

Report for: Overview & Scrutiny Committee 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Report Title: **Combined Complaints, Member Enquiries, Freedom of Information Request and Ombudsman Annual Report 2021 - 2022**

**Report authorised by:** Andy Briggs, Assistant Director of Corporate & Customer Services

**Lead Officer:** Kirsten Webb, Customer Experience Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** N/A

## Introduction

This report summarises Member Enquiries, complaints, Ombudsman caseload and FOI activity alongside performance **from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**.

To provide some context to numbers set out in the report, it is estimated that we have approximately 1 million interactions with, or enquiries from, residents and businesses throughout Haringey in any given year. Below provides a breakdown of how many resident interactions were received by some of the services where our residents interact with us the most in 2021/22:

### Revenues & Benefits

- 216,526 incoming documents for Council Tax in the financial year Apr 2021 to March 2022
- 212,541 Business Rates customer interactions
- 302,741 housing benefit interactions

### Customer Services & Libraries

- 49,831 residents served in the face-to-face contact which is just under a 100% increase compared to 20/21 (24,899) \*
- 303,948 telephone calls answered.
- 199,152 items of correspondence processed – either online or email enquiries

*\*The customer service centre was closed for part of the year in 20/21 due to Covid-19. Once it reopened, visits were limited so this is likely to be the cause for such a high surge in numbers*

### E&N

- 35,561 'Love Clean Streets' resident interactions for Parks, Waste Enforcement and Highways
- 496 Clinical waste service requests

### Adults

- 87,439 calls handled.
- 4,331 referrals
- 2,097 assessments completed.
- 1, 237 re-enablement completed

While these numbers show that as a proportion of all the interactions that residents have with the Council over a year, those which are formal complaints are very small (less than 1%), nonetheless the Council recognises that this is an area which requires improvement. This report shows some areas of strength over 2021/22 but overall, it was a challenging year. During 2022/23 we have started several improvement actions, which are detailed in the report, learning from performance and issues raised during 2021/22.

It should be noted that England was still subject Covid-19 restrictions which did impact on our ability to respond to complaints on time. In order to provide support to our communities during this period, a number of resources were redeployed across the organisation to respond to the Pandemic.

For the time period of this report, the Haringey ALMO (Homes for Haringey) was an external organisation that managed their Stage 1 complaints & Members Enquiries in house. The data has not been included in the body of this report but has been included as Appendix C for information purposes. The paper was published for the HfH Board in March 2022.

## 1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This is the annual report and analysis of Complaints, Ombudsman Cases, Member Enquiries and Freedom of Information Requests for the period **2021/2022**.

## 2. Input Requested from Overview & Scrutiny

- 2.1 It is requested that Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of this report and we recommend that this report is used to focus the in-year complaints monitoring sessions throughout 2023/24 to assess where there is improvement work required and underway.

## 3. Complaints

- 3.1 Haringey Council welcomes feedback and complaints as valuable learning opportunities 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.
- 3.2 The Corporate Feedback Team (CFT) administers complaints for the authority at the first stage as well as administering and investigating Independent Reviews. CFT sits under the Culture Strategy and Engagement directorate. The Housing feedback team administer complaints at stage 1 for Housing. The Housing team moved into the corporate team in December 2022 and will be fully incorporated during 2023. The next annual report will include both corporate and housing data across all stages of the feedback process.
- 3.3 The majority of complaints are received electronically through email or via an online form. In order to encourage channel-shift, hard copy paper forms were removed from public access points however, we can provide paper forms if the resident is unable to make a complaint through other means.

3.4

Method	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Email*	60%	58%	58%	40%	39%
Online form*	30%	35%	38%	58%	59%

Letter	6%	4%	3%	1%	1%
Phone Call	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%

\* All received into outlook, so requires validation due to no current automation of process.

- 3.5 The table below shows there has been an increase in the number of stage one corporate complaints which has led to a 9% decrease in the percentage responded to within target compared to last year.

	<b>Volume and % Replied to on time 2017/18</b>	<b>Volume and % Replied to on time 2018/19</b>	<b>Volume and % Replied to on time 2019/20</b>	<b>Volume and % Replied to on time 2021/20</b>	<b>Volume and % Replied to on time 2021/22</b>
Stage 1 Complaints	1,396 85%	1,516 87%	1,326 83%	1,319 87%	1,980 78%
Children's Social Care Complaints	21 71%	31 68%	17 53%	50 26%	25 16%
Adults Social Care Complaints	56 96%	72 93%	72 89%	72 75%	60 58%

- 3.6 Children's Social Care complaint volumes decreased in 2021/22 by 50% compared to those received in 2021/20, however those responded to within target decreased by 10% compared to the year before.

Corporate Feedback Team and Children's Social Care are working together to improve the performance and will be reviewing the policy and process for Statutory CSC complaints.

Adults Social Care received fewer complaints than the year before and their performance for responding on time decreased by 17%.

Adults have appointed a designated officer to have oversight of feedback received. Corporate Feedback Team will continue to work closely with this officer to help improve performance in this area.

It is highly likely that the dip in performance can be attributed to a combination of factors including the Pandemic, availability of staff during this period and late referrals from the Feedback Team.

- 3.7 Where it is accepted that the authority is at fault in some way, the complaint is "upheld". In 2021/22, 31% of first stage complaints were upheld compared with 34% of first stage complaints in 2020/21, a 3% decrease.
- 3.8 The table below shows the upheld rate of corporate complaints across the different service areas.

Service Area	% of all Complaints Upheld
Corporate and Customer Services	30%
Environment and Neighbourhoods- Direct Services	34%
Environment & Neighbourhoods – Stronger & Safer Communities	19%
All other services	17%

3.9 The following table shows the five service areas that received the most complaints in 2021/22. These are also the service areas that most frequently interact directly with residents.

Service Area	No. of Complaints	% of Total Complaints Received
Highways & Parking	716	36%
Contact Centre	193	10%
Revenues	190	10%
Waste	162	8%
Enforcement	95	5%

3.10 The following table shows the top five reasons why people submit complaints. The 2021/22 data is broadly the same as the 2020/21 results. Poor standard of service remains the top reason for complaints but has decreased by 3% compared to the previous year, while Dissatisfaction with Policy or Decision has increased by 9% in the same period.

Complaint Reason	2020/21 %	2021/22 %
Poor standard of service	34%	31%
Dissatisfaction with Policy or Decision	22%	31%
Failure to Provide a Service	22%	18%
Inadequate or Inaccurate Communication	12%	13%
Employee Behaviour	6%	6%

### Independent Reviews (Stage 2 Complaints)

3.11 At the Independent Review stage (Stage 2), the Corporate Feedback Team reviews Stage 1 complaints for both the Council and Homes for Haringey. All first stage responses give the complainant details on how to escalate their complaint if they remain dissatisfied, a total of 19% took their complaints to the next stage which is an increase compared to the previous year.

3.12 The following table shows a large increase in Stage 2 volumes for 2021/2022 with a reduction in performance, albeit remaining above the target of 80% responded to within 25 days.

3.13 While we recognise that performance in this area remains good, it is troubling that the number of escalated complaints has increased. This is an indication that Stage 1

complaints were not resolved sufficiently during our initial opportunity to make things right for our residents. We intend to work more closely with services to provide training and share good practice on how best to respond to complaints, with a focus on early resolution.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Volume	280	358	282	230	374
%responded to on-time (Target 80%)	87%	92%	88%	87%	85%

3.14 Of the 374 escalated complaints investigated, a total of 45% were upheld or partially upheld (an increase of 9%). Housing made up 55% of the total escalations to Stage 2, with 74% of the cases being upheld which is a significant increase on the previous year. In-depth work is planned between the Feedback team and Housing colleagues to learn from these complaints and understand the issues being experienced in this area.

3.15 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
Housing Services and Building Safety	205	55%	125	74%
Corporate & Customer Services	39	10%	13	8%
E&N - Direct Services	37	10%	8	5%
E&N - Stronger & Safer Communities	36	10%	11	6%
Environment & Neighbourhoods	16	4%	4	2%
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	10	3%	1	.5%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	7	2%	0	0
Other services	5 or less each	5%	7	
Total	374		169	4%

### Feedback Next Steps

- 3.16 A new Customer Experience Manager joined the Corporate Feedback Team in August 2022, managing the Feedback team and providing advice on complaints handling across the Council.
- 3.17 As part of the Resident Experience programme, initiated as a key action under the new Corporate Delivery Plan, adopted by Cabinet in January 2023, we are undertaking a review of the Corporate Feedback service offer which will include, improving processes, introducing learning from feedback and updating systems.
- 3.18 One of the activities currently in progress is upgrading the Respond case management system from on-premises to a cloud-based system, which will bring enhanced capabilities while reducing costs to the council. Along with this upgrade, we are testing

e-forms which will automatically log cases into the system which in turn will create further capacity in the team for initiating the quality assurance measures that we are keen to implement to address some of the issues highlighted in this report.

- 3.19 As part of the review, the Corporate Feedback Team will become more involved in managing rather than simply administering complaints and promoting learning from the feedback received. It will also introduce improved reporting to make learning more available and digestible for services, so they are better able to address areas of concern.
- 3.20 Regular meetings are held with key service areas (high demand/statutory) however these will be extended to the remaining services as part of the improvement plan for Feedback. There will be clear and agreed escalation routes where the Corporate Feedback team consider that draft responses do not sufficiently address the issues raised by complainants with a view to improving the quality of complaints responses.
- 3.21 The Corporate Feedback Review is intended to 're-set' the corporate culture relating to feedback, to be more positive and collaborative with our residents when resolving issues that have been raised. The relevant actions from the Corporate Delivery Plan are extracted below for information and ease of reference:

#### 4. Compliments

- 4.1 We record compliments from residents whether it be by email, letter, online, by phone or directly via a manager.

**Work will be undertaken to transform our approach to complaints, so that there is a clear shift from processing complaints to managing complaints:**

Outputs from this work will include:

- Clear method of pre-complaint opportunities to resolve
- Intervention in Stage 1 - no more marking of own homework
- Clear Quality Assurance framework for all services to meet the 'Residents First' internal kitemark
- Clear links to training and development and sharing learning through an internal Complaints Forum to improve services
- Change in KPIs and monitoring framework to focus on successes not on processing times

We received 114 compliments between 1 April 2021 and March 2022 and the table below provides a breakdown of the service areas that were complimented. There has been a slight decline in the number of compliments received compared to 2019/2020 (previously 149 council wide). However, there are some initiatives underway to enhance the compliments process which may increase the number of compliments received across the Authority.

Service Area	No. of Compliments
Corporate and Customer Services	61
Children's Services Early Help and Prevention	11
Adult Social Services	11
E&N Direct Services	10
Children's Services Safeguarding and Social Care	8

Commissioning	4
Planning, Building Standards and Sustainability	4
E&N Stronger & Safer Communities	3
Legal & Governance	1
Children's Services Schools and Learning	1
Total	114

## 5. Member Enquiries

5.1 The target is to respond to 95% of Member Enquiries within 10 working days. In 2021/2022 a total of 2,535 Member Enquiries were received: comprising of 77% enquiries from Haringey Councillors and 23% from Members of Parliament. This is the same ratio of enquiries as in the previous year.

5.2 The response rate in 2021/22 was 83%, which was below our target and a decrease of 4% compared to the previous year.

5.3 The following table shows the comparative performance data across the last five years

Year	Number	% Replied to on-time
2021/22	2,535	83%
2020/21	2,532	87%
2019/20	2,460	88%
2018/19	2,778	92%
2017/18	2,249	89%

5.4 The table below shows the breakdown of Member Enquiries received across service areas for 2021/22.

Service Area	No. of MEs	2021/22	% of Total MEs
E&N - Direct Services	915		36%
E&N - Stronger & Safer Communities	504		20%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	287		11%
Corporate & Customer services	280		11%
Adult Social Services	123		5%
Commissioning	69		3%
Capital Projects and Property	52		2%
Housing	47		2%
Children's Services – Early Help and Prevention	44		2%
Children's Services – Safeguarding and Social Care	38		1%

Environment & Neighbourhoods	38	1%
Children's Services – School's and Learning	35	1%
Regeneration and Economic Development	27	1%
Finance	23	1%
Public Health	16	1%
Legal & Governance	15	1%
HR & OD	8	<1%
Strategy, Communication and Delivery	7	<1%
Digital Services	4	<1%
E&N – Procurement	3	<1%

5.5 The following tables break this information down further for the top 3 service areas (five most complained about issues).

<b>E&amp;N Stronger &amp; Safer Communities</b>	
Anti-Social Behaviour	234
Missed collections	61
Noise	43
Housing Disrepair / Environmental Health	34
Street Cleansing	28

<b>E &amp; N Direct Services</b>	
Concessionary Travel & Parking Permits	107
Trees	89
PCN Challenges	78
Traffic calming	62
Parks Management	56

<b>Planning, Building Standards &amp; Sustainability</b>	
Planning enforcement	87
Development Management	74
Transport Planning	52
Active Travel	19
Planning Policy	15



5.6 Below gives a breakdown of issues raised in the enquiries.

<b>Nature of Enquiry</b>	
Information Request	71%
Service Request	16%
Covid-19 Information	15%
Dissatisfaction with Policy and Procedure	4%
Poor Standard of Service	7%
Failure to Provide a Service	3%
Inadequate or Inaccurate Communications	2%
Employee Behaviour	<1%

5.7 A total of 71% of Member Enquiries were requests for information which is an increase of 12% from the previous year, and 16% were Service Requests. Notably, Covid-19 Information requested doubled in 2021/22 compared to the 2020/21 figure (7%) when the pandemic first began in the UK.

### **Member Enquiries Next Steps**

5.8 As part of the Feedback Review project, we will continue to work with the Councillors and MPs to improve the Member Enquiries process to allow us to issue a timely response and resolve residents' concerns. Recognising that the vast majority of Member Enquiries are simple information requests, we will investigate further if there are speedier and simpler ways of providing the kind of information requested by Members, for example signposting to information more clearly on the website. There is an opportunity to use the information held by the Feedback team to inform the development of the new website to reduce the number of contacts instigated by Members and indeed members of the public.

5.9 One of the outputs of the Feedback Review will also be to deliver a case management system to councillors so they can better manage and track the more complex cases brought to them by constituents.

### **Freedom of Information (FOI)**

5.10 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.

5.11 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.

5.12 Public Authorities must respond to FOI / EIR requests within 20 working days from the date the request was received.

5.13 All requests must be received in writing and Haringey has a dedicated online form and email address for this.

5.14 In line with best practice, Haringey proactively publishes data and information relating to FOI/EIR requests online and we have a disclosure log, which shows all requests received and responses issued. In addition, a full performance report is published online.

5.15 Between April 2021 and March 2022, Haringey received a total of 1335 requests, which is a 22% increase on the previous year. 83% of responses were sent within 20 days, a 1% increase compared to the year before but does not meet the requirement for all request to be responded to on time.

5.16 The following table shows the volume and performance for the past 5 years.

Year	No. of requests	% on time
2021-2022	1335	83%
2020-2021	1094	82%
2019-2020	1384	86%
2018-2019	1434	82%
2017-2018	1352	83%

5.17 There were requests where information was not provided to the requestor either because it was not held or there was a cost attached to responding to the request as shown in the table below. Note: requests where information was not held/costly are included in the overall number of 1335 requests received.

Information not provided	Total	% of Total requests
Information not held	147	11%
Information not given due to cost	26	2%

5.18 Of the of 1335 requests received, we applied exemptions to 128 (11%). Both the FOI and EIR Acts contain exemptions that allow Public Authorities to withhold information in certain cases. Note: exemptions are included in the overall number of 1335 requests received.

FOI - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Section 40 – Personal Information	52	40%
Section 31 – Law Enforcement	28	22%
Section 43 – Commercial Interests	13	10%
Section 21 - Info accessible by some other means	12	9%
Section 36 - Effective Conduct of Public Affairs	5	4%
Section 22 - Intended for future publication	3	2%
Section 24 – Safeguarding of National Security	3	2%
Section 41 – Confidential Information	1	1%
Section 38 - safety of any individual	1	1%
EIR - Exemption Applied	Total	% of Total Exemptions
Regulation 12 5 (f)	5	4%
Regulation 12 (4) b) – Manifestly Unreasonable	3	2%
Regulation 12 (4) (a) – Information not held	2	2%
Regulation 12 (4) (d) – Material in the course of completion	1	1%

- 5.19 The highest number of requests were received by Environment and Neighbourhoods – Direct Services, who dealt with 262 cases (20% of all received requests)

Service	No of Requests	% of Total Requests
E&N – Direct Services	262	20
E&N – Stronger & Safer Communities	239	18
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	135	10
Corporate & Customer Services	127	10
Commissioning	107	8
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	67	5
Children's Services - Schools & Learning	56	4
Finance	49	4
Human Resources & Organisational Development	39	3
Capital Projects and Property	34	3
Children's Services - Early Help & Prevention	34	3
Public Health	32	2
Digital Services	30	2
Legal and Governance	27	2
Strategy, Communications and Delivery	25	2
Housing	20	1
Environment & Neighbourhoods	19	1
Adult Social Services	13	<1
E&N – Procurement	11	<1
Regeneration and Economic Development	9	<1

## 6. Internal Reviews

- 6.1 If a resident is unhappy with the way their FOI/EIR request was handled, they can ask for an Internal Review, which are conducted by the Corporate Feedback Team.
- 6.2 A total of 63 internal reviews were conducted (5% of the requests received). This was an increase of 142% compared to the number of reviews conducted in the previous year. 83% of the internal reviews were responded to on time. Almost half of the reviews were upheld, again indicating that the requests had not been correctly responded to at the initial request. It is clear from this data that as an organisation we need to improve our responses to FOI's and quite possibly other Data Protection related processes such as Subject Access Requests. We will explore additional training for service areas and the Corporate Feedback Team to ensure we fully understand the Freedom of Information process and our obligations to be transparent with the data we hold.

Decision	Total	% of Total Reviews
Not upheld	31	49
Partly upheld	12	19
Upheld	20	32

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 During 2021/2022 we received two formal decisions, neither required us to undertake any actions. This is a 50% decrease from the number of formal decisions the ICO made in respect of Haringey compared to 2019/20.

## 7. Local Government Ombudsman Performance and Findings

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 There is further information on the Ombudsman’s website, which provides a comparison with other Local Authorities. Some key national statistics are shown in **appendix A**.
- 7.3 The table below shows Haringey’s performance in 2021/22 against our neighbouring boroughs. In all instances there was an increase in the number of cases referred to the Ombudsman compared to the previous year.

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	11	11	48	58	9	21	158	70%	71%
London Borough of Camden	4	17	27	31	8	17	104	68%	71%
London Borough of Enfield	4	7	56	40	10	27	144	73%	71%
London Borough of Hackney	6	20	36	41	6	22	131	79%	71%
London Borough of Haringey	5	14	35	51	15	29	149	66%	71%
London Borough of Islington	4	12	39	26	4	11	96	73%	71%

- 7.4 Haringey had 149 cases referred to the Ombudsman in 2021/22 compared to 164 in 2020/21. The Ombudsman investigated 44 of these and upheld 29, showing an upheld percentage of 66%. This compares to an average of 71% in similar councils.
- 7.5 The reduced percentage of upheld cases is positive as this indicates we are resolving cases to a more satisfactory level at Stage 2 of the process than in previous years.
- 7.6 The Local Government Ombudsman issued two Public Interest Reports against Haringey Council in 2021/22 which is one more than the year before.

The first involved Haringey’s handling of a disabled facilities grant-funded adaptation for a disabled child. The investigation found that *“Haringey took too long to carry out the works, changed the specification without agreement, did not offer suitable interim provision and did not properly consult with the child’s parents about what they needed for their growing son, as so much time had passed since the initial assessment. The failure to provide adaptations caused significant distress and inconvenience to the whole family.*

*To remedy this injustice, we recommended the Council should apologise, make a payment to the complainants, and liaise with them to complete the adaptation. We also asked the Council to review its procedures to prevent similar failures. The Council*

*agreed and I am pleased with the extensive work carried out to improve its disabled facilities grant procedures and resources.”*

The second Public Interest Report detailed the Haringey’s handling of the possible purchase of a complainant’s home related to the development of a neighbouring site. The investigation found *“that the Council failed to undertake proper scrutiny and analysis when deciding not to include the terrace of houses in the scheme. We also found the Council had not been even-handed in its dealings with the complainant and had failed to keep in touch. We also considered the Council had not presented accurate information to its scrutiny committee.*

*To remedy the injustice, we recommended the Council should apologise and pay the complainant £1,000. We also asked the Council to reconsider the proposals. In the report, we referred to the Council’s failure to provide information on negotiations and contact with the neighbouring property owner. We did not pursue this further because we were able to make a decision on the complaint, but it was unsatisfactory that the Council was unable, or unwilling, to provide this information. The lack of transparency added to our concerns about the case.*

*I am, however, satisfied with the action the Council has taken in its reconsideration of the matter.”*

- 7.7 The Local Government Ombudsman was able to confirm satisfaction with our compliance with their recommendations in 96% of cases during the year, which is a 1% increase compared to the year before.

### **Ombudsman Statistics**

- 7.8 The following table shows the number of enquiries the ombudsman received in 2021/22 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 54 cases and 36% of the total received.

<b>Outcomes 2021/22</b>	<b>Number</b>
Advice given	14
Incomplete / invalid	5
Not Upheld	15
Upheld	29
Referred to local resolution	35
Closed after initial enquiry	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

- 7.9 Cases that are closed after initial enquiries do involve some investigation and input from the Council.
- 7.10 The upheld and not upheld cases are enquiries that proceeded to a full investigation. Of the cases we dealt with, 29 were upheld representing 19% across all enquiries regarding Haringey received by the Ombudsman. For a breakdown of these cases, please see Appendix B.

### **8. Housing Ombudsman Performance and Findings**

- 8.1 Where Homes for Haringey (HfH) were unable to resolve a complaint at Stage 1, they would inform the complainant of their right to refer their complaint to Stage 2 and finally the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied. Of the 1949 Stage 1 decisions issued by HfH, 60% had at least one element of the complaint upheld.
- 8.2 The rate of conversion from Stage 1 to Stage 2 was 12% with a further 33% escalated from Stage 2 to the Housing Ombudsman.
- 8.3 The Housing Ombudsman issued 42 decisions against HfH. The following table provides a breakdown of the number of decisions issued and the outcome of these cases.

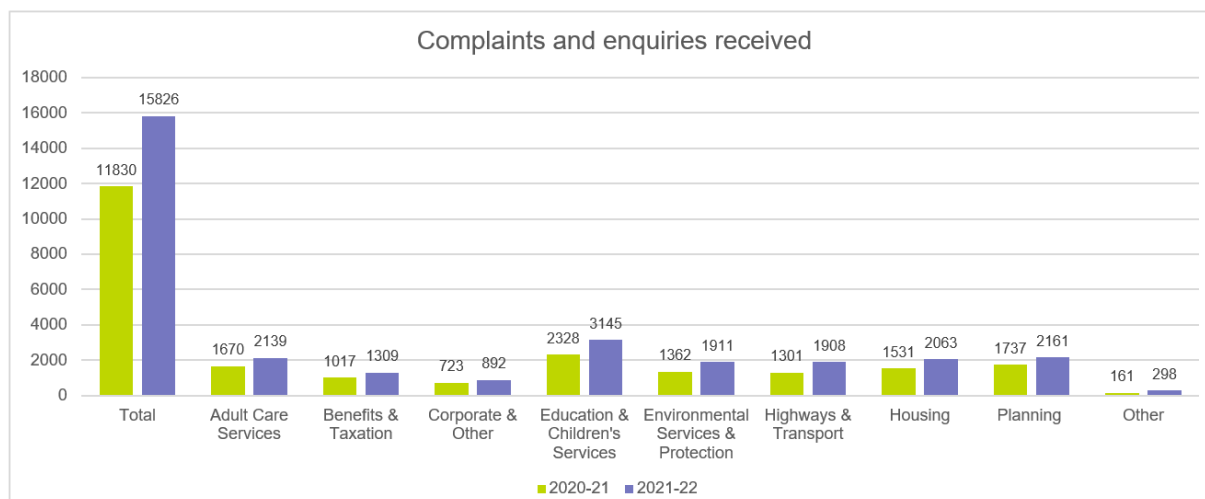
<b>Determination</b>	<b>2021/22</b>		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	No of cases	% of total												
Closed after initial enqs - no further action	4	10%			1					2			1	
Closed after initial enqs - out of jurisdiction	9	21%						1	1	3		1		3
Maladministration	11	26%		1	1		1	2	1		1	1	1	2
No Maladministration	2	5%					1		1					
Not upheld - No Maladministration	4	10%	1	1			1				1			
Outside Jurisdiction	3	7%								1		1		1
Partial Maladministration	2	5%										1	1	
Redress	1	2%												1
Severe Maladministration	1	2%							1					
Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	2	5%			1					1				
Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	2	5%						1				1		
Upheld - No further action	1	2%												1
<b>Total Upheld</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>

- 8.4 HfH paid a total of £51,968.71 in compensation relating to complaints.

## Appendix A – summary of Local Government Ombudsman cases (all boroughs)

There is further information on the Ombudsman’s website, however some key statistics for all cases received by the Ombudsman are shown below for reference.

The Ombudsman registered a total of 15,826 complaints and enquiries in 2021/22 compared to 11,830 in 2020/21



They carried out 4048 detailed investigations in 2021/22 compared to 3144 in 2020/21. 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	1,069	77%
Adult Care Services	990	69%
Housing	397	71%
Environment & Public Protection	380	68%
Benefits and Tax	327	59%
Highways & Transport	212	55%
Planning & Development	565	45%
Corporate & Other	108	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4048</b>	

Of those detailed investigations they upheld 66%, a decrease from 67% in 2020/22

The Ombudsman made a total of 1848 recommendations to put things right on upheld cases for 2021/22

## Appendix B – summary of findings

<b>Adult's Social Services</b>	
<b>Summary of complaint</b>	<b>Remedy</b>
The majority of this complaint was relating to the NHS Trust, but there was an element regarding care package and social care needs which related to the Council.	We apologised for failing to respond the complainant's offer to provide support and pay towards the care package if it would enable her to return home.
Mr B has a disability and had difficulty in using his adapted bathroom which meant it was difficult for him to transfer from the toilet to the shower. He complained about the Council's process of assessing his needs for the bathroom and says the Council delayed addressing the problem.	We apologised and paid compensation.
Dispute over our decision that the complainant was not eligible for care and support from August 2019. We were found to be at fault.	We apologised and made a payment to acknowledge the distress caused to her by the delay in assessing her as eligible for care and support which meant she did not have a care package for approximately 18 months longer than necessary. We also to reimburse the cost of the care she had to purchase. We also reminded officers that they should consider the impact of a person's mental health on their ability to meet outcomes and their wellbeing when carrying out a care act assessment and determining their eligibility for care and support.
Miss X, complains the Council delayed putting adequate care in place for her late mother, Ms Y, after an assessment in February 2020. Also that we carried out carers assessments without getting her opinion.	We paid compensation to recognise the fault
Ms C complained about the way in which we dealt with her sister's financial assessment for her temporary care home placement. Ms C says this resulted in distress to her.	We apologised and paid compensation
Joint complaint with the CCG - The complainant, Mr B, complained about the actions of London Borough of Haringey (the Council) and NHS North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG). Mr B complained the free home care package his mother, Miss M, received following discharge from hospital in May 2020 was stopped incorrectly. Mr B said that: This was contrary to the Government's COVID-19 hospital discharge guidance and to a letter Miss M received from the CCG; and the care package was stopped suddenly and without enough notice.	We, alongside the CCG wrote to the complainant to acknowledge the faults identified and to apologise for their impact.  We also undertook to ensure our reablement service is aware of the importance of keeping adequate records, including of planning conversations with service users and key reasons for its decisions.



### Revenues and Benefits

Summary of complaint	Remedy
The complaint was that we wrongly stopped taking council tax payments in 2021 causing arrears. The complaint was not investigated by the Ombudsman	The Ombudsman found we had resolved the complaint appropriately by explaining what went wrong, apologising for our error, and offering to spread the arrears over this financial year.
Ms B complained about the Council miscalculating her and her brother's council tax for the period when she was a full-time student. She said this confused them and led them to believe she overpaid her council tax. The Ombudsman found us to be at fault for raising Ms B's and Mr X's expectations about a possible council tax refund	We made a payment in recognition of the injustice caused by the raised expectations and update council tax records

### Education and Children's Services

Summary of complaint	Remedy
<p>Ms X complained that we wrongly treated her granddaughter's placement with her as a private arrangement and failed to provide any practical or financial support between May and October 2017. Ms X also complained the Council failed to establish her granddaughter's status and delayed in applying for a passport and citizenship.</p> <p>The failings in the way the Council dealt with Z's placement with Ms X and in the level of support it provided amount to fault. As does the delay in applying for or supporting Ms X in applying for Z's passport. These faults have cause Ms X and Z an injustice.</p>	<p>We agreed to pay Ms X backdated kinship allowance for the period 20 May to 30 May 2017.</p> <p>We also apologised to the child and made a payment to her in recognition of the distress and uncertainty the delay in applying for or supporting Ms X to apply for her passport has caused.</p>
Mr X complained about delay by the Council when arranging replacement cot sides for his disabled son's bed and related matters.	We apologised and paid compensation. We had already taken action to improve the ordering process to prevent a similar situation happening again.
Mr X complained about the Council's failure to meet his disabled son's needs by taking too long to carry out adaptations to his property. He also complained about being pressurised into accepting unsuitable adaptations.	We apologised, paid compensation and agreed work to be completed.
Mr X complained about how the Council responded to two child safeguarding reports about his children in 2020. There was no fault in how the Council investigated Mr X's safeguarding reports, but there was fault in how the Council caused Mr X to miss part of a child in need meeting.	We apologised, reviewed procedures and issued reminders to relevant staff.
Mrs M complained about her son B's education. The Council did not complete annual reviews of B's EHC Plan between March 2017, when the Plan was first issued, and March 2021.	We apologised for the complaints that were upheld and arranged some tuition for B.

Ms X complained about the Council's handling of her daughter, Y's special educational needs and delay in carrying out an annual review of her Education, Health and Care Plan and post -16 placement transfer review. The Ombudsman found fault as we had delayed in carrying out the post -16 placement transfer review, but this did not cause significant injustice to warrant a personal remedy.	No remedy needed
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<b>Highways</b>	
<b>Summary of complaint</b>	<b>Remedy</b>
Complaint was that the Council issued her with a penalty charge notice for parking in a residents' parking bay without displaying a valid permit and failed to cancel it when she explained she had been issued with a virtual permit rather than a physical one. The Ombudsman found the Council was at fault in failing to cancel the penalty charge notice when Ms B made informal representations.	We apologised, made a payment and reviewed procedures.
Complaint was that we repeatedly failed to collect a resident's household waste, including a three-month period from December 2020 when we failed to make any collections at all.	No remedy as the Ombudsman did not consider that our failure to collect the waste caused the resident injustice
Ms Y complained that we failed to pay an agreed refund for a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) which was sent to an incorrect address. Ms Y says we said we had sent a cheque to her several times, but she had not received this. This has caused her inconvenience.	The Ombudsman did not investigate as we had already agreed an alternative way of providing the refund.
Mr X complained we and our contractor failed to consistently collect his rubbish, missing some collections and collecting others late.  Mr X says he had overflowing bins, irritation with the service problems, and annoyance with the complaint process upholding his complaint but not remedying it to his satisfaction.	The Ombudsman did not investigate Mr X's complaint because:  There was not enough evidence of the matters causing Mr X such a significant personal injustice to warrant them investigating, and an investigation would not lead to a different outcome to the Council apology it has already provided.

<b>Housing</b>	
<b>Summary of complaint</b>	<b>Remedy</b>
Complaint was about how we dealt with Miss X when she was homeless.	Ombudsman did not investigate as she had not been caused a significant injustice in relation to our action in providing her with temporary accommodation. We had also acknowledged delays in responding to her complaint and provided a financial remedy so there was nothing further to be achieved from an investigation.

<p>Complaint was that we were at fault in the way we considered a housing register application and refused the application to join the housing register. The Ombudsman found fault as we had not clearly explained appeal rights against our decision and wrongly listed the applicant as living in a three bedroomed property</p>	<p>The Ombudsman recommended a service improvement about our decision letters. But the fault did not cause the complainant an injustice, so they completed the investigation with no further remedy needed.</p>
<p>Complaint was that we failed to: provide suitable temporary accommodation when we decided the complainant was homeless in October 2019; and move her and her young children out of their property, which suffered from damp and mould, before July 2021. As a result, she and her young children slept together in one bed in a single room whose walls were damp and mouldy.</p>	<p>We apologised for failing to: carry out, or arrange, an inspection of her accommodation before she moved in; show evidence of the checks it says officers would have done before she moved in; find her alternative suitable temporary accommodation when aware of her overcrowding; show it acted in January 2020 on her reports of damp and mould for 8 months;</p> <p>Paid compensation</p> <p>Undertook to ensure inspections by, or on behalf of, the Council are carried out along with necessary checks of accommodation; to ensure requests for repairs are referred promptly to landlords/management agents and followed up to ensure they are done; and ensure applicants in unsuitable accommodation are found suitable accommodation promptly.</p>
<p>A private tenant had an issue with a disrepair problem regarding her boiler for over a year and the complaint was that we did not adequately support her and didn't deal with her complaint properly.</p>	<p>We made a payment in respect of avoidable distress caused to her.</p> <p>We undertook to review how we handle communications from members of the public and how they are then entered on CRM systems in order to ensure they are properly assessed and actioned.</p>
<p>Miss X complained we failed to provide her with timely and suitable support after her landlord illegally evicted her. There was no fault in how we helped Miss X with her complaint of illegal eviction. There was fault with how we encouraged Miss X to withdraw her application when considering her homelessness, however this did not cause Miss X a significant injustice.</p>	<p>We issued reminders to housing officers to prevent similar fault in future.</p>
<p>The complaint was that we should have awarded band A priority under our housing allocations scheme to a couple. The Ombudsman found there was no evidence of fault in how we reached the decision to place the couple in band B. However, we failed to</p>	<p>We apologised</p>

respond to their complaint which was fault and this caused frustration to them.	
<p>Mr P complained about the level of housing priority we had allocated him. Specifically, Mr P says he had been allocated standard priority since 2011, though given the number of children he had in residence, he felt he should be given higher priority for housing.</p> <p>Mr P also said we had wrongly said his priority band for housing has an effective date (the date of his eligibility). of May 2019. He says he should have an effective date of August 2011.</p> <p>Mr P also complained that his current property was overcrowded as five people are sharing a one-bedroom property. Mr P wants to move to a bigger home and for the Council to rectify the priority effective date.</p>	<p>We apologised to Mr P for the faults identified and made a payment on account of the uncertainty he has suffered, as well as time and trouble in pursuing his complaint.</p> <p>We agreed to undertake a full review of Mr P's needs for housing, including the priority banding and effective date, and then provide a written decision.</p>

<b>Other</b>	
<b>Summary of complaint</b>	<b>Remedy</b>
Mr X complained we incorrectly applied a retail discount to his company's business rates account. The Ombudsman found that we incorrectly applied the discount on the account, then billed Mr X's company without proper communication and then withdrew an offer to cancel some of the debt after Mr X had made a substantial payment.	We made a payment to acknowledge the distress and frustration this caused him.
Mr X complained about our handling of the possible purchase of his home related to the development of a neighbouring site. The Ombudsman upheld the complaint and found fault causing injustice.	<p>We apologised to Mr X for the faults found and the injustice caused to him and made a payment.</p> <p>We also undertook to review the decision, and consider all the possible options for the site including the inclusion of the terrace of houses in the scheme.</p>
Complaint was that we wrongly refused a full Covid related discretionary grant payment, causing financial loss.	We gave an apology, a payment for time and trouble and a payment for injustice caused by the missed discretionary grant payment, of the value of the grant payment. .
Mr K complained that we decided to introduce a borough-wide ban on exercising dogs without a lead, as part of social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr K said this is disproportionate. The Ombudsman found that we were entitled to decide dogs should be kept on leads in all areas, as part of its social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, our explanations of our dog control powers were confusing and contradictory, which was found to be fault. This did not cause a substantive injustice to	We agreed to circulate a reminder to staff in the relevant teams, explaining clearly what current dog control powers we have, which orders they arise from, and the change made to introduce the expanded 'leads by direction' rule.

the complainant, but we agreed to ensure officers properly understand the orders on which its powers are based.



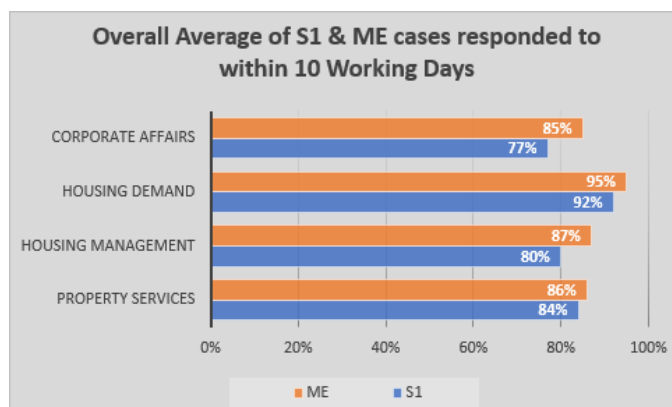
## Appendix C – Housing data / Housing Board March 2022

Below is a link to the Performance report that was presented at the Homes for Haringey Board in March 2022, and contains some information relating to complaint performance.

[12 Board Performance Report March 2022.pdf](#)

We have also shared some data below that has been pulled from the complaints case management system to provide more granular detail regarding the volume and service area of Stage 1 complaints and Members Enquiries.

<b><u>Overall Average of S1 &amp; ME cases responded to within 10 Working Days</u></b>		
<b>Service Area</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>ME</b>
Property Services	84%	86%
Housing Management	80%	87%
Housing Demand	92%	95%
Corporate Affairs	77%	85%



<b><u>Total Number of Stage 1 Complaints Received</u></b>		
<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Overall %</b>
Property Services	1082	56%
Housing Management	524	27%
Housing Demand	281	14%
Corporate Affairs	60	3%