upgrade will include an automation feature thereby creating capacity in the team to undertake quality checking on stage one complaints.
- r. The Corporate Feedback Team will be taking on a more involved role in promoting learning from complaints. It will also introduce improved reporting to make learning more available and digestible for service management and will hold more regular meetings with service managers to discuss complaints. "Complaints Inductions" for new managers will also be introduced.
- s. We will provide further commentary in the Quarterly Reports to senior management to indicate where issues exist in specific teams and to identify trends.
- t. Twice monthly surgeries with HRS staff within Homes for Haringey were introduced in October this year whereby CFT officers can link in to prompt and remind repairs management for details pertaining to stage two complaints and Ombudsman investigations thereby ensuring responses are issued in a more timely manner.

Compliments

We record compliments from residents whether it be by email, letter, online or via a manager. We received 149 compliments between 1 April 2020 and March 2021 and the table below provides a breakdown of the service areas complimented. It is pleasing to see a substantial

increase in numbers in this area when comparing the number of compliments received in 2019/2020; a total of 80.

Service Area	No. of Compliments
Corporate and Customer Services	65
Adult Social Services	27
Environment and Neighbourhoods	24
Children's Services Early Help and Prevention	12
Children's Services Safeguarding and Social Care	5
Planning, Building Standards and Sustainability	4
Children's Services Schools and Learning	4
Strategy, Communications and Delivery	3
Digital Services	3
Commissioning	2
Total	149

6. Member Enquiries

- In 2020/2021 a total of 2532 enquiries were received from Members including enquiries on behalf of customers and residents from Haringey Councillors (77%) and Members of Parliament (23%). This is an increase of 3% from 2019/2020.
- The target is to respond to 95% of Member Enquiries within the 10 working days. In 2020/21 the response rate was 87% a decrease of 1% on the previous reporting period.
- The following table shows the comparative performance data across the last three years
- We continue to explore automation options that will offer Members an easy way to log and track their ME casework.

	Number	% Replied to on-time
2020/21	2,532	87%
2019/20	2,460	88%
2018/19	2,778	92%

- The following table shows the breakdown of Member Enquiries received across service areas for 2020/21.

Service Area	No. of ME's 2020/21	% of Total ME's
Environment & Neighbourhoods	1179	47%
Corporate & Customer services	480	19%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	280	11%
Adult Social Services	101	4%
Commissioning	88	3%
Regeneration & Economic Development	68	3%
Capital Projects and Property	65	3%
Children's Services – School's and Learning	63	2%
Children's Services – Early Help and Prevention	51	2%
Children's Services – Safeguarding and Social Care	42	2%

Housing	34	1%
Strategy, Communication and Delivery	26	1%
Legal and Governance	17	1%
Public Health	14	<1%
Finance	11	<1%
Digital Services	6	<1%
HR and OD	5	<1%
E and N – Direct Services	2	<1%

- f. The following table breaks this information down further for the top 3 service areas.

Environment & Neighbourhoods	47%
Operations (includes Parking and Roads)	41%
Community Safety & Enforcement (includes ASB, Enforcement, Noise and Licensing)	29%
Commissioning & Client (includes Parks, Missed Collections, Street Cleaning)	28%
Organisational Resilience	1%
Procurement	1%

Corporate & Customer Services	19%
Finance Operations (includes small business Covid grants)	30%
Revenues	26%
Benefits	23%
Contact Centre	15%
Corporate Feedback Team	5%
Library Services	1%

Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	11%
Development Management and Planning Enforcement	50%
Planning Policy & Transport Planning	36%
Carbon Management	8%
Building Control	6%
Business Development & Technical Support	<1%

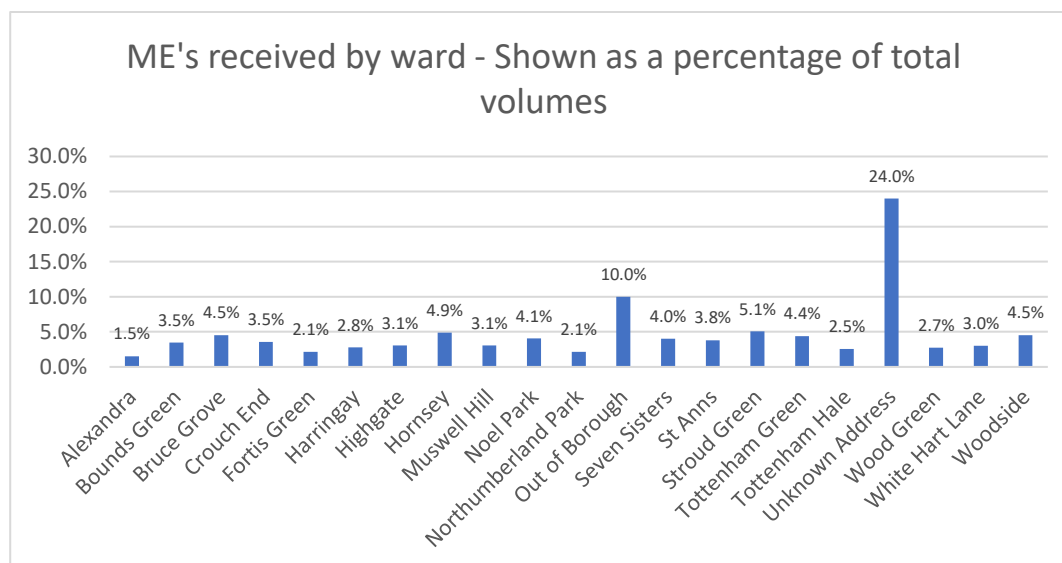
Below gives a breakdown of issues raised in the enquiries

Nature of Enquiry	
Information Request	59%
Service Request	15%
Covid-19 Information	7%
Dissatisfaction with Policy and Procedure	7%
Poor Standard of Service	6%
Failure to Provide a Service	4%
Inadequate or Inaccurate Communications	2%

- g. A total of 75% of Member Enquiries were requests for information or Service Requests.
- h. Haringey Council has been taking continued steps to encourage residents to self-serve via apps or through the website as this is the most efficient way to report such matters due to the

integration with operating systems managed by both Homes for Haringey and Veolia (our external Waste Management contractor) rather than raise them via their Councillors.

The below graph shows the collective total in percentage of the 2532 Member Enquiries received by ward. The high percentage of ME's showing as unknown address is where we did not have an address to log on the enquiry therefore, we could not allocate this to a ward.



Member Enquiries Next Steps

- i. Going forward our aim is to continue to work with the Councillors and MPs to improve the Service Requests and Member Enquiries process to allow us to issue a timely response.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

- j. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act was introduced in 2005 with its purpose being to make authorities and public bodies more open and transparent with the information they hold.
- k. The FOI Act and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) are very similar and are dealt with through the same process. The figures given below are for both FOI and EIR requests.
- l. Public Authorities should respond to FOI / EIR requests within 20 working days from the date the request was received.
- m. All requests must be received in writing and Haringey has a dedicated online form and email address for this.
- n. In line with best practice, Haringey has been proactively publishing more data and information online and has a disclosure log, which shows all requests received and responses issued. In addition, a full performance report is published online.
- o. Between April 2020 and March 2021 Haringey responded to a total of 1094 requests, a decrease from the previous year. 82% of responses were sent within 20 days. The following table shows the performance across the past 5 years.

Year	No. of requests	% on time
2020-2021	1094	82%
2019-2020	1384	86%
2018-2019	1434	82%
2017-2018	1352	83%
2016-2017	1471	87%

- p. There are cases where information was not provided to the requestor either because it was not held or there was a cost attached to it.

Information not Provided	Total	% of Total requests
Information not held	109	10%
Information not given due to cost	20	2%

- q. In addition to these requests there were a further 152 cases (14%) where an exemption was applied. Both the FOI and EIR Acts contain exemptions that allow Public Authorities to withhold information in certain cases.

FOI - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Section 40 – Personal Information	48	32%
Section 31 – Law Enforcement	38	25%
Section 43 – Commercial Interests	12	8%
Section 42 - Legal Professional Privilege	4	3%
Section 21 - Info accessible by some other means	5	3%
Section 41 – Confidential Information	3	2%
Section 22 - Intended for future publication	3	2%
Section 36 - Effective Conduct of Public Affairs	2	1%
Section 24 – Safeguarding of National Security	1	<1%
EIR - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Regulation 12 (4) b) – Manifestly Unreasonable	31	20%
Regulation 12 (4) (a) – Information not held	2	1%
Regulation 12 (4) (d) – Material in the course of completion	2	1%
Regulation 12 (4) (e) – Communications between Government departments	1	<1%

- r. The highest number of requests was received by Environment and Neighbourhoods Service who dealt with 352 cases, 32% of all received, and they responded to 90% on-time.

Service	No of Requests	% of Total Requests
Environment & Neighbourhoods	352	32
Corporate & Customer Services	137	13
Commissioning	101	9
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	100	9
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	60	5
Human Resources & Organisational Development	41	4
Children's Services - Schools & Learning	41	4
Children's Services - Early Help & Prevention	37	3
Finance	37	3
Legal and Governance	30	3
Public Health	29	3
Digital Services	28	3
Adult Social Services	24	2
Strategy, Communications and Delivery	22	2
Housing	22	2

Capital Projects and Property	21	2
Regeneration and Economic Development	10	1
Programme Delivery – CPMO	1	<1

7. Internal Reviews

- If a customer is unhappy with the way their FOI/EIR request was handled, they can ask for an Internal Review.
- A total of 26 reviews were conducted in 2020/2021, 2% of the 1094 requests received. 34% of the reviews were upheld. 85% of Internal Reviews were responded to in time

Decision	Total	% of Total Reviews
Not upheld	15	58%
Partly upheld	2	8%
Upheld	9	34%

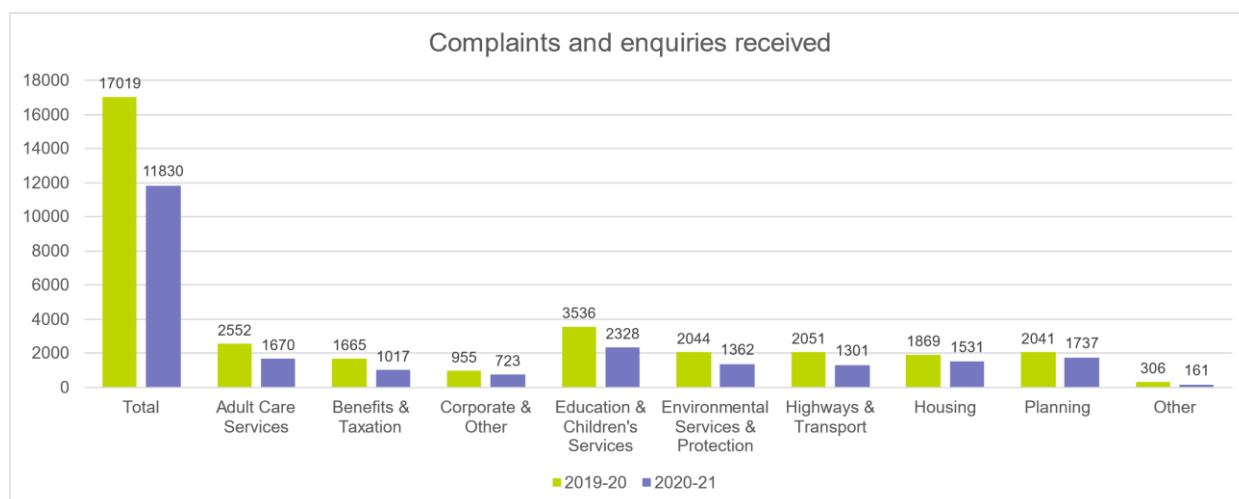
Information Commissioner

- If, following an internal review, a customer remains dissatisfied with the response they can approach the office of the Information Commissioner (ICO) to ask them to review the decision.
- During 2020/2021 a total of 4 formal enquiries were received from the ICO. In all these cases the Commissioner found in our favour, with no action required from us.

8. Local Government Ombudsman Performance and Findings

Summary

- Every year the Local Government Ombudsman writes to all Local Authorities with details of the complaints that their office has received including information about the number of complaints and enquiries received, the decisions made, and compliance with recommendations during the period.
- There is further information on the Ombudsman's website, which provides a comparison with other Local Authorities. Some key statistics are shown below:
 - The Ombudsman registered a total of 11,830 in complaints and enquiries in 2020/21 compared to 17,019 in 2019/20



- They carried out 3144 detailed investigations in 2020/21 compared to 4217 in 2019/20

- The below graph explains the breakdown of the received service areas and percentage upheld for all councils.

Service Name	Volume of detailed cases	Percentage upheld
Education & Children's Services	800	77%
Adult Care Services	801	72%
Housing	330	71%
Environment & Public Protection	307	58%
Benefits and Tax	220	70%
Highways & Transport	190	58%
Planning & Development	436	45%
Corporate & Other	60	62%
Total	3144	

- Of those detailed investigations they upheld 67%, an increase from 58% in 2019/20
 - The Ombudsman made 1726 recommendations to put things right on upheld cases for 2020/21
 - Haringey had a slight decrease in cases referred to the Ombudsman in 2020/21 – 164 compared to 166 in 2019/2020. The Ombudsman investigated 36 of these and upheld 27 of them, showing an upheld percentage of 75%. This compares to an average of 72% in similar councils. Cases investigated in 2019/2020 were 41 with 33 (80%) showing as upheld. There may be fewer cases recorded for 2020/2021 due to Covid and the Ombudsman taking the stance to pause work between March 2020 and June 2020, therefore the reduction in volumes should be considered lightly.
9. The Ombudsman issued one Public Interest Report against Haringey Council in 2020/21. The investigation found the council failed to make a suitable plan when it was approached by a family whose landlord had started legal proceedings to evict them and failed to follow the Code of Guidance, which sets out the actions required in these circumstances.
10. The Ombudsman stated that they "...found evidence that some of your officers were unaware of current law, or your own procedures or had chosen to disregard them. As a result, the family were placed into Bed and Breakfast accommodation for a prolonged period. This situation would be challenging for anybody but the specifics of the family and vulnerabilities of some of the children made it significantly more difficult for them all. To remedy the injustice caused to the family we recommended the Council make a payment for the distress they had been caused and make an ongoing payment for each week they remained in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. We also recommended it review a sample of other cases to identify if similar issues had occurred and, if so, to offer an appropriate remedy for any injustice caused, and to conduct refresher training on homelessness legislation for staff. I am pleased to note you provided timely evidence of compliance with all the recommendations made and I was able to confirm my satisfaction with the actions taken".
- The Ombudsman was able to confirm satisfaction with our compliance with their recommendations in 95% of cases during the year.
 - This year we have progressed the work with the Monitoring Officer regarding providing a report detailing investigations that found fault and we have a draft proposal which is currently being finalised. This remains a priority.
 - To raise the profile of Ombudsman cases we propose to send a monthly report to the AD's and Directors and to commence copying in ADs to correspondence to officers to provide oversight. Additionally, we will be copying in Directors to the first enquiry from the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman Statistics

- d. The following table shows the number of enquiries the ombudsman received in 2020/21 and the outcome. Categories of “advice given”, “incomplete/invalid”, and “referred back for local resolution” are all cases that did not involve the Ombudsman investigating the complaint. This equated to 51 cases and 41% of the total received.
- e. Cases that are closed after initial enquiries do involve some investigation and input from the Council.
- f. The upheld and not upheld cases are the cases that proceeded to a full investigation. Of the cases we dealt with, 27 were upheld representing 22% across all enquiries regarding Haringey received by the Ombudsman.

Outcomes 2020/21	Number
Advice given	13
Incomplete / invalid	9
Not Upheld	9
Upheld	27
Referred to local resolution	29
Closed after initial enquiry	36
Total	123

- g. Of the cases investigated, the Ombudsman upheld 27. These 27 cases have been broken down below: These cases have all been remedied.

Adult's Social Services	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Financial assessment and appropriateness of room provided in care home.	Apology and payment for the negative impact the service failure had on customer.
Failure to respond to a request for a Care Act assessment. Retrospectively converted a sensory impairment assessment into a Care Act assessment.	Apology to acknowledge the distress and inconvenience caused and carry out a new Care Act assessment.
Delay in assessing needs and in provision of assistance	Apology and payment to recognise frustration caused and the impact on mental wellbeing. Review the case, including how it monitored progress and establish any learning and implement any identified improvements

Revenues and Benefits	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Delay in inspecting a converted property resulting in an incorrect Council Tax bill	Apology.
Delay in the handling of Housing Benefit payments for the tenancy of a property where customer resided before moving to a care home resulting in an overpayment.	Apology and payment in recognition of the impact service failure had on the customer.
Incorrect suspension of Housing Benefit which caused resident to fall into rent arrears.	Apology and payment in recognition of failings.
Incorrectly taking recovery action regarding a Housing Benefit overpayment.	Reissue overpayment notification advising customer of right of appeal
Non-Compliance in above case. The Council delayed acknowledging the customer's appeal and continued to collect money from his employer when it should not have done.	Apology and deductions taken to be refunded. Review of policy and procedure.

Incorrectly demanded money in November 2019 for a Housing Benefit overpayment that had already been paid.	Apology
Council incorrectly taking recovery action regarding a Housing Benefit overpayment	Re-issue the overpayment notification to customer and advising him of his appeal right, which it did not do previously
Council failed to credit payments that the customer made under a payment agreement towards her arrears and current year's liability.	None – no significant injustice called.

Education and Children's Services	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Customer complained about how the Council dealt with a child protection referral concerning his family.	Apology, a payment in recognition of time and trouble caused by faults in the handling of his complaint.
Delay in completing recommendations from a previous Ombudsman investigation and recurrent fault in failing to ensure special educational provision in an EHC plan	Apology, a payment and a request that service improvements are made.
Council wrongly refused to provide customer with an Education Health and Care Plan and then failed to provide appropriate support for her to appeal this decision	Payment to reflect distress, frustration, and uncertainty she experienced. Provide training and reminders to relevant staff on the statutory timeframes for EHC assessments and plan development; particularly, the timeframes to be met when carrying out assessments ordered by tribunals
Council's decision to change the pick-up point for customer's child's school transport. There was also fault in how the Council considered her requests for reconsideration	Review the way applications and appeals are considered. Apology and compensation payment.
Correct procedure not followed during arrangement for a Child Protection Conference	None
School transport provided by the Council was late for a week	Apology

Highways	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Incorrectly pursued for a debt incurred from a traffic contravention that had already been paid	Apology. Payment to reflect time and trouble in making complaint and distress. Review system checks
Incorrect advice given about the availability of a parking permit	Apology and payment
Council failed to suspend enforcement action and make other attempts to contact customer when its correspondence about a penalty charge notice (PCN) was returned	None. PCN cancelled during Ombudsman investigation.

Housing	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Failure to make a suitable plan when it was approached by a family whose landlord had started legal proceedings to evict them	Apology. Review a sample of other cases to identify if similar issues had occurred and, if so, to offer an appropriate remedy for any injustice caused.
The Council delayed in providing suitable temporary accommodation for a customer following its decision that her existing temporary accommodation was unsuitable. The Council also failed to ensure repairs to the property were carried out.	Apology and a payment to acknowledge the customer lived in an unsuitable property and with disrepair for longer than necessary. Consider the steps it can take to ensure the Council meets its statutory duty to provide suitable temporary accommodation.

	Review its process for dealing with repairs in private rented temporary accommodation.
The Council did not provide suitable interim accommodation for a family that were evicted from their home and delayed providing storage for their belongings.	Payment for avoidable distress caused by the raised expectation the Council would pay the customer's arrears and the uncertainty about whether the interim accommodation provided by the Council was suitable for her family. Review its case management systems to ensure it is clearly recorded whether an individual is eligible for support under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Remind staff of their duties to assess the suitability of interim accommodation for everyone in the household. Review its procedure for record keeping to ensure details are kept of its decision making.
Delay and failure to resolve an ant infestation in a temporary accommodation property. where she lives with your young children.	Apology and a payment in recognition of the distress and frustration caused.
Failure to correctly assess a child's medical needs when assessing the family's housing priority	Apology
Delay in dealing with a housing application, including deciding the number of bedrooms the family was eligible for.	Backdate customer's band A priority award and a payment for the distress and inconvenience caused by the Council's faults. Remind staff in the housing department that the Council is required to respond to an applicant's review request, in writing, within 56 days.

Development Management	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Unsatisfactory handling of neighbour objections to a planning proposal	None

Corporate and Customer Services	
Decision / Findings	Remedy
Failure to use the statutory complaints procedure to investigate a complaint.	Apology, payment in recognition of the time and trouble Issue a reminder to staff dealing with complaints of the circumstances when the statutory complaint procedure should be used for Children's Services complaints.

h. The table below shows Haringey's performance against our neighbouring boroughs

Authority Name	Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Total	Uphold Rate (%)	Average uphold rate (%) of similar authorities
London Borough of Barnet	4	1	54	40	11	26	136	70%	72%
London Borough of Camden	6	11	25	19	3	18	82	86%	72%
London Borough of Enfield	7	9	31	35	3	17	102	85%	72%
London Borough of Hackney	10	5	33	22	2	18	90	90%	72%
London Borough of Haringey	9	13	29	36	9	27	123	75%	72%
London Borough of Islington	7	13	19	15	5	12	71	71%	72%

Conclusion

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, Michael King, expressed concern to all Local Authorities in their Annual Letters, stating...

“I am increasingly concerned about the evidence I see of the erosion of effective complaint functions in local authorities. While no doubt the result of considerable and prolonged budget and demand pressures, the Covid-19 pandemic appears to have amplified the problems and my concerns. With much greater frequency, we find poor local complaint handling practices when investigating substantive service issues and see evidence of reductions in the overall capacity, status and visibility of local redress systems”.

The Complaints and Feedback Team will be working hard in 2021/2022 to ensure that all services are implementing learning highlighted in complaints that are upheld by the Ombudsman.

A new mailbox has been set up, solely for the use of the Ombudsman to send correspondence to us. This will make requests for documentation and correspondence to assist in their investigations and decisions that require action more visible to our team and produce timelier responses.

In compliance with recent Ombudsman advice, we will be changing the way the final paragraphs in all complaint responses read. Whilst continuing to offer clear advice on how to contact the Ombudsman, we will be inviting customers to contact us to clarify and discuss complaint outcomes if they so wish.

11. Contribution to strategic outcomes

“Your Council” Outcome 17: A council that engages effectively with its residents and businesses and Outcome 18: Residents get the right information and advice first time and find it easy to interact digitally

12. Use of Appendices

None

13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Information was taken from Respond, the Corporate Feedback Teams’s software provision and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s website