

**Annual report for the year 2005 –
2006 on the Council’s handling of:**

- **complaints, compliments and suggestions, and**
- **members’ enquiries**

Central Feedback Team

July 2006

1. Background

1.1 This annual report outlines the key features and statistics on the handling of complaints, compliments and suggestions, and members' enquiries during 2005-06. This is the first time that members' enquiries have been included in the annual report following the introduction of new corporate procedures from 1 October 2005.

Key achievements

1.2. Key achievements in the year are set out below.

Complaints

- Overall performance improvement across all stages: 79% to timescale compared with 75% in 2004-05
- Achievement of performance target at stages 1 and 3
- Welcome increase in complaint numbers – we are improving our recording, and complaints increase when customers have confidence in the organisation and an expectation that concerns will be addressed
- An independent customer survey gave some indication of improvements in complaint handling being noticed by customers
- An independent staff survey suggested that the organisation is 'developing a positive focus towards the benefits of complaints'.
- Reduction in complaints escalating from one stage to the next, and to the Ombudsman, indicating improved handling
- Fall in number of complaints to Ombudsman, despite increase in complaints to the Council
- Improvement in response time to Ombudsman enquiries
- Major reduction in Ombudsman 'local settlements', the main category where fault is found

Members' enquiries

- Production and implementation of new corporate procedures
- Setting up named directorate contact officers with dedicated email addresses
- Issuing of staff guidance and training of contact officers
- Production and distribution to members of explanatory leaflet and pocket guide
- Appointment of Members' Enquiries Officer to progress chase overdue cases and keep members informed of reasons for delay
- Implementing of performance monitoring of members' enquiries as part of the corporate system

2. Improving performance in complaint handling

Complaints to the Council

2.1 There was again an increase in the number of complaints received under the corporate procedures in 2005-06. This is to be welcomed for three reasons:

- firstly, we are continuing to improve our recording of complaints on the corporate database through staff training,

- secondly, it reflects the increased confidence of service users in the Council: research in both the public and private sectors indicates that customers will complain more if they trust the organisation to deal effectively with their concerns, and
- thirdly, we are receiving free feedback, which we can use to improve our services

Total complaints at all three stages were 2,246 an increase of 27% compared with the 1,786 in 2004-05.

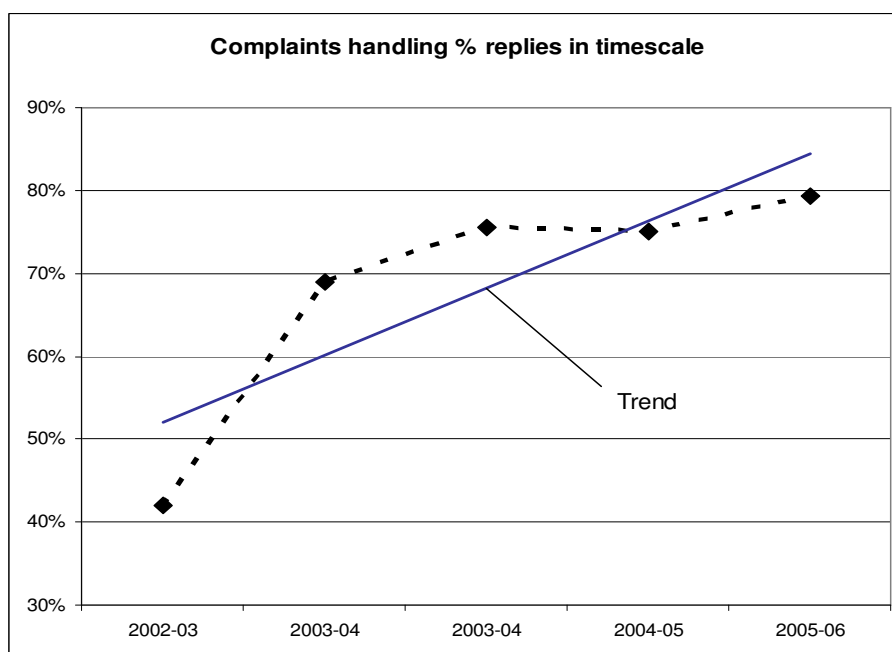
2.2 The figures in this report are only for the corporate procedures. Separate statutory procedures need to be used for many Children’s and Social Services complaints, and both directorates are required to produce their own separate annual report on complaints. The Executive considered the Social Services report on 4 July, and the Children’s report is a separate agenda item for your next meeting.

2.3 The performance figures for the handling of complaints to timescale in 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 were as follows:

Stage (+working days)	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
1 (15*)	44%	68%	76%	75%	80%
2 (25)	33%	76%	63%	76%	74%
3 (25)	30%	80%	94%	88%	94%
Overall total	42%	69%	76%	75%	79%

*14 working days under the procedure in operation before May 2002

2.4 The detailed breakdown of the performance information is attached at Appendix 1. A trend graph is attached below, which indicates the improving performance over the last five years.



2.5 An important measure of the Council’s improvement in complaint handling is that, where possible, complaints should be resolved quickly without escalation to later stages of our own procedures and to the Ombudsman. As the table below shows, a

lower percentage of cases at all stages escalated last year, compared with the previous year.

Stage	Number completed		Number to next stage		% to next stage	
	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06
1	1573	2003	138	172	8.8%	8.6%
2	181	209	31	34	17.1%	16.1%
3	32	34	12	8	37.5%	23.5%
Total	1786	2246	181	211	10.1%	9.4%

Reductions in timescale for 2006-07

2.6 Our aim has been to reduce timescales for complaint handling to meet national best practice. This indicates the need to reduce to a 10-day standard for stage 1, and 20 days for stages 2 and 3. It is also inequitable for complainants to be disadvantaged by having to wait longer for a response than constituents who choose to take up matters with a member. The standard for handling members' enquiries was 15 days in the past and has been reduced to 10 days.

2.7 Performance was on target at stage 1 and exceeded the target at stage 3. Therefore from 1 April 2006, the timescales have been reduced from 15 to 10 working days for stage 1 and from 25 to 20 for stage 3. The stage 2 timescale will be reduced from 25 to 20 days when performance has reached the current 80% target: hopefully this will be possible from 1 April 2007.

Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman

2.8 In 2004-05, there was a substantial decrease in the number of complaints about the Council received by the Ombudsman. In 2005-06, there was a further small fall to 147, despite the 27% increase in the number of stage 1 complaints received under the corporate procedure.

2.9 The Ombudsman made decisions on 148 cases during the year. He referred 43 of these back to the Council for consideration under our own complaints procedures. The number of cases he decided, excluding these referrals back, was 105.

2.10 Despite this reduced number of cases, there was an increase in the number of findings of 'no maladministration' from 31 to 34. The number of 'local settlement' decisions fell from 38 to 25. Local settlements are cases where the Council was at fault and agreed a remedy that the Ombudsman considered appropriate during the course of his investigation. One directorate had the same number as last year in this category, and the others had fewer. The Ombudsman also issued no report of maladministration against the Council for the second year running.

2.11 In previous years, the Ombudsman had a target response time of 21 calendar days for the Council to respond to his first written enquiries. Our performance against this target has improved progressively. It was 54.1 days in 2001-02, 37.7 days in 2002-03, 29.0 days in 2003-04, and 20.7 days in 2004-05. For 2005-06, the Ombudsman increased the target to 28 calendar days because of the inability of most authorities to meet the previous target. However, we achieved a further reduction to 18.1 days.

2.12 There is a detailed break down of the data on Ombudsman complaints at Appendix 2.

3 Learning from feedback

Complainant and employee surveys

3.1 We commissioned an independent complaints survey in the autumn of 2005. This encompassed a postal survey of known complainants, an on line and on street survey of people who may have experienced a problem with the council over the previous 12 months, a 'mystery shopping' exercise, and a survey of employees.

3.2 The key findings in relation to customers included the following:

- Customers did not consider that enough is done to put things right when they go wrong
- Customer awareness of the Customer Feedback procedure can be improved
 - No young people (age 24 and under) responded to postal and online surveys.
 - Older people (aged 60 and over) are more likely to be satisfied than younger groups of customers.
 - Disabled customers are also more likely to be satisfied than other groups of complainants.
- Black Caribbean males do not complain. Also, Greek and Turkish communities and the Kurdish community appear to be under-represented in making complaints

However:

- Few customers surveyed did not know how to complain
- Some services are responding to complaints positively and pro-actively
- There was some indication of improvement being noticed by customers

3.3 The employee survey findings included:

- 78% of employees are aware of the complaints process and 80% know what to do when a complaint is received.
- 22% are unaware of the complaints process, and 20% do not know what to do when a complaint is received
- the organisation is developing a positive focus towards the benefits of complaints

3.4 The survey findings have been reported to the Chief Executive's Management Board, and action for improvement is being incorporated into the corporate and directorate improvement plans. This includes:

- Action to improve staff and customer awareness of the procedures
- Emphasis on staff empowerment to clarify customer expectations and to provide improved responses
- Developing clear guidance on action that can be taken by officers at different levels of the organisation

- Action to address under representation amongst complainants in conjunction with work on the equalities impact assessment of accessibility of complaint procedures (see paragraphs 11.6 to 11.11 below)
- Raising awareness internally of the complaints procedures and timescales, and ensuring that customers are correctly advised

Learning from complaints received

3.5 The Central Feedback Team produce regular reports for all directorates on 'learning points' from stage 3 investigations and Ombudsman cases, and an analysis of issues raised and outcomes of stage 1 and 2 complaints.

3.6 Directorates use this information in different ways. In some cases, the appropriate business unit heads determine action to be taken and reports are submitted to directorate management teams. Elsewhere, responsibility is allocated to 3rd tier managers, including in Environment, where 'business improvement meetings' consider learning from complaints. Housing started to develop a 'learning log': this work is being continued by Homes for Haringey.

3.7 In Housing, complaints analysis indicated the need for training of contractors, and training sessions have therefore been conducted. In the Children's Service, new guidance is being issued to staff for assessing the funding of nursery placements, including eligibility criteria and funding, and revised arrangements have been implemented for dealing with unauthorised absences from schools. The Benefits and Local Taxation Division identified the need to improve the clarity of IT system-produced letters that are sent to customers. All such letters are being systematically reviewed against plain English standards. Furthermore BLT Team Leaders will be receiving be-spoke training through an external provider to improve the quality of responses.

3.8 Embedding learning from complaints for service improvement remains a high priority in the corporate and directorate complaints improvement plans for the current year.

Annual improvement and audit report

3.9 The third annual audit of complaint handling is currently being conducted. Its purpose is to check for adherence to the requirements of the customer feedback scheme, including the quality of responses. It involves examination of a random sample of cases close during the year in all directorates against the criteria of an audit guide. The Improvement and Performance Service conduct this work.

3.10 The audit findings are written up on a corporate and directorate basis as part of an annual improvement and audit report. This also includes:

- year end learning reports
- analyses of issues raised by complainants at stage 1
- decisions where complaints are upheld or partly upheld at all stages
- improvement issues arising from a range of data analysis at business unit level
- other findings and recommendations of the Central Feedback Team and directorate complaints officers.

Directorate management teams and business unit heads consider and implement the findings as appropriate.

Decisions taken on complaints

3.11 The chart below indicates the decisions taken on complaints at each stage. The proportion of complaints that were upheld or partly upheld in 2005-06 compared with 2004-05 fell from 63% to 58% at stage 1, increased from 60% to 65% at stage 2 and fell at stage 3 from 83% to 54%.

Decision	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Not upheld	27%	32%	40%	33%	35%	32%	42%	16%	45%
Partly upheld	21%	30%	26%	36%	39%	35%	40%	35%	42%
Upheld	46%	33%	32%	23%	21%	30%	17%	48%	12%
Withdrawn	7%	5%	2%	7%	6%	3%	2%	0%	0%
No finding*			0.2%			0%			0%

* This category was added in 2005. Cases categorised here, would previously have been recorded as not upheld.

Issues raised by complainants, what they wanted, and how they made contact

3.12 The charts at appendix 4 show the issues complainants raised at stage 1, what they wanted, and also how they made contact with us. Directorates consider the reasons for complaint as part of the learning reports.

3.13 The only significant changes in issues raised in 2005-06, compared with the previous year, were small increases in problems of employee behaviour, poor communication and service quality. .

3.14 In terms of what complainants wanted us to do, there was a fall of 5% in expectations of a service being provided, although this remained by far the major requirement at 28%, and a 5% rise to 14% of those wanting information to be provided. 16% wanted a decision explained.

3.15 There was a small increase in contacts made by complaint form, phone and web form (complaints made via the Council website's previously being by an email link and therefore being classified as email contact). There was a small corresponding fall in email complaints, and complaints by letter.

4 Implementing improvements to the corporate feedback arrangements

4.1 There is a corporate complaints management improvement plan, and directorate complaints improvement plans which address the relevant local issues. All plans are reviewed and updated at least annually. Directorate plans are monitored by management teams and reviewed corporately twice yearly. The key improvement issues during the year are summarised below.

Web forms

4.2 For many years, there has been an email complaints link in the customer feedback area of the Council's external website. Last year, e-forms technology was introduced which allowed on-line entry of corporate feedback into a structured form on the Council's website. This became operational in August 2005.

Customer Services

4.3 To reduce the likelihood of customers calling the wrong number, the Customer Services approach was extended to complaints. A corporate telephone number, (0845 034 1000) was introduced and calls are routed to the call centre. Staff record full details of each issue on an internal version of the web form and email it to the relevant complaints team. A record is retained by Customer Services in case of future queries, and the complaints teams log and process the feedback in the normal way. All relevant calls made to the switchboard number (020 8489 0000) are also routed to the call centre. Appropriate training has been provided for staff.

Other improvements

4.4 Other improvements made include:

- Carrying out of complainant and employee surveys and initiating consequential action to address the findings (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 above)
- A recent equalities impact assessment of the accessibility of complaints procedures (see paragraph 11.6 below)
- Outreach work, informed by this assessment
- Reprint of public complaints posters and leaflets (see paragraphs 7.2 to 7.4 below)
- Homes for Haringey has produced its own complaints leaflet, but is adhering to the customer feedback scheme, included the reduced timescales. It will continue to work closely with the Council on complaint handling.
- Development of a joint operational protocol with the Haringey Mental Health Partnership Board for co-ordination of the respective Mental Health Trust and local authority complaints procedures.
- Reconfiguring of the complaints database to provide improved data analysis for business units

4.5 An update of the Corporate Feedback Scheme will shortly be issued. This will include:

- A revised section on harassment, hate crime and anti social behaviour in line with the draft hate crime and harassment strategy
- Revisions to complaints about senior managers. Complaints about Directors and the Monitoring Officer will be considered by the Chief Executive, and about the Chief Executive by the Leader and the Monitoring Officer, both having just one internal stage. Employee behaviour complaints that are dealt with by Assistant Directors or Directors will be considered at stage 2, with the Monitoring Officer conducting any stage 3
- Formal co-ordinated issue of other updated guidance that has previously been circulated on an ad hoc basis, including complaints of breaches of the freedom of information and environmental information regulations, complaints about potential insurance claims, and independent mediation.

4.6 The improvements relating to learning from feedback to improve services are detailed at section 3 above.

5 Handling of members' enquiries

Setting up new procedures

5.1 The Executive made decisions on the recommendations of the scrutiny review of members' enquires in March 2005. These have been implemented, and the new arrangements became fully operational from 1 October 2005. Responsibility for the new procedures was allocated to the Corporate Complaints Team. To avoid any confusion arising as a consequence of these additional responsibilities, the name of the Corporate Complaints Team changed to 'Central Feedback Team' with effect from 1 September 2005.

5.2 Action taken to give effect to the Executive's decisions includes:

- Implementation of a standard corporate procedure
- Monthly performance monitoring of enquiry handling performance
- Setting up named contact officers with dedicated email addresses in each directorate
- Setting up of regular meetings of contact officers to review matters of common interest and concern and development issues
- Appointment of a Members' Enquiries Officer in the Central Feedback Team, who now have corporate responsibility for the procedures, including support to members and officers
- The Members' Enquiries Officer monitors and progress chases weekly all overdue cases, and ensures that members are informed of reasons for any delays
- All enquiries are logged on the corporate database, which has been amended to facilitate the handling and tracking of cases
- Training of contact officers and issuing of guidance to ensure accurate data entry
- Issue to members of a leaflet and pocket guide, outlining arrangements and contact officers (a revised version was issued with the new members' induction pack in May 2006)

Improvements arising from operation of new procedures

5.3 The scrutiny review was proposed because some members felt that the way in which enquiries were dealt with could be made more responsive and effective. There was no central corporate responsibility for monitoring performance in dealing with enquiries, no formal definition of an enquiry, operational arrangements differed between departments with no corporate procedure available, and because of inconsistent recording there was no accurate overview or performance.

5.4 In addition to the action outlined at paragraph 5.2 above, the following improvements have arisen from the operation of the new procedures:

- Increase in number of enquiries recorded and responded to: 20% more enquiries were recorded in the second half of the 2005-06 year than the first, one of the previous concerns having been that no action was taken on a significant number of enquiries
- 85% of enquiries responded to on time, compared with an estimated 74% reported in the scrutiny review
- More holding replies sent where enquiry responses could not be sent on time
- Regular analysis and reporting of enquiries and their subject matter
- Consistency of practice in dealing with enquiries

Performance in handling enquiries

5.5 In the 2005-06 year, 3,611 out of 4,270 members' enquiries were responded to within the 10 calendar day timescale. This represents a performance of 85% against the target of 90%. The average completion time was 6 working days overall. Only five cases in total took more than 2 months to complete. The delays were due either to administrative error or the need for extensive research into complex issues. However, all five cases were enquiries received before the new arrangements took effect, and recurrences due to administrative error are unlikely given the progress chasing that now takes place.

5.6 The table below sets out performance in handling enquiries by directorate.

Total	On time	% On time	Average Completion Days	Cases replied to in more than 45 working days (2 months)
Council Total				
4270	3611	85%	6	5
Chief Executive's				
229	196	87%	6	1
Children's				
207	174	84%	7	0
Environment				
2493	2151	86%	5	1
Finance				
251	187	75%	10	2
Housing				
840	724	86%	7	1
Social Services				
249	179	72%	8	0

Issues raised in enquiries

5.7 The percentage breakdown for all cases for the year by the standard categories in the corporate feedback database is set out in the table below.

Category	No of Issues	Percentage
Employee Behaviour	15	1 %
Freedom of Information	38	3 %
Information/Service request	3	0 %
Policy	108	8 %
Poor Communication	41	3 %
Service Access	7	1 %
Service Cost	5	0 %
Service Delayed	33	3 %
Service Inappropriate	56	4 %
Service Not Provided	161	12 %
Service Quality	832	64 %
Service Removed	3	0 %

5.8 Information is made available to members on enquiries received in their ward. Data on complaints in the ward is also available in cases where complainants have given consent: new arrangements were introduced during the year to seek this consent.

6 Providing effective training

6.1 In conjunction with Organisational Development & Learning and services, a review took place of the two internal training courses on 'handling complaints' and 'investigating complaints' in the Council's short course programme. As a result, the 'handling' course has been replaced by a complaints handling module in the corporate customer focus course. The 'investigating complaints' course remains part of the corporate programme.

6.2 The Central Feedback Team provides regular informal briefing, training and support for all complaints officers and members' enquiries contact officers on both complaints and enquiries procedures and the operation of the customer feedback database. The Team provided a member briefing session on the procedures for handling their enquiries in May 2006.

6.3 The Homes for Haringey Feedback Team also provide short courses on handling, investigating and resolving complaints, for both their own officers and contractors. These are being reviewed and will be amalgamated into one course pitched at different levels for different groups of officers. All Housing Management staff, the Repairs Service and their main partnering contractors have all received refresher/introductory training in the last year. The remainder of the new service will be trained in the coming year once the new courses are in place.

7 Improving publicity and communications

7.1 The annual report is published in the 'complaints, compliments and suggestions' section of Council's website and publicised through a press release. The website and intranet entries are regularly updated, most recently in April 2006.

7.2 The corporate 'complaints, compliments and suggestions' leaflet was updated, including details of the new dedicated Customer Services complaints phone line, and distributed to schools to encourage complaints from children and young people about all services. An article publicising the dedicated complaints phone line was included in Haringey People in November 2005.

7.3 The Children's Service also issued new leaflets and posters to reflect the full range of provision of the new Service. They were distributed to all relevant services, including libraries and leisure centres. They were redesigned in consultation with young people, and all publicity is age appropriate.

7.4 The staff leaflet that summarises complaints procedures has been updated and reprinted. It is issued to all new staff at corporate induction.

8 Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2005-06

8.1 The purpose of the Ombudsman's letter is to:

- Help the Council to learn from complaints made to him
- Underpin effective working relationships between the Council and his office
- Identify opportunities for the Ombudsman and his staff to provide any assistance that the Council may wish to seek in bringing about improvements to its internal complaints handling, and
- Provide complaint based information which we may find useful in assessing and reviewing our performance

8.2 The annual letter and the Council's reply are attached at Appendix 3. On page 2 the Ombudsman points out that the areas of reduction in complaints he received about Haringey in the year were in his categories of Social Services (which includes children's social care in our Children's Services), Planning, and Education. In all three categories there were national increases – 22.6% in the case of Education.

8.3 He states that our improvement in the time we take to respond to his first written enquiries (see paragraph 2.11 above) 'is an excellent record for any authority, but particularly so for one of the London boroughs'.

9 Persistent, serial and vexatious complainants

9.1 We have procedures for dealing with extreme situations where a complainant may impose such demands on our resources that measures need to be taken to address the position, while still providing for complaints to be considered.

9.2 During 2005-06, it was necessary to impose new exceptional measures provided for in our procedures as set out below.

- *Option 2c, decline further communication on a specific complaint after consideration under the procedure* was applied in two new cases.
- *Option 3, legal action* was imposed in September 2005, an anti social behaviour order being obtained against a complainant in respect of whom restrictions under the complaints procedures had been imposed in 2004-05. The order applied for 12 months and prohibits the causing of 'nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress' to staff, and restricts contact to writing.

10 Compliments and suggestions

10.1 The corporate feedback scheme provides for compliments and suggestions from the public in addition to complaints. All feedback received is administered by directorate complaints teams in accordance with the customer feedback scheme.

10.2 The number of compliments and suggestions recorded in the last three years was as follows:

Directorate	Compliments			Suggestions		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Chief Executive's	23	40	70	8	26	29
Children's (03-4 & 04-5: Education)	0	2	16	0	1	15
Environment	9	28	43	12	55	55
Finance	2	0	1	0	1	2
Housing	7	4	4	6	3	5
Social Services	17	41	13	1	1	0
TOTAL	58	115	147	27	87	106

10.3 Below are some examples of compliments received in the year:

- *I found myself without a roof over my head, through no fault of my own, and [name] was a diamond. She found me a contact that would give me a room without a deposit. She acted beyond her call of duty.*
- *An excellent service, friendly and polite staff who go out of their way to understand and listen to you, also to help you. In the past they have taken a lot of stick when they are only doing their job. The layout of this office is also excellent and gives you a very relaxed feel.*
- *I would like to tell you that your centre has helped me in coping with my disabilities. I feel that I have not been left alone.*
- *I am heavily pregnant and had to see Customer Services about several different issues with Housing, all of which [name] was extremely helpful and understanding with and made sure she gave all the help she could. I would just like to say it was obvious that [name] is an asset to your team.*

11 Equalities implications

11.1 Equalities monitoring data is requested on customer feedback forms but this is not always completed. Complaints received by letter, email or fax invariably do not include it. In 2005-06 overall, data was generally known for little more than one third of complainants.

11.2 Every effort is being made to improve data capture. All complaints teams are progressively introducing customer surveys on completion of the response to the complainant at each stage. This includes a request for equalities monitoring data. Customer Services are conducting pilot telephone surveys for Homes for Haringey. Initial feedback is that this is proving successful. Extension of the pilot arrangements will depend on resources.

11.3 There were eight complaints of discrimination in 2005-06:

- Age: 1
- Disability: 2
- Gender: 1
- Race: 2
- Racist incident: 1
- Religion: 1

Gender and disability

11.4 The known percentages of women and disabled people amongst complainants at stage 1 of the Council’s procedures are set out in the table below. The gender of 4%, 19% and 13% of complainants was unknown in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. The disabled category is the percentage of all complainants declaring a disability.

Year	% Women	% Disabled
2003-04	57.8	7.3
2004-05	57.8	8.0
2005-06	57.9	10.0

Ethnicity

11.5 The ethnicity of 72%, 71% and 65.9% of complainants was unknown in 2003/4, 2004-05, and 2005-06 respectively. The percentage ethnicity of known complainants at stage 1 is set out below:

Year	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Mixed	Chinese & other	White British	White Irish	Other White
2003-04	4.7%	40.0%	2.3%	7.7%	26.9%	4.4%	13.8%
2004-05	5.3%	33.0%	3.1%	6.4%	30.0%	5.5%	16.7%
2005-06	4.4%	32.1%	4.1%	6.1%	34.3%	6.6%	12.4%

11.6 A full analysis of data by gender and ethnicity for the last three years, including unknowns, is at Appendix 5.

Age of complainants

11.7 The percentage of known complainants by age group at stage 1 is set out in the table below. The age of 78.9%, 73.6% and 62.5% of complainants was unknown in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. It is hoped that the work being undertaken by the Children’s Service will increase complaints by children and young people (see paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 above).

Year	Under 16	16-17	18-23	24-45	46-59	Over 60
2003-04	0.9%	0.6%	3.7%	54.3%	23.2%	17.3%
2004-05	0.5%	0.7%	5.3%	55.4%	20.0%	18.1%
2005-06	0.3%	0.7%	7.1%	49.8%	23.4%	18.8%

Equalities impact assessment

11.8 An equalities impact assessment on the accessibility of complaints procedures has just been completed. It utilised the data from this report, including the findings of the complainant survey (see paragraph 3.2 above).

11.9 The key findings were that there is:

- ◆ under representation in complaints received from:
 - White British and white other, including Greek and Turkish Cypriots and the Kurdish community
 - Men and in particular black Caribbeans
- ◆ over representation amongst:
 - Black and Asian communities
 - Chines and other ethnic groups
 - White Irish
 - Women
 - Disabled people
- ◆ no current monitoring of sexual orientation and religion or belief.

11.10 We therefore need to:

- carry out targeted work to encourage more complaints from the under represented groups listed above.
- introduce monitoring of sexual orientation and religion or belief, and amend complaints leaflets and feedback forms for this purpose at the next reprint, and the corporate database
- provide appropriate publicity for customers and staff

11.11 Initial contact has already been made with some of the under represented communities, and this will continue and expand as resources permit. Appropriate use will be made of translated leaflets. As part of the work to expand accessibility to include sexual orientation and religion or belief, we will engage with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender and faith groups.

11.12 We will continue to produce appropriate general publicity material for customers and staff on the website and intranet, and in external and internal publications, including in community languages, braille and large print on request. Translations of complaints leaflets in community languages are being made available on the website and intranet, and a short complaints leaflet is planned in the main community languages.

11.13 The relative lack of complaints from young and older people may be attributed to a reluctance to complain by those groups. We therefore propose an initiative to encourage older people to comment about services rather than only complain.

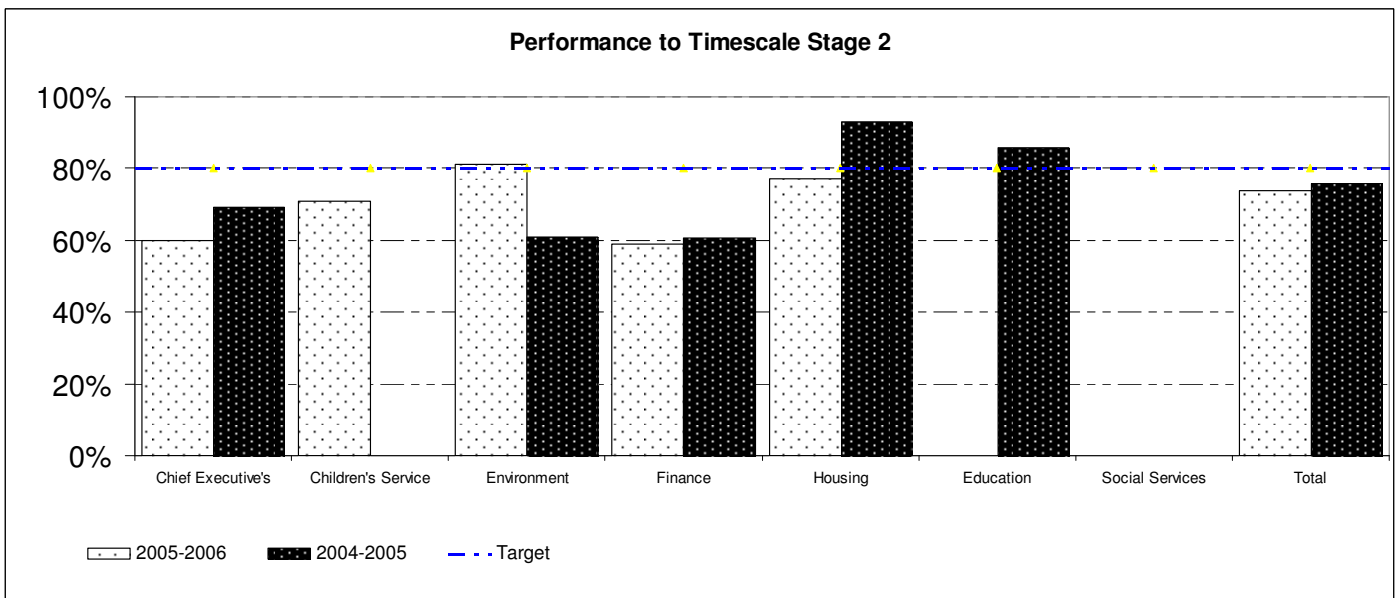
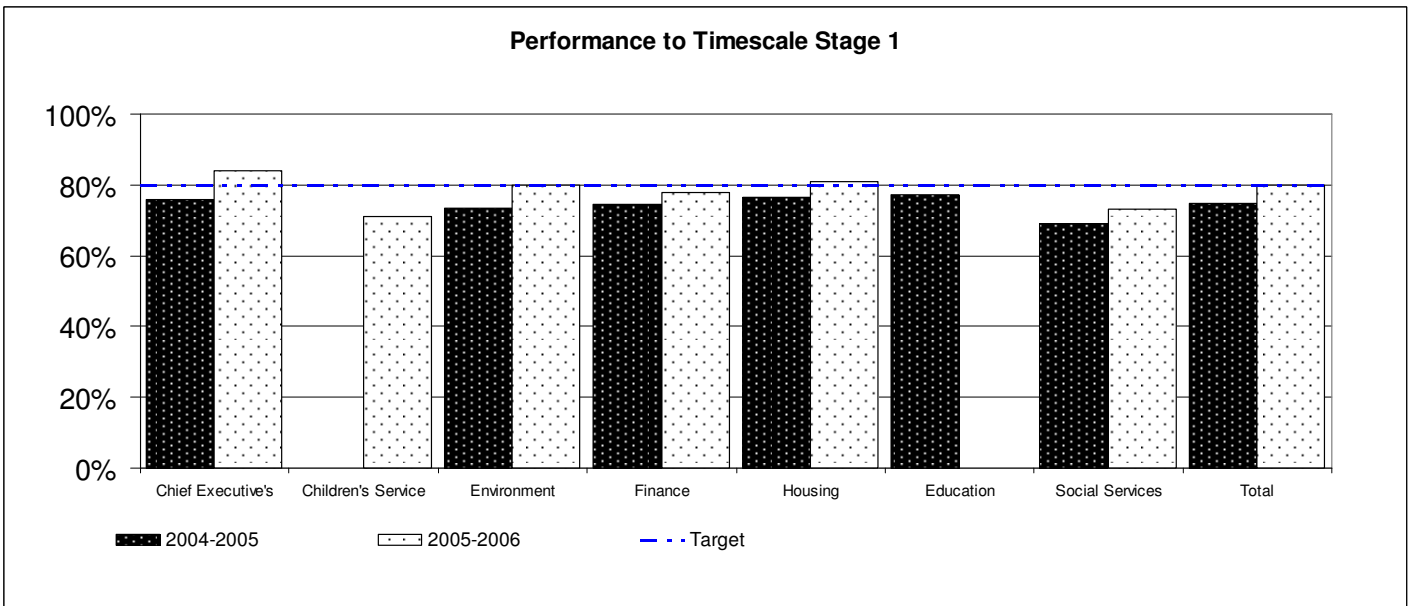
11.14 Children's Services are now actively seeking feedback from young people through distribution of leaflets and posters to schools, libraries, play and youth services, and by promoting the rights of young people to express themselves and voice concerns about Council services. This will hopefully increase feedback from that age range.

Appendix 1:

COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE TO TIMESCALE

1. Comparative directorate performance in 2004-05 & 2005-06

Targets for both stages in both years were 80%



2. Complaints completed on time at all stages in 2004-05 & 2005-06

a. 2004-05

Targets: stages 1 and 2 - 80%, stage 3* - 90%

Stage 1	Total	On time	%	Stage 2	Total	On time	%	Stage 3*	Total	On time	%	Overall	Total	On time	%
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Council Wide

	1,573	1,177	74.8		181	137	75.7		32	28	87.5		1786	1342	75.1
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Chief Executive's

	104	79	76		14	10	71								
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Education

	36	27	75		14	12	86								
--	----	----	----	--	----	----	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Environment

	589	432	73		51	31	61								
--	-----	-----	----	--	----	----	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Finance

	272	202	74		29	17	59								
--	-----	-----	----	--	----	----	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Housing

	543	417	77		72	67	93								
--	-----	-----	----	--	----	----	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Social Services

	29	20	69		1	0	0								
--	----	----	----	--	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

* The Central Feedback Team investigates all stage 3 complaints

b. 2005-06

Targets: stages 1 and 2 - 80%, stage 3* - 90%

Stage 1	Total	On time	%	Stage 2	Total	On time	%	Stage 3*	Total	On time	%	Overall	Total	On time	%
---------	-------	---------	---	---------	-------	---------	---	----------	-------	---------	---	---------	-------	---------	---

Council Wide

	2003	1595	80%		209	155	74%		34	32	94%		2246	1782	79%
--	------	------	-----	--	-----	-----	-----	--	----	----	-----	--	------	------	-----

Chief Executive's

	156	131	84%		5	3	60%								
--	-----	-----	-----	--	---	---	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Children's

	65	46	71%		7	5	71%								
--	----	----	-----	--	---	---	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Environment

	647	520	80%		81	66	81%								
--	-----	-----	-----	--	----	----	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Finance

	454	353	78%		37	22	59%								
--	-----	-----	-----	--	----	----	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Housing

	633	510	81%		77	59	77%								
--	-----	-----	-----	--	----	----	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Social Services

	48	35	73%		2	0	0%								
--	----	----	-----	--	---	---	----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

* The Central Feedback Team investigates all stage 3 complaints.

(The 34 stage 3 complaints in 2005-06 were from the following directorates: CE's 1, Environment 16, Finance 7, and Housing 10)

Appendix 2: COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

1. Decisions made by the Ombudsman on complaints determined by him

<u>Category</u>	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<i>Cases not subject to formal report:</i>				
Local settlement	38	39	38	25
No maladministration	40	26	31	34
Ombudsman's discretion	24	45	33	23
Outside jurisdiction	26	25	22	23
<i>Cases subject to formal report:</i>				
Maladministration causing injustice	0	1	0	0
Maladministration, no injustice	0	0	0	0
No maladministration	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (excluding prematures*)	128	136	124	105
Premature complaints*	71	64	42	43
TOTAL	199	200	166	148

*The Ombudsman does not normally deal with a complaint unless the Council has first had an opportunity to deal with it. If the Council has not had that opportunity, he will therefore usually refer the matter back as a 'premature complaint' to see if the Council can resolve the matter. The total 'excluding prematures' is of decisions made excluding cases referred back as premature.

2. Complaints received by the Ombudsman

(These include 'prematures' and the service categories are those defined by the Ombudsman.)

	Education	Highways	Housing	Housing Benefits	Local Taxation	Other	Planning	Social Services	Total
2002-03	7	14	99	27	9	19	10	13	198
2003-04	12	15	80	24	15	21	11	23	201
2004-05	10	18	51	16	7	15	13	24	154
2005-06	7	17	48	18	14	15	9	19	147

3. Council response times to the Ombudsman's first enquiries

	Enquiries received	Average days to respond	LGO target*	Council target*
2002-03	74	37.7	21	40
2003-04	79	29.0	21	32
2004-05	66	20.7	21	26
2005-06	45	18.1	28	21

*Targets are calendar days

Appendix 3: THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL LETTER

1. The Annual Letter

21 June 2006

Dr I O'Donovan
Chief Executive
London Borough of Haringey
Civic Centre, PO Box 264
High Road
Wood Green
London N22 4LE

Our ref: DMC/LP
(Please quote our reference when contacting us)

**If telephoning please contact David Connolly on 020 7217 4646
email address: d.connolly@lgo.org.uk**

Dear Dr O'Donovan

Annual Letter 2005/06

I am writing to give you my reflections on the complaints received against your authority and dealt with by my office over the last year. I hope that in reviewing your own performance you will find this letter a useful addition to other information you hold highlighting how people experience or perceive your services.

This year we will publish all our annual letters on our website (www.lgo.org.uk) and share them with the Audit Commission. There is widespread support from authorities for us to do this. We will wait for four weeks after this letter before doing so, to give you an opportunity to consider the letter first. If a letter is found to contain any factual inaccuracy we will reissue it.

In addition to the narrative below there are two attachments which form an integral part of this letter: statistical data covering a three year period and a note to help the interpretation of the statistics.

But before I analyse the statistics, I would like to thank you for the information provided at our meeting in July 2005 and for your written response to last year's annual letter. I was interested to hear of Council's improvements as a result of suggestions made to it in my investigation of complaints. Thank you also for the email information keeping my staff up to date with future significant Council changes in policy and procedures. I note in particular that the Council has set up an ALMO under the name of Homes for Haringey. This will deal with all estate management issues including transfers. The residual housing functions, homelessness, help and advice and housing registration, will remain with the Council.

Complaints received

In my letter to you last year I noted that there had been a substantial decrease in the number of complaints received about your Council. This year there has also been a decrease; 147 complaints as compared to 154 in 2004/5. The areas of reduction this year are in social services complaints, down from 24 to 19, in planning, down from 13 to 9, and education down from 10 to 7. This is against a national increase in complaints in these subject areas; 0.5% for social services, 3.2% for planning complaints and 22.6% in education.

The single largest category of complaint remains housing, about which there were 48 complaints as against 51 last year. There was a spread of complaints within this category, including repairs (12), housing management (10), neighbour nuisance (10) and allocations and transfers (9).

Decisions on complaints

I made 148 decisions this year of which 43 were complaints which I referred back to the Council for investigation under its own complaints procedure. Of the remaining complaints, 23 were outside my remit to investigate and there were 34 complaints where I decided that there was no maladministration.

Reports and local settlements

When we complete an investigation we must issue a report. There is a significant proportion of investigations that do not reach this stage. This is because we settle the complaint during the course of our investigation. We call these decisions "local settlements".

This year, as in the previous year, I did not need to issue any reports against your Council. This is to your credit as it reflects your Council's willingness to accept our findings and to resolve complaints. This year there were 25 local settlements, a decrease from last year when there were 38. I will now refer in more detail to some of the issues which have arisen from these complaints.

Social services

Of the 3 local settlements, one involved the assessment of a freedom pass application; there was confusion by the Council as to what criteria should be used and how it should be applied. The Council agreed to a payment of £250 to the complainant for her distress and agreed to make revisions to the application form.

In another case, my investigation highlighted the importance of carrying out proper checks to ensure that any interim placement, while a child protection investigation is underway, is in the child's best interests. The Council agreed to pay compensation of £2,750.

Planning

The Council's delay in taking enforcement action in respect of unauthorised works by the complainant's neighbour, who was a council tenant, highlighted a lack of clarity about whether responsible for managing such breaches lay with the housing or

planning department. The Council agreed to a procedural review and to pay the complainant £350 compensation.

Highways

There were 5 local settlements in this category. One involved the Council's failure to provide a temporary resident's parking permit, while the Council awaited further information from the complainant, even though the complainant had been a resident for many years. When the complainant continued to park outside his home, he was issued with a number of tickets. The Council agreed to cancel these tickets and to consider further the idea of providing temporary permits.

Another complaint concerned information given in the Notice to Owner letter. The Council warned the resident that if he lost his appeal, the Parking Adjudicator could order him to pay costs. The Council gave further explanation about the limited circumstances in which costs would be awarded on the appeal form which accompanied the Notice. It was felt that the Notice on its own acted as a deterrent to those considering making an appeal. The Council agreed to consider this when revising its Notice letters.

Housing Benefit

There were three local settlements. In one case there was unreasonable delay and poor record keeping by the Fraud Team. In another case the Council agreed to pay £1,050 for its delay in assessing a claim for housing benefit and for its delay in paying the arrears. The complainant was served with a possession order and eviction warrant by her landlord as a result of the Council's delays.

Housing and neighbour nuisance

The Council paid £100 for its 7 month delay in dealing with the complainant's concerns about harassment, and a 5 month delay for dealing with concerns about environmental health issues. Another complaint concerned noise from the early morning collection of commercial waste. The Council agreed to monitor the situation.

A complaint about disrepair which involved a long delay in putting right a damaged roof led to a settlement in which the Council agreed to increase its offer of compensation by £250.

Education

Two complaints involving special educational needs were settled. One concerned the Council's failure to provide services specified in a Statement of Special Educational Needs for a child who attended an out of borough school. The Council paid compensation of £7,000 and agreed to improve its record keeping and liaison with the local PCT over the provision of occupational therapy services, and to revise its procedures for overseeing the provision of services to children in out of borough schools. While the Council has told me that it has taken some action in these areas, I am concerned that progress has been slow since the settlement was agreed in August 2005. I should now welcome an update on the present position and an indication of the timescale for completion.

On another case there was a delay of about 6 months in the Council assessing a child. This led to delay in the case coming before the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, which upheld the complainant's view that the child required a placement at an independent boarding school, where the child had been placed by the parent. Although the Council was initially reluctant to accept fault, it is to your credit that the Council did agree to pay for one term of school fees amounting to £6,300.

Other findings

There were 23 complaints which were closed under the category of Ombudsman's discretion. This is where we have exercised discretion to discontinue an investigation. This can be for a variety of reasons but the most common is that there is insufficient evidence of injustice to the complainant which warrants pursuing the complaint. But sometimes these complaints do raise issues about a council's administrative procedures. For example, one complaint raised a question as to whether it would be possible for housing applicants to view properties in the evening. The Council agreed to consider this when revising its allocations policy.

Another complaint involved management transfers. The Council's procedures were considered inadequate in that they did not give guidance on the factors to be taken into account when making these decisions, or how decisions could be reviewed. The Council agreed to amend its procedures to include such guidance. I should welcome an update on this.

In a case involving the anti social behaviour team, my investigator concluded that officers were not following the Council's procedures. The Council replied that it had amended its practice to include monthly supervision of these officers and that anti social behaviour instructions had been highlighted for review.

Your Council's complaints procedure and handling of complaints

My office referred 43 complaints back to the Council as premature. At 29% of decisions that is slightly above the average for all authorities (27%). I was interested to note that the Council has reduced its timescales at stage 1 and 3 of its procedures and this is to be commended.

During the year I received 7 new complaints from those whose complaints I had earlier referred back to the Council to be dealt with under its complaints procedure. I have decided five of those so far and have not upheld four. The fifth, a local taxation complaint, was decided as a local settlement.

Training in complaint handling

Our training in complaint handling is proving very popular with authorities and we continue to receive very positive feedback from participants. Over the last year we have delivered more than 100 courses from the range of three courses that we now offer as part of our role in promoting good administrative practice.

Effective Complaint Handling was the first course we developed, aimed at staff who deal with complaints as a significant part of their job. Since then we have introduced courses in complaint handling for front line staff and in handling social services complaints.

All courses are presented by an experienced investigator so participants benefit from their knowledge and expertise of complaint handling.

I have enclosed some information on the range of courses available together with contact details for enquiries and bookings.

Liaison with LGO

The average time taken by the Council to respond to first written enquiries on complaints has improved once more and now stands at just over 18 days. This compares with our target response time of 28 days. That is an excellent record for any authority, but particularly so for one of the London boroughs.

My investigators met with two of the Council's officers who visited us in July to provide information on the council's housing allocations policies. I understand that the Council is introducing a new housing allocations policy and I should welcome an update on progress and a copy of the new policy once it is agreed.

We continue to appreciate the hard work and commitment of the staff in the Council's complaints team.

Conclusions

I welcome this opportunity to give you my reflections about the complaints my office has dealt with over the past year. I hope that you find the information and assessment provided useful when seeking improvements to your Council's services. I would again very much welcome any comments you may have on the form and content of the letter.

I would again be happy to consider requests for myself or a senior colleague to visit the Council to present and discuss the letter with councillors or staff, as I did in July 2005. We will do our best to meet the requests within the limits of the resources available to us.

I am also arranging for a copy of this letter and its attachments to be sent to you electronically so that you can distribute it easily within the council and post it on your website should you decide to do this.

Yours sincerely

Tony Redmond

2. The Council's response letter

Mr Tony Redmond
Local Government Ombudsman
10th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Your ref: DMC/LP
Our ref:

Date

Dear Mr Redmond

Annual Letter 2005-06

Thank you for your letter. I am pleased that you found helpful the information we provided at the meeting in July 2005 and subsequently.

I set out below the Council's comments on the points you have raised.

Complaints received

I am naturally pleased that you have again received a smaller number of complaints about Haringey than last year, and in particular for our reduction in your education category where there has been a major increase nationally.

We acknowledge that the largest single category in Haringey is Housing, but are pleased that we continue to see a downward trend. As you are aware, Homes for Haringey, our ALMO, has taken over responsibility for the Council's housing stock. Their complaints procedures mirror the Council's and, like the Council, encourage complaints and effective remedies. They have a dedicated feedback team and have taken the following steps to reduce the number of complaints that escalate beyond stage 1:

- monthly monitoring by senior management of quality of responses including content, tone, completeness of investigation and appropriateness of remedies;
- handling and investigating complaints training for all frontline staff and complaints investigators.
- a learning from complaints survey completed by each investigator after responding - to record how services should be improved to prevent recurrences; results are reviewed quarterly by senior managers and outcomes are incorporated in improvement plans.
- monitoring of agreed remedies to ensure they are actioned and completed within promised timescales

The Social Services department is responsible for the housing functions remaining with the Council. They are currently working closely with Homes for Haringey to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to transfers, which is integral to the allocations policy and also assists with the prevention of homelessness.

The complaints of neighbour nuisance related to temporary accommodation, which covers over 5,000 households. To address the situation, Social Services are working

closely with our Anti Social Behaviour Action Team to ensure staff are better trained and aware of dealing with issues at the initial stages. We now have a written procedure, guidance for staff, and better information for customers on expectations and behaviour while in temporary accommodation. We are also finalising procedures with our Vulnerable Adults Team, in our new Prevention and Options Service. These will permit better risk assessment for all households going into temporary accommodation, and identified support for all households that require it. We are also analysing the types and location of nuisance so we can target potential hotspots and deal with repetitive issues. We are therefore in a stronger position to deal with issues of anti-social behaviour and indeed take action where necessary. We hope these will lead to a decline in complaints.

Since May 2006 we have been working on a new allocation policy, in recognition that our previous policy was not fit for purpose. We are out to consultation at present and will have this completed by September 2006. If agreed by the Council, it will be ready for implementation by October 2006. We will be moving to a full choice based lettings process via Home Connections, the North London choice based lettings scheme by early November 2006. This will offer a transparent and accessible lettings system for all our applicants. We hope to therefore deal more directly with issues around the system and are working to put in place robust monitoring arrangements. This should reduce the number of complaints to you, as customers will be able to access all the information for themselves through the Home Connections website and will be able to follow their bidding process with clear outcomes.

Decisions, reports and local settlements

We are always happy to accept your findings and resolve complaints as quickly as possible when we have been at fault. We are pleased that you again did not need to issue any reports against us, and that the number of local settlements that were necessary also decreased significantly.

Social Services

We have made appropriate amendments to the freedom pass application form and the revised version is now in use.

The case in which you highlighted the importance of carrying out proper child protection checks was some years ago. Since then we have fully implemented the pan London procedures and taken measures to ensure that appropriate checks take place.

Planning

We agreed to conduct a procedural review of enforcement action for unauthorised works. This review has been undertaken and is part of ongoing work to develop improved working arrangements with Homes for Haringey.

Highways

We do issue temporary parking permits for a 4 week period to residents who do not have all the documentation required, but failed to do so in error in the case you refer to. We agreed to review our parking Notice to Owner letters, and have done this after consultation with the Association of London Government. We have concluded that we cannot amend the wording with regard to costs, as you suggested, in view of the

requirements of the legislation. In fact, we recently lost a case at appeal when the Parking Adjudicator ruled that the Notice was insufficiently clear in relation to costs with reference to Paragraph 4 (b) of schedule 6 to the Road Traffic Act 1991. In view of this apparent conflict of opinion, we are writing to you separately to see whether it is possible to achieve a clear view on the wording of Notices.

Housing Benefit

There was one case of delay and poor record keeping by the Fraud Team, and one of delay in assessing entitlement and paying arrears. The Benefits Service has thoroughly reviewed both complaints and concluded that they were avoidable. Revised procedures have been put in place in both benefits administration and fraud identification to eliminate any recurrences.

Housing and neighbour nuisance

In respect of the case of delay in dealing with harassment and environmental issues, the Enforcement Service has reviewed its existing arrangements for covering out of hours noise complaints. It will continue to respond to complaints arising and has increased cover during peak periods in the summer. In addition, proposals for restructuring out of hours arrangements will provide increased resources for programming known problem locations.

We agreed to monitor noise from early morning commercial waste collection. We have received no further noise complaints relating to waste management services in that area, and are confident that the actions put in place to respond to this complaint remain effective.

You referred to a case of a long delay in putting right a damaged roof. Homes for Haringey is introducing a BSI accredited quality management system for responsive repairs now, and will be introducing quality management systems for the whole of Building Services within the next 18 months. It is also reviewing parts of production with a view to outsourcing. It is intended that this will lead to improved quality of work and better value for money, which will permit a greater depth of service in the future.

Education

You asked for an update on progress with the revision of our procedures for provision of services to children in out borough schools. Frequent meetings about this have taken place with the PCT, but to date it has not proved possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome. We are writing to you separately on this matter to seek your assistance in achieving a solution. As you appreciate, the issues involved are of wider than local relevance.

As the establishment of Children's Services is now well advanced nationally, I wonder whether you will be able to refine your classifications and replace Education with Children's Services, including children and families complaints that you currently categorise under Social Services.

Other findings

Social Services are working with Homes for Haringey to address the issue of accompanied property viewings for housing applicants, and hope to be able to offer a comprehensive viewing system in the near future. Within this we are actively looking at the possibility of out of office hours viewings, as you suggested.

In an anti social behaviour (ASB) case, your investigator concluded that officers were not properly following our procedure. The procedure was reviewed in the autumn of 2005, including consultation with the Anti Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT) and Housing staff, to assess how it could be improved. Various suggestions were received and all were adopted. There has recently been a subsequent review in conjunction with the establishment of Homes for Haringey (HfH). Both HfH and the ASBAT have carried out training of all staff involved in ASB matters (including concierge and estate service staff). The first tranche was last year and the second is drawing to an end now. Further sessions will be carried out from time to time as required. All of the ASBAT officers have monthly supervision sessions with their team leaders – this enables them to discuss progress of cases and for the team leaders to give specific instruction on how to proceed in line with our procedure. In addition, officers also meet with the ASB lawyer on all cases that may involve legal action.

Our complaints procedure and the handling of complaints

I note that our proportion of premature cases is slightly above the national average. We are not aware of any particular reason for this, or of any action we might take to address it. We would welcome any suggestions you may be able to offer.

You refer to seven new complaints that you received which you had earlier referred back to us. In one of these, the local taxation case decided as a local settlement, you allowed us four weeks to deal with the matter as we were already aware of it. Unfortunately, we did not receive your email notification of the referral back, so had no opportunity to consider it fully under our procedures. To prevent a recurrence of this situation, I wonder whether your staff would be able to contact us in the future if we have not acknowledged referrals within, say, five working days.

Training in complaint handling

I am aware that the training that you offer is highly regarded. Some of my staff have previously attended some of the courses, and others will wish to do so in the future. We do run a number of our own complaints training courses and modules, so do not need to send significant numbers to your events. However, we may be particularly interested in training on the new statutory procedures for Social Services and Children's Services, when you are ready to offer this, and have contacted your staff about this.

Liaison with you

I am pleased that we have been able to further reduce our response times to your first enquiries and appreciate your kind words on our achievement. We aim to maintain this level in the current year.

I have commented on the progress of our new housing allocations policy in the 'complaints received' section above. We will certainly send you a copy of the new policy as soon as it is available.

Thank you for your appreciation of the commitment of our complaints staff. They are only able to respond to you so effectively, however, because of the support of colleagues in all of our services. The helpfulness and guidance of your own staff is also invaluable to them.

Conclusions

As in previous years, we have found your letter to be most helpful in assisting us to review our performance and improve our services. I hope that this reply adequately responds to the points you have raised.

Thank you for the offer to again meet my staff or councillors. I have discussed this with the Leader of the Council, who would appreciate it if you would meet him and the Executive council members, together with me and the officers on my management board. The Chief Executive of Homes for Haringey is writing to you separately to request you to also meet his Board members and Executive management team.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ita O'Donovan
Chief Executive

**Appendix 4:
WHY PEOPLE COMPLAINED, WHAT THEY WANTED, & HOW THEY
MADE CONTACT (stage 1 complaints)**

1. Issues raised in complaint cases

Nature of Problem	Further info on problem	2004-05		2005-06	
		No.	%	No.	%
Data Protection	Data Protection			4	0.17%
Discrimination	Age			1	0.04%
	Disability			2	0.08%
	Gender	2	0.1 %	1	0.04%
	Race	2	0.1 %	2	0.08%
	Racist incident			1	0.04%
	Religion			1	0.04%
	Employee Behaviour	Employee Behaviour	133	7.8 %	200
NONE (Enquiry Only)	NONE (Enquiry Only)	274	16.0 %	166	7.03%
Policy	Policy	25	1.5 %	30	1.27%
Poor Communication	Insufficient/Wrong Explanation	13	0.8 %	36	1.52 %
	Long wait for meeting/visit	7	0.4 %	5	0.21 %
	No reply to emails	8	0.5 %	19	0.80 %
	No reply to letters	38	2.2 %	57	2.41 %
	Not informed of a decision	19	1.1 %	44	1.86 %
	Other	49	2.9 %	88	3.73 %
	Repeat requests for info	7	0.4 %	26	1.10 %
	Telephones busy/unanswered	15	0.9 %	8	0.34 %
	Unsatisfactory Response	7	0.4 %	30	1.27 %
	Service Access	Physical			8
Service Cost	Service Cost	61	3.6 %	36	1.52 %
Service Delayed	Service Delayed	157	9.2 %	5	0.21 %
Service Inappropriate	Bailiffs	16	0.9 %	19	0.80 %
	Bereavement	1	0.1 %	57	2.41 %
	Other	120	7.0 %	44	1.86 %
Service not provided	Financial Award	15	0.9 %	39	1.65 %
	Other	401	23.4 %	535	22.65 %
	Service incomplete			1	0.04%
Service Quality	Appointment Not Kept	18	1.1 %	74	3.13 %
	Confidentiality	2	0.1 %	5	0.21 %
	Incorrect or misleading advice	19	1.1 %	64	2.71 %
	Lost Documents	13	0.8 %	11	0.47 %
	Other	274	16.0 %	532	22.52 %
	Payment made to wrong a/c	2	0.1 %	1	0.04 %
	Poor standard			2	0.08%
Service Removed	Service Removed	13	0.8 %	22	0.93 %

2. What complainants wanted

Expectations	2004-2005		2005-2006	
	No.	No.	No.	%
Action against employee(s)	69	3 %	70	2 %
A decision explained	419	19 %	555	16 %
An apology	273	12 %	431	13 %
A service provided	743	33%	933	28%
Better customer care	114	5%	249	7%
Compensation	67	3%	56	2%
Improved customer information	30	1%	99	3%
Improved policy	37	2%	98	3%
Improved procedure	199	9%	323	10%
Information provided	197	9%	460	14%
Refund	76	3%	59	2%
Training for employees	20	1%	56	2%

3. How complainants made contact

How received	2004-2005		2005-2006	
	No.	%	No.	%
Complaint Form	293	19%	408	21 %
Email	314	20%	363	18 %
Fax	34	2%	37	2 %
In person	13	1%	14	1 %
Letter	538	35%	619	31 %
Ombudsman Letter	13	1%	21	1 %
Phone	354	23%	468	24%
Web Form			58	3%

Appendix 5: GENDER & ETHNICITY OF COMPLAINANTS

	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	1508		1571		2003	
1. Gender						
Female	817	54.2	720	45.8	979	48.9
Male	596	39.5	524	33.4	709	35.4
Male & Female	30	2.0	24	1.5	43	2.1
Unknown	65	4.3	303	19.3	268	13.4
Did not want to provide					4	0.2
2. Ethnicity						
<i>Asian/ Asian British</i>						
Bangladeshi	7	0.5	2	0.1	6	0.3
East African Asian	1	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1
Indian	3	0.2	10	0.6	9	0.4
Other	6	0.4	7	0.4	10	0.5
Pakistani	3	0.2	3	0.2	3	0.1
<i>Black/black British</i>						
African	81	5.4	61	3.9	83	4.1
Caribbean	87	5.8	85	5.4	124	6.2
Other	3	0.2	4	0.3	12	0.6
<i>Chinese</i>	2	0.1	1	0.1	3	0.1
<i>Mixed</i>						
<i>Other</i>	2	0.1	3	0.2	7	0.3
White & Asian	2	0.1	4	0.3	4	0.2
White & black African	0	0	4	0.3	9	0.4
White & black Caribbean	6	0.4	7	0.4	8	0.4
<i>Other ethnic group</i>	31	2.1	28	1.8	39	1.9
<i>White</i>						
British	116	7.7	136	8.7	234	11.7
Greek-Cypriot	8	0.5	11	0.7	9	0.4
Irish	19	1.3	25	1.6	45	2.2
Kurdish	8	0.5	12	0.8	15	0.7
Other	32	2.1	33	2.1	36	1.8
Turkish	7	0.5	11	0.7	11	0.5
Turkish-Cypriot	4	0.3	9	0.6	14	0.7
<i>Unknown</i>	1080	71.6	1117	71.1	1291	64.5
<i>Did not want to provide</i>					29	1.4