Report for: Corporate Committee 30 January 2018

Item number: 9

Title: Complaints update

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: For information only

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 We have been asked to report to the Corporate Committee as follows:

- an update on complaints performance;
- learning from complaints; and
- the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

For information.

4. Reasons for decision

N/A

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

6.1 The Feedback and Information Governance (FIG) Team are responsible for the complaints, member enquiry and Freedom of Information policy and processes. We reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017 providing details of the complaints and member enquiry process and performance figures and have been asked to share this information with Corporate Committee. An annual review of the Feedback process and performance is conducted each year and shared with the Statutory Officer Group this is attached at ***Appendix 1***. Performance information for the first three quarters of 17/18 is contained in the body of this report below at section 7.

6.2 Every year the Local Government Ombudsman writes to local authorities with details of the complaints that his office received about each authority. This year the the Ombudsman issued a general reminder to all authorities about reporting findings of maladministration. There is a statutory requirement to prepare a formal report to the council on all ombudsman investigations where they found fault/maladministration. This report aims to meet that requirement.

7. Complaints, Member Enquiries, FOIs update April to September 2017

7.1 The table below shows the overall performance from April 2015:

Complaint Type	2015/16 Volume % Replied to on-time	2016/17 Volume % Replied to on-time	2017/18 (first 9 months) Volume % Replied to on-time	Trend
Stage 1 Complaints	1818 83%	1896 89%	1075 86%	
Children's Social Care Complaints	28 54%	16 56%	13 69%	
Adults Social Care Complaints	39 95%	61 100%	42 98%	
Member Enquiries	2665 88%	2765 91%	1753 89%	
FOI Requests	1494 89%	1471 87%	1010 82%	

7.2 Performance to target in all areas except Children's statutory complaints has gone down.

7.3 The upheld rate for Stage 1 complaints in the first three quarters of 17/18 is slightly improved compared to the previous year: 51% compared to 53%. The services that have the highest number of upheld complaints are: Benefits, the contact centre (Customer Services) and Revenues (Council tax). These services have a very high level of customer interaction and are the services that receive the most complaints overall.

7.4 Benefits and Council Tax upheld complaints related mostly to delays in replying to correspondence or assessing claims. These problems were due primarily to a shortage of qualified officers alongside high volumes of correspondence which has led to a backlog. The services have taken measures to address the backlog. All vacancies in Council tax are now filled and officers are focussing on the backlog. Benefits has brought in extra resources to help clear their backlog.

7.5 Contact centre upheld complaints related mainly to: waiting times to get through on the phone, Blue Badge and parking permit applications and rude and unhelpful staff, as they did last year. The service recognises that since the 30%

reduction in staffing numbers in September 2016, the level of service fell below expectations and there can be delays in getting through by phone. Customer Services and Libraries have undertaken a great deal of work to improve performance since then, and now consistently report a reduction in telephone waiting times and face to face queue times.

7.6 We have increased the number of controlled parking zones in Haringey and therefore have experienced a higher volume of requests for permits to our residents. We now actively plan how to tackle the workload within the mailboxes, on a daily basis, and prioritise the requests that are nearing the SLA timeframes.

7.7 Unfortunately, we are in a position where we often need to deliver unwanted information/outcomes to our customers, and are aware that this can result in negative feedback. We do not accept our staff being rude or unhelpful to customers. Poor staff behaviours, whether reported to us by customers or observed during quality monitoring sessions, are addressed by the service management team.

8. Learning from complaints

8.1 First stage complaints are investigated by service officers; it is their responsibility to highlight any learning to their line managers. At Stage 2 and Ombudsman, the Feedback & Information Governance (FIG) Team investigator will highlight any learning points to the Head of Service and Assistant Director. While it is likely that changes are made in response to lessons learned from complaints, these are not captured or evident outside of individual cases. We will therefore be proposing a new process which will encourage services to analyse the feedback gained from complaints, use it for service improvement and enable us to capture lessons learned. As follows:

- FIG will circulate a collection of reports each quarter to the services that receive a significant number of complaints as follows: details and outcomes of all Stage 1 complaints, learning points from all Stage 2 complaints and details of upheld Ombudsman complaints.
- Services to consider these reports at the appropriate senior management meeting within their service.
- Services feedback to FIG any actions, changes or learning that they have incorporated.
- FIG report to SOG quarterly on the learning and actions.

9. Complaints, Member Enquiries and FOIs Next Steps

9.1 The Council has undertaken a review of the processes, systems and team structures led by the Assistant Directors of Shared Service Centre and Customer Services & Libraries to address known issues and identify further

improvements that can be made to raise performance and increase efficiency. The review looked at:

- The existing end-to-end processes for complaints, member enquiries and FOIs, to ensure they are robust and efficient, and focuses on address the enquiry in the more appropriate manner.

- The current administration arrangements including roles and responsibilities for complaints, member enquiries and FOIs – these activities are currently split between two teams in two different services.

- Whether correspondence is being handled through the complaints or member enquiries process when it should not be – for example council tax appeals correspondence, service requests from members and information requests from members.

- Identify specific actions that will reduce the overall level of complaints, member enquires and FOIs, for example, publishing more data online

9.2 The review findings are being analysed and recommendations will be presented to the Council's Senior Leadership Team in January 2018.

9.3 We have identified a series of enhancements to the database used to administer these processes which will make logging cases more efficient and will also enhance the quality of the data used in learning reports.

10. Ombudsman Annual Letter 2016 - 2017

10.1 The Ombudsman expressed concern about Haringey's timeliness in implementing the remedies we agreed:

It is, however, disappointing that on occasions there has been delay in the Council providing the agreed remedy for complaints we have investigated. Any delay adds to the frustration complainants often already feel and can potentially lead to further injustice. I hope the Council will take measures to ensure any agreed remedies are implemented without delay in the year ahead.

10.2 Two of the cases they upheld in 16/17 were specifically about a failure to implement a previously agreed remedy. Both related to Planning complaints. Details can be found in Appendix 3.

10.3 Any remedies agreed with the Ombudsman are discussed with and agreed by the head of the relevant service. On closure of an Ombudsman case where a remedy has been agreed, the Feedback & Information Governance Team (FIG) instruct the service to implement the remedy agreed with the Ombudsman. Following the Ombudsman's comments, the FIG team has adjusted its process to include a requirement to check with the service that the agreed remedy has been implemented.

10.4 The Ombudsman also reminded the council of the requirement to prepare a formal report to the council on all ombudsman investigations where they found fault/maladministration. We will now report this information to Corporate Committee. The frequency of the reports is to be agreed.

10.5 The table below shows the number of enquiries the ombudsman received in 2016 -2017 last year and the outcome. Advice given, incomplete/invalid, and referred back for local resolution are all cases that did not involve the ombudsman investigating the complaint. Cases that are closed after initial enquiries do involve some investigation and input from the council. The upheld and not upheld cases are the ones that proceeded to a full investigation. There were 59 of those cases, which is 29% of the complaints that the Ombudsman received about Haringey council.

Outcomes	Number
Advice given	10
Closed after initial enquiries	47
Incomplete/Invalid	9
Not Upheld	15
Referred back for local resolution	77
Upheld	44
Total	**202**

10.6 Of those that were investigated, including those that were closed after initial enquiries, 42% were upheld. In one of these cases, the Ombudsman issued a formal report. They will issue a report in cases where the authority is not willing to agree with the Ombudsman's recommendations or where the concern is sufficiently serious for the Ombudsman to want to make the findings public. Haringey always tries to agree a settlement with the Ombudsman; it was the latter scenario that led to the Ombudsman issuing a report in this case which involved a delay in a medical assessment for housing priority.

10.7 It is always difficult to match the ombudsman statistics to our own records because the Ombudsman figures are based on the number of complaints they receive within the year. Also, in some cases, the status of the investigation can change (for example from referred back for local resolution to a full investigation); in such cases there might be two Ombudsman decisions relating to only one case on our system.

10.8 Of the 44 upheld cases on the Ombudsman report, we have matched them to 40 records on our system. The Ombudsman upheld cases were about the following services:

SERVICE	No.
Community Housing Services (now Homes For	15

Haringey)	
Housing Demand	1
Housing Needs and Lettings	6
Housing Support and Options	8
Shared Services Centre	**6**
SSC – Benefits	2
SSC-Revenues	4
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	**7**
Children in Care and Placements	7
Environmental Services and Community Safety	**5**
Community Safety	1
Neighbourhood Action	3
Traffic Management	1
Adult Social Services	**4**
Adult Provider Services	1
Integration and Personalisation	3
Planning	**2**
Development Management and Planning Enforcement	2
Libraries and Customer Services	**1**
Customer Services	1

10.9 A summary of the findings and outcomes in each case is at ***Appendix 2***.

10.10 The majority of upheld cases related to Homes for Haringey (HfH), Housing Demand functions. Complaints about housing matters can be considered by the Housing or Local Government Ombudsman. Broadly speaking, complaints about allocating housing would be dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman, complaints relating to housing management are heard by the Housing Ombudsman. Housing Ombudsman decisions are not included in the above figures.

10.11 The number of upheld cases relating to HfH is high, however it should be borne in mind that people tend to pursue complaints about housing matters more tenaciously than they might other service areas because being housed and the nature of that housing is naturally a very high priority for people.

10.12 In the Environmental Services (now Commercial & Operations) area, three complaints were upheld about failure to collect waste/recycling. The service has reorganised its contract monitoring function which will enable rigorous monitoring of any repeat incidents.

10.13 The Ombudsman highlighted concerns about failure to implement remedies promptly, two of the cases (relating to Planning) were specifically about failure to implement a remedy. The service has since has reviewed its processes to ensure that there are no longer delays in implementing Ombudsman decisions.

10.14 It should be noted that in a number of the cases that were upheld, the council was not found to be at fault overall, but there was a peripheral element of fault. For example, in one complaint about the Wireless festival, the complaint about

the festival itself was not upheld but the council had misled sound monitoring information.

10. Update on Local Government Ombudsman findings of Maladministration April-December 2017

10.15 In the first three quarters of 2017 – 2018, there have been 15 cases (out of a total of 59 considered by the Local Government Ombudsman) where the Ombudsman has found maladministration as follows:

Service	Findings of maladministration
Adult Social Services	7
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	1
Commercial & Operations	1
Corporate Governance	1
Homes For Haringey	3
Planning	1
Shared Services Centre	1
Grand Total	**15**

10.16 There were a high number of cases relating to Adults services. Details of the cases are as follows:

Directorate	Service	Summary	LGO Decision
Adult Social Services	Hospital Triage and Community Reablement	It took the Council six weeks to find Mr N a suitable home to meet his needs; concerns about the standard of care in the home Mr N moved to. Because of these issues, complainat asked the Council to pay the £6500 it cost to move Mr N back to Ireland. The Council originally agreed to this. But it later changed it mind and only offered to cover the cost of a flight.	I have upheld the complaint. The Council has offered a remedy and agreed to my further recommendations.

Adult Social Services	Adult Assessment	Visiting mother in care home and treatment received	There was fault in the way a decision was made to restrict Ms B's visiting hours to a nursing home and in the communication and record keeping. The Ombudsmen have recommended a remedy.
Adult Social Services	Adult Provider Services	That in carrying out a review of her mother's care and support needs the Council has failed to take proper account of her need for help with domestic tasks and preparing food for a special diet. She also says the Council has wrongly taken account of her welfare benefits in the needs assessment when this should only be considered as part of the financial assessment	There was fault in the way the Council considered the questions of domestic tasks and food preparation in Ms X's social care assessment and support plan. It gave unclear and contradictory explanations of how it decided these issues. The Council has agreed to review the assessment in these two areas and clearly explain its decisions.
Adult Social Services	Adult Provider Services	Complaint about the changes made to her son's support plan and care package. In particular she is concerned about the change from a live-in carer to a three hour daily visit by care agency staff. She says this provision is not adequate because it does not meet her son's complex needs and puts him at risk.	I have completed the investigation and found fault which caused some injustice to Y. I am satisfied with the action the Council has agreed to take to provide a suitable remedy.
Adult Social Services	Adult Mental Health Services	The Council acted with fault when managing the collection and storage of a vulnerable adult's personal possessions and when considering an application to register for its Shared Lives Scheme.	The Council acted with fault in its management of Mr Y's personal possessions and in considering Mr X's application to register for the Shared Lives Scheme

Adult Social Services	Adult Assessment	The Council failed to carry out her mother's six weeks review within a timely manner	Mrs C complained she felt unable to attend her mother's care review, because the Council failed to make all the changes needed to the document of her mother's previous care assessment in January 2016. As a result the Council involved an advocate, rather than the family, in her mother's care review in January 2017. I found there was fault by the Council.
Adult Social Services	Adult Assessment	Mr F complains that the Council inappropriately reduced Mrs F's personal budget which has resulted in her having unmet needs. Mr F also says that the process followed by the assessor was flawed as it failed to properly take into account Mrs F's dementia and consider information that the family provided.	There is fault in the Council's decision to reduce Mrs S's personal budget. The Council will apologise to Mrs S and Mr Y and reassess Mrs S's needs.
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	Safeguarding QA & Practice Development	The Council has failed to comply with its statutory duty to a young person (Child B). Specifically the Council failed to act in accordance with Section 38 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) which required it to provide accommodation to Child B when the Police had requested this.	The Council failed to comply with its statutory duty to a young person who had been charged for an offence and detained in a Police cell. The Council has agreed to remind its social workers of the Council's legal requirements in these circumstances and to make a small payment to the complainant for his avoidable distress.

Commercial & Operations	Commissioning & Client	Mrs D complains that the bins are repeatedly being returned to the wrong place by the Council's contracted refuse collectors. This causes her inconvenience and creates a nuisance for her and her neighbours.	The Council was at fault when it failed to ensure its contractor returned bins properly to the complainant's property. This caused a nuisance to her. The Council has agreed a remedy to acknowledge this and ensure the service in her street is also improved.
Corporate Governance	Audit & Risk Management	The Council has delayed unreasonably in processing his parents' Right to Buy application. Mr X also complains that officers have not responded to enquiries made by him and his parents' solicitor.	I have completed the investigation and found some fault in the Council's communication with Mr X since the summer of 2016. The Council has agreed to take satisfactory action to provide a remedy.
Homes For Haringey	Housing Operations	Mr X complains that the Council wrongly refused his right to buy application in June 2013 and following a second successful application in 2015 the Council has refused to use the valuation applicable the valuation applicable in 2013.	There was fault by the Council in relying on incorrect information held on its database when it refused Mr B's right to buy application in 2013. This meant Mr B was denied the opportunity to buy his property at an affordable price. The Council has agreed to sell the property to Mr B at its 2013 value.
Homes For Haringey	Housing Operations	HfH sent Mr T a letter, copied to his landlady, accusing him of acts which Mr T says did not occur. The Council has refused to detail or withdraw these accusations.	There was fault in how the Council investigated reports of alleged damage to bins and threatening behaviour towards its staff by Mr X. The Council falsely accused Mr X of threatening behaviour, which was fault causing him a significant personal injustice. The Council has agreed to take the recommended actions. I consider the complaint resolved and have completed my investigation.

Homes For Haringey	Housing Operations	Mr Y, complains the Council has not provided details of the VAT he has paid on garage rentals despite him asking for the information several times.	We will not investigate as the Council has made an assurance to resolve the complaint.
Planning	Development Management and Planning Enforcement	How the council handled a planning application approval.	There is no fault in how the Council granted planning permission. The Council delayed responding to complaints and failed to properly explain its reasoning to Mr B.
Shared Services Centre	Benefits	Mr S complains that: the Council delayed in dealing with his housing benefit claim and two housing benefit appeals. He says it asked him for information it already had and lost confidential information he provided.	The Council is at fault for the confused way it asked Mr X for information. It is at fault for a delay in dealing with Mr X's appeals and complaint. The Council lost copies of information it took about Mr X and his partner.

11. Contribution to strategic outcomes

11.1 This report is a general update on performance and trends, it is not specific to one Strategic Outcome but touches on all of them as it relates to providing an effective service to our residents.

12. Statutory Officers comments

N/A

13. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1: Complaints and Member Enquiries Annual Report 16/17
Appendix 2: Ombudsman Decision Details 16/17

1. Complaints - Background and Summary

1.1 Haringey Council welcomes feedback and complaints and has set challenging targets to respond to 95% of Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days and 80% of Independent Reviews (second stage complaints) within 25 working days.

1.2 The Feedback team, based within Customer Services and Libraries administer complaints at the first stage; the Feedback & Information Governance Team administer and investigate second stage complaints: Independent Reviews.

1.3 The majority of complaints are received electronically through email or the online form. In order to encourage channel-shift hard copy paper forms have been removed from public access points and the direct email/postal address for the complaints team is not publicised.

1.4 There has been a small shift from email to online form in the past year and a decrease in communication by post and phone call:

Method	15/16	16/17
Email	61%	56%
Online form	22%	31%
Letter	12%	9%
Phone Call	5%	4%

2. First Stage Complaints

2.1 In 2016/17 a total of 1,896 Stage 1 complaints were closed, 89% were responded to on time. This was a slight increase on the 2015/17 figures by 4% although still not at the 95% target.

2.2 The following table shows the performance data across 2015/16 and 2016/17:

Complaint Type	2015/16 Volume % Replied to on-time	2016/17 Volume % Replied to on-time
Stage 1 Complaints	1,818 83%	1,896 89%
Children's Social Care Complaints	28 54%	16 56%
Adults Social Care Complaints	39 95%	61 100%

2.3 Children's Social Care complaints performance has improved slightly over the previous year. This is due to a number of factors including a significant reduction in the number of complaints received for this area and a greater effort by the Service to resolve issues informally by meeting with complainants to discuss their concerns before going through the formal process.

2.4 Adults Social Care complaints performance has improved despite a significant increase in the volume of complaints received.

2.5 Where it is accepted that the Authority is at fault in some way the complaint is upheld, 53% of first stage complaints were upheld in 2016/17, a 1% reduction on 2015/16.

There are lessons to be learnt from these cases to ensure that mistakes and errors are not repeated going forward.

2.6 The following table shows the upheld rate across the different service areas. The majority of upheld complaints were for the three council services that receive the most complaints. However, it is noteworthy that in almost 40% of the complaints relating to the Shared Services Centre (which relate to Council Tax and Benefits issues) it was accepted that the service was at fault and the complaint was upheld. The main reason for the complaints was delays in processing claims or responding to correspondence.

Service Area	% of Complaints Upheld
Shared Service Centre	39%
Customer Services and Libraries	25%
Environmental Services and Community Safety	24%
All other Services	4%

2.7 The following table shows the 5 Service Areas that received the most complaints in both 2015/16 and 2016/17, as expected they are also the Service Areas that interact most with residents.

Service Area	No. of Complaints	% of Total Complaints Received
Revenues	363	19%
Customer Services	285	15%
Neighbourhood Action Team*	278	15%
Benefits	239	12%
Traffic Management	199	10%

*This team deals with on street waste and enforcement issues)

2.8 The following table shows the reasons why people submit complaints:

Complaint Reason	%
Poor Standard of Service	50%
Failure to Provide a Service	20%
Inadequate / Inaccurate communication	17%
Employee Behaviour	8%
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Decision	5%

3. Independent Reviews (Second Stage Complaints)

3.1 The Feedback and Information Governance (FIG) Team reviews stage one complaints for both the Council and Homes for Haringey. The following table shows the performance over the past two years;

	2015/16	2016/17
Volume	446	402
% responded to on-time (Target 80%)	85%	84%

3.2 All first stage responses give the complainant details on how to escalate their complaint if the remain dissatisfied, a total of 21% took their complaints to the next stage. Of the 402 investigated a total of 31% were upheld or partially upheld. The following table breaks this information down across Service Areas:

Service Area	No. of IRs	% of total IRs	No. upheld/partly upheld	% of total upheld/partly upheld cases
Homes For Haringey	137	34%	44	36%
Environmental Services and Community Safety	95	24%	32	26%
Shared Services Centre	58	14%	21	17%
Community Housing Services	34	8%	6	5%
Libraries and Customer Services	26	6%	10	8%
Planning	14	3%	4	3%
Children's Services	20	5%	3	2%
Adult Social Services	9	2%	3	2%
Corporate Governance	6	1%	0	0%
Commissioning	2	0%	0	0%
Corporate Property and Major Projects	1	0%	0	0%
Total	402		123	

4. Complaints Next Steps

4.1 We have reviewed how we handle benefit complaints to ensure that issues are addressed through the correct process and that matter that should be dealt with as an appeal or a review are not dealt with through the complaints process. This should result in more clarity for claimants and a more efficient service as officers are not having to deal with the same matter as both a review/appeal and a complaint.

4.2 We will be adopting a similar approach with council tax cases and will review other service areas to see if the same approach can be applied.

4.3 We will be reviewing what we can do to better help services learn from complaints and improve services as a consequence.

4.4 We are reviewing the current split between the Feedback team who process first stage complaints and member enquiries and the FIG team which are responsible for the complaints and member enquiries' policy and procedure. Currently these teams sit in two separate parts of the council but we are considering whether a more coherent and consistent service could be provided if the teams are merged.

5. Member Enquiries

5.1 In 2016/17 a total of 3,042 enquiries were received from Members including enquiries on behalf of customers and residents from Haringey Councillors (74%) and Members of Parliament (26%).

5.2 The target is to respond to 95% of Member Enquiries within 10 working days, in 2016/17 the response rate was below this at 91%.

5.3 The following table shows the performance data across the last three years;

	Number	% Replied to on-time
2016/17	3,042	91%
2015/16	2,665	88%
2014/15	3,501	90%

5.4 The following table shows the breakdown of Member Enquiries received across Service Areas:

Service Area	No. of MEs	% of total MEs received
Environmental Services and Community Safety	1371	45.07%
Shared Services Centre	322	10.59%
Housing Demand	531	17.46%
Planning	228	7.50%
Adult Social Services	120	3.94%
Children's Services	141	4.64%
Libraries and Customer Services	82	2.70%
Regeneration	70	2.30%
Commissioning	59	1.94%
Corporate Property and Major Projects	48	1.58%
Corporate Governance	22	0.72%
Public Health	15	0.49%
Tottenham Programme	14	0.46%
Policy and Business Management	8	0.26%
Finance	5	0.16%
Communications	4	0.13%
Housing and Growth	1	0.03%
Shared Digital (Haringey)	1	0.03%

5.5 The following tables break this information down further for the top 3 Service Areas:

Environmental Services and Community Safety	45%
Traffic Management	21%
Neighbourhood Action	12%
Community Safety	6%
Direct Services	5%
Others	1%

Community Housing Services	17%
Housing Needs	5%
Housing Support and Options	5%
Housing Needs and Lettings	2%
Occupancy Management	2%
Others	3%

Shared Services	11%
Benefits	6%
Revenues	4%
Other	1%

5.6 The following table gives a breakdown of issues raised in the enquiries;

Nature of Enquiry	%
General Information / Service Request	59%
Poor Standard of Service	24%
Failure to Provide a Service	6%
Inadequate / Inaccurate Communication	5%
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Decision	5%

5.7 A total of 59% of Member Enquiries were requests for information or Service Requests – such as requests for a repair or notification of dumped rubbish. Haringey Council has been taking steps to encourage residents to self-serve via apps or through the website as this is the most efficient way to report such matters due to the integration with current operating systems managed by both Homes for Haringey and Veolia (our external Waste Management contractor) rather than raise them via their Councillors.

5.8 Going forward a workshop has been arranged with Councillors for September 2017 to discuss alternative methods for reporting Service Requests, alongside this there will be an information pack that can be shared with residents on the best way to raise these queries.

6. Member Enquiries - Next Steps

6.1 We have been reviewing whether incoming queries from members are being directed through the appropriate channels and have identified that many matters that are service requests (usually requests to clear up or repair something) are put through the formal member enquiries process. This is unnecessarily resource intensive and means that the request takes longer to reach the right person.

6.2 We have been encouraging members to encourage residents to self-serve and to use the reporting facilities online and the Our Haringey app to report common service requests such as to clear dumped rubbish and repair a streetlight.

6.3 We have also been helping members to answer the most commonly raised issues without having to refer to an officer through the member enquiry process. We have produced an information sheet on the subjects that we receive most enquiries about.

6.4 A training session for members has been held and materials will be made available for all members through Fuse.

	Service	Ombudsman Summary	Decision details	Ombudsman Decision	Service Comments, action taken, lessons learned
Adult Social Services	Integration and Personalisation	Mrs C complained about several issues, mainly related to the way the Council had supported her mother since she moved into residential care.	there was fault in relation to some of the issues Mrs C complained about. The Council has accepted my recommendations and I have therefore closed the complaint	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	There were a number of complaints from a family member, the aspect that was upheld related to the lack of a formal review for the service user who was residing in a care home. The service user had capacity and had made a number of decisions about their care in discussion with workers from the council. The council agreed that a formal review should have taken place regardless of any other contact with adult services. With the completion of phase 1 of adults service redesign there is now a review team responsible for ensuring 100% of reviews take place.
Adult Social Services	Integration and Personalisation	Complaint about the Council's handling of a needs assessment.	There was fault through the Council's delay in assessing Miss A's needs. But, this did not cause her significant injustice. The assessment did not identify services she might have otherwise received earlier. The Council was not at fault in its responses to Miss A's requests for assistance in finding alternative accommodation.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The case was allocated for a review in Feb 2016, but did not take place until March 2016. Despite starting the process of engaging the services of an interpreter on 17th February 2016, there was a delay of 1 month which was due to the availability of a Bulgarian interpreter and that of the client. It is possible that this may occur in the future as the assessment could not have gone forward without an interpreter, however, the service now has in place performance targets to complete assessments within 28 days of accepting the referral and exceptions to this are raised at performance callover with the managers to provide a rationale and monitor the performance of individual staff.

Adult Social Services	Integration and Personalisation	Delays in responding to complainants enquiries, delay of five months to carry out a review of her needs, delay in being allocated a social worker, and her care provider was changed by the council without discussing with her first.	Ms C complained to us about the way in which the Council dealt with her request for a care review. I have upheld Ms C's complaint.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The complaint involved dissatisfaction with the way the Council dealt with a request for a review (in that she was not kept fully informed of when a review would take place) and the change of a care provider by the brokerage service without informing the client. Staff have been informed of need to inform clients of the timescales and if there is a delay to inform the client and give an update on when the review will be undertaken. The reviewing care manager was also not aware of the provider change and as such did not inform the client either. The brokerage team are fully briefed on the need to inform the service and or the service user of any changes and the rationale for the change before taking any action. The newly formed review team has a focussed and planned approach to reviewing all clients with a care package that will mitigate against similar problems in the future.
Adult Social Services	Adult Provider Services	The Council has dealt with him unfairly in relation to his claim for a backdated reduction in his late mother's contribution to care fees. He had asked the Council to take account of the full extent of the care she received and her Disability Related Expenditure (DRE).	I have discontinued my investigation because Mr X's complaint has been resolved and there is no need for me to pursue it further. It is unlikely further investigation could achieve a better outcome for him.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The complaint was that the Council dealt with Mr X unfairly in regards to a claim for backdated reduction in fees of his late mother. The substance of the complaint was that the Councils DRE formula was unfair to his mother. This was an ongoing dispute around unpaid invoices and debt collection, efforts were made via legal to resolve in 2015 but had failed. A settlement was recently agreed by the Council and Mr X's solicitors. The learning is that in pursuing debt collection there is a need to ensure that the systems used are fully tested and do not unfairly disadvantage an individual; in considering debt collection full consideration needs to be given to what income is considered as relevant to be taken into account.

Children's Services	Children's Social Care	The Council failed to provide a satisfactory response to the complaint he made under the statutory children's social care complaints procedure. The complaint was about the way the Council dealt with him in relation to a Looked after Child who was placed in the children's home he runs.	The Council has taken suitable action in response to the findings of the investigation of his complaint and agreed to remedy some further faults found. If Mr X wants to make a financial claim against the Council, he should pursue the matter through the courts rather than the Ombudsman.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	We have taken steps to ensure that there is an attendance sheet at LAC reviews and to improve the accuracy of the recording of LAC reviews by IROs.
Children's Services	Children's Social Care	Complaint is that her son, who has special educational needs, has been placed in a special school although she would prefer him to be in mainstream. She removed him from one school because she believed it was unsuitable. Child now attends another School but his statement has not been amended to name that school. The delay in doing so has prevented her from appealing to SEND. Also that no suitable alternative provision was available for child between January and June 2016.	The Council has delayed in amending the statement of special educational needs of the complaint's son. It should have done so when he changed schools. There is no evidence the fault has caused an injustice.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The delay in amending the SEN statement was because the council were waiting for the school to meet with the parent to review the placement. The ombudsman took the view that we should have amended anyway, and not tried to mediate with the parent in the meantime, as this then left us vulnerable to challenge as the child was in a school which was not formally named. The ombudsman did not find that any injustice had occurred however.

Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	Children in Care and Placements	The Council had assessed the complainants as a possible foster to adopt match for two LAC, however this was withdrawn at a late stage in the proceedings.	The Council reached an ill-informed and hasty decision when deciding to end its plan to place two vulnerable children for adoption with the complainants. This has caused avoidable distress and frustration to the complainants. The Council has agreed a remedy. I am therefore closing the complaint.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The incoming Head of Service investigated this complaint and identified a number of failings by CiC and by Fostering & Adoption. Given the opportunity to have a sibling group of 4 harder to place children the service did not look closely enough at the fostering agency statement of purpose which on legal advice was advised was not compliant with the Council Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy. Council Officers gave the two sets of prospective carers a premature & inappropriate expectation that the adoption would proceed. This was before any formal adoption matching meeting had been convened. On this basis the carers made plans & took practical steps in anticipation of the children being placed. The match was never formally approved and on further reflection was decided that it was not an appropriate match. The Council apologised for their actions. The Head of Service met with the managers involved and directed that with all new agencies their statement of purpose and Ofsted reports are checked to see if they are compliant with Council policies.
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	Children in Care and Placements	complains that the Council removed foster children in her care without following the proper procedures for such decisions. This caused her avoidable distress and subsequent difficulties	The Council delayed in agreeing to the complainant's request for a Stage 2 investigation under the statutory Children Act 1989 complaints procedures. However, the Council will now investigate in accordance with the Children Act procedures. The Ombudsman is satisfied that this resolves the complaint.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The Council did not agree that this complaint fell under the statutory Children Act procedures. We agreed to investigate this complaint at the second stage of those procedures to resolve the case with the Ombudsman. However we will continue to scrutinise with great care whether a case falls within those procedures and make our case if we think it does not as those procedures are complex, time consuming and resource intensive.

Children's Services - Safeguarding	Children in Care and Placements	The Council's decision to move two foster children was made without proper consideration of all the facts and without sufficient evidence to support the decision.	The Council failed to take into account all the relevant facts or follow due process when deciding to move two foster children who had been in the complainant's care for five years.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	There is a need for better communication with professionals when there is a plan for children to move placements, particularly with schools, the foster carers, their agency /SSW, and the IRO with a clear record of decision making detailed on the case file.
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	Children in Care and Placements	that the Council has provided contradictory reasons as to why Mr D could not remain with his previous foster carers, post 18, under a Staying Put Agreement and that the Council is unreasonably refusing to arrange such an agreement.	The Council had not shown how it weighed in the balance all the necessary factors when refusing the complainant's request for a 'staying put' agreement with his current carers and it delayed in making the decision. The Council has now provided a more detailed explanation and agreed a small payment to the complainant for his avoidable distress caused by its faults.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	One of the LaC nurses made a referral to the Haringey LADO about comments made by the young person about the quality of care he was receiving from a Haringey Foster Carer. The LADO upheld the concerns and the foster carers were de-registered for standards of care concerns. On the basis of this the former Head of Service decided that a Staying Put arrangement could not be supported. Unfortunately this was not sufficiently well explained to the young person or the reasons recorded on the file. The service disagrees with the finding that it was unreasonable not to continue the arrangement as it would have been unprofessional to support a young person with carers who were eventually deregistered due to the poor quality of their care.
Community Housing Services	Housing Needs and Lettings	The Council provided unsuitable interim accommodation for the family. As a result, they could not safely use bathroom and cooking facilities because they were shared and involved the mother leaving her youngest child unattended; She was not able to meet her younger son's medical needs properly; her daughter was the victim of an apparent attempted abduction; and the family suffered anxiety.	There were some faults in the Council's consideration of temporary accommodation it gave when the complainant and her family were homeless. These faults included avoidable uncertainty about whether matters might have been better for her family.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	This complaint relates to a single mother being placed into Northumberland Park hostel and having to use shared facilities. We have since the complaint developed our own hostels which are solely for families and have been developed to cater for their needs. Though Northumberland Park had been assessed as suitable for S188 placements we no longer use this or other private facilities for families. The Lettings Team has been restructured since the complaint with the aim to offer a more personalised and customer focused service.

Community Housing Services	Housing Needs and Lettings	The Council has not taken effective action to investigate and respond to complaints about noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour caused by a homeless household whom the Council placed in temporary accommodation in the top floor flat of the complainants building.	There was fault in the way the Council investigated Mrs X's complaints about noise and anti-social behaviour. This caused her injustice. The Council has agreed to provide a suitable remedy.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	This compliant relates to the response a neighbour of a Temporary Accommodation customer received from the service regards the investigation and remedying of a complaint regarding noise and Anti-Social Behaviour. The Service has since the complaint been restructured removing some of the previous duties of officers to give greater emphasis to managing any Anti-Social behaviour incidents by our customers. We have reviewed our internal processes and working practices to increase the input of complainants into decision making and actions taken in resolving complaints.
Community Housing Services	Housing Needs and Lettings	The Council has not been correctly assessed for priority housing based on medical needs. Also, the Council priorities those in temporary accommodation over those in permanent but unsuitable accommodation.	Assessment for housing priority: The Council took five months to assess the medical information, then delayed in giving Mrs K Band A priority for a further three months. We consider it delayed unnecessarily for six months. This is fault.	Report issued - Upheld, Maladmin & Injustice	This complaint relates to delays in assessing medical information and this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure. There have been no delays since this date and we are currently doing all medical assessments within 28 days. The independent medical advisor was previously visiting the offices once a month to carry out medical assessments but we have changed this process and the assessments are done remotely on a rolling basis to ensure that assessments are undertaken in a timely manner.
Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	The Council did not: send her a written homeless decision in January 2014 and so she was unable to appeal the decision, obtain all relevant information before making its homeless decision; arrange storage for her belongings when she was evicted in January 2014. Also the Council's social services department placed her in unsuitable accommodation after she was evicted.	There was 2-3 months delay when the Council considered a homeless application. Miss S was not disadvantaged by this and so no remedy is proposed. Other parts of the complaint about her homeless applications were not upheld.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	It is recognised that the previous structure in Housing Demand was not as transparent to Applicants as it needed to be to enable them to understand when their case was being managed under a non-statutory part of the service. The previous Housing Options Team were the initial team who worked with Applicants to prevent homelessness and where this was not possible, the case was transferred to the Homelessness Team. This issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure, Housing Demand merged these two teams to create a single Housing Solutions Team who have responsibility for both prevention and statutory assessment.

Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	the Council failed to deal properly with Mr W's housing application(s) since February 2014.	There was delay by the Council in making inquiries into Mr X's homelessness. But there can be no certainty the outcome would have been significantly different if the Council had reached a decision earlier, before his sons' 18th birthday.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	As above, this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure which created a single Housing Solutions Team who have responsibility for both prevention and statutory assessment. The delay in this case was also compounded by the caseworker going on long term absence. There is now a system in place to ensure that cases are reassigned to other caseworkers if sickness absence exceeds two weeks (or earlier if there is some urgency in the case).
Community Housing	Housing Support and Options	Mr X, complains the Council failed to deal properly with his housing application(s) after February 2014.	There was fault by the Council that caused injustice to Mr X. I uphold his complaint. I am satisfied with the actions the Council has agreed, and have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	no comment provided
Community Housing Services	Housing Needs and Lettings	Mr X, complains the Council did not properly vet a housing applicant, Ms Y, before referring her to him as a tenant. It referred the tenant through its Home Finder Scheme. He complains the Council has not agreed to compensate him for rent owed, and damage to his property, by the tenant.	The Council failed to carry out former tenancy checks as fully as it should on a tenant, before referring her to Mr X. But I do not find this caused the losses Mr X incurred when the tenant failed to pay her full rent.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The Council carries out regular training courses for people on the waiting list for its private rented sector offer or Homefinder option. The training highlights the importance of rent payment and the repercussions for not doing so. The Council does not vet its tenants before referring them to the Private Rented Sector and has no intention of doing so because we are a social landlord. The Council must be seen as giving everyone a fair chance in both the private and social housing sector.
Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	The Council did not properly investigate his circumstances before twice deciding it had no duty to accommodate him and it failed to offer temporary accommodation.	The complaint will not be pursued further as an appropriate remedy has been agreed.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	With the implementation of the new service, administrative processes are now more streamlined reducing duplication and the need for households to be passed between teams. I note the Ombudsman's decision, for this case, is the complaint will not be pursed as a remedy was agreed.

Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	Not helped with housing following eviction	The complaint is about how the Council dealt with the complainant when he told it his landlord was about to evict him. My view is the Council should have made a formal written decision on a homelessness application. To not do so was fault. The Council has agreed to my recommended remedy.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	It is recognised that the previous structure in Housing Demand was not as transparent to Applicants as it needed to be to enable them to understand when their case was being managed under a non-statutory part of the service. The previous Vulnerable Adults Team were the initial team who worked with single Applicants to access supported housing and where this wasn't possible, the case was transferred to the Homelessness Team. This issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure, the Vulnerable Adults Team was deleted and the functions moved to the Housing Solutions Team who have responsibility for both prevention and statutory assessment and the Assessment & Referral Team.
Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	· The Council delayed taking a homeless application from her. · The Council says, after the September 2015 interview, it wrote to her on 6 October. But she did not receive this letter. · On 26 April she gave the Council medical evidence from her GP and asked it to review her housing register application. But the Council took no action about this.	I uphold the complaint. I have made recommendations to which the Council has agreed. So I have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	As above, this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure which created a single Housing Solutions Team who have responsibility for both prevention and statutory assessment.

Community Housing Services	Housing Support and Options	the Council delayed in accepting and deciding her homelessness application, provided unsuitable interim accommodation pending the decision on her homelessness application, and failed to take appropriate action in response to her complaints about disrepair and inadequate heating at her interim accommodation	There was fault by the Council that caused injustice to Miss X. I uphold her complaint. I am satisfied with the actions the Council has agreed and have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Learning points were in relation to a suitability review that wasn't completed and delay in offering interim accommodation. In relation to the second point, as above, this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure which created a single Housing Solutions Team who have responsibility for both prevention and statutory assessment.
Environmental Services and Community Safety	Neighbourhood Action	Mr X alleges the Council is still failing to empty his shared block refuse collection bins on a weekly basis.	The Council is at fault as its contractor failed to collect refuse from Mr X's property on a number of occasions. Mr X has also reported further missed collections. As a result Mr X experienced overflowing rubbish in the bin stores. The Council should take action to remedy Mr X's complaint as recommended.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	In addition to resolving the specific case the Council has reorganised its contract monitoring function which will enable rigorous monitoring of any repeat incidents
Environmental Services and Community Safety	Neighbourhood Action	He consistently had problems with missed refuse and recycling collections between March 2014 and May 2015. Mr R does not feel the Council has done enough to resolve the issues, and to recognise the impact on him and the public if they have to keep reporting problems. Mr R feels the Council's complaints procedure is not robust and adds to the frustration.	Mr R experienced poor service because of recurring problems with missed bin collections and poor complaints responses by the Council and its waste collection contractor.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	In addition to resolving the specific case the Council has reorganised its contract monitoring function which will enable rigorous monitoring of any repeat incidents

Environmental Services and	Neighbourhood Action	The Council is persistently failing to collect general refuse from her registered care home.	The Council's contractor has failed to collect the complainant's general refuse and recycling on several occasions and has failed to resolve her complaints about the matter. The action the Council has agreed to take is sufficient to remedy the complainant's injustice.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	In addition to resolving the specific case the Council has reorganised its contract monitoring function which will enable rigorous monitoring of any repeat incidents. Furthermore the Council is consulting residents in the road to ensure that a wheeled bin collection is the most appropriate for that road.
Environmental Services and Community Safety	Traffic Management	The Council issued him with a parking ticket for stopping in a bus lane. The Council turned down his representation and then sent him incorrect information about what the adjudicator could consider.	I have found the Council was at fault when it provided Dr X with conflicting information about his right to appeal a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	We now have automated processes in place when sending out appeal information so this error, which was an isolated human error, could not be repeated.

Environmental Services and Community Safety	Community Safety	Ms X complains about the Council's decision to grant a licence to Live Nation to host the Wireless Festival. She also complains about the Council's actions while the festival has taken place. She says that: 1. The noise levels are too high during the festival. 2. The Council has not taken enough action to address the racist and homophobic language by the performers. 3. The Council has not done enough to tackle the anti-social behaviour associated with the festival such as people urinating and vomiting in the street, drug use and illegal raves in the park.	There is no fault in the way the Council has granted permission to hold outdoor events in the park. The Council has systems in place to monitor the noise and the effects of the events and to address any adverse effects. The Council has lost noise monitoring data relating to Ms B's property which may have given more information about the noise Ms B experiences and I have recommended a remedy.	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The overall complaint about the wireless festival was not upheld. The fault was that we had lost the monitoring data. The complainant has had visits carried out to her property and to the nearest noise monitoring point when the large events have taken place in the park subsequently. The Council Officers and contracted noise officers have not recorded any incidents of noise breaches in relation to this complainant address. The complainant is leafleted and provided with information on how to log and register any issues she may have arising from the large concerts and does exercise her right to do so each year.

Homes For Haringey	Housing Support and Options	The Council has failed to provide her with adequate housing support and move her from overcrowded accommodation.	The Council was at fault when it said it would move Ms B from band A to band C if it removed her internal floor restrictions. This has caused uncertainty whether the Council would have made a different decision about Ms B's medical priority.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	There was a delay in assessing medical information and this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure. There have been no delays since this date and we are currently doing all medical assessments within 28 days. The independent medical advisor was previously visiting the offices once a month to carry out medical assessments but we have changed this process and the assessments are done remotely on a rolling basis to ensure that assessments are undertaken in a timely manner. The information given to the Applicant in regard to how her medical assessment would impact on her housing register case was not clear. The officer involved in medical notifications has been reminded of the need to respond to enquiries in a timely manner and to be conscious of the need to avoid ambiguity in letters.

Homes For Haringey	Housing Support and Options	way the Council responded to his reports of disrepair in his housing association flat.	Fault by the Council in how it responded to complaints of damp and disrepair in the complainant's housing association property. The Council did not keep proper records of its contact with the housing association, or with Mr B, did not reply to a letter from the complainant's solicitor and cannot provide evidence to show how it was satisfied with the action the housing association was taking.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Since being involved with this particular complaint we have revised our internal policy for dealing with RSL properties. Previously we would always refer the Registered Social Landolord (RSL) client back to their RSL for intervention and then advise them to go to the ombudsman. We now however intervene with an inspection if required if a RSL tenant has been through stage 1 of the complaints procedure and is still not satisfied with the RSL response. We still refer people back to their RSL to ensure that they have gone through all the appropriate complaints procedure in order to be able to go to the Housing Ombudsman regardless of our intervention. Staff have also been reminded of the importance of keeping file notes even though the case may not be one that we would pursue and to inform and update in writing whenever possible when closing a case.
Homes For Haringey	Housing Needs and Lettings	the Council failed to take sufficient action to deal with infestations of mice and cockroaches.	The Council is at fault as it did not take sufficient action to ensure the provider of Miss X's temporary accommodation properly dealt with an infestation of pests and it delayed its consideration of whether to move Miss X. Miss X was caused distress and uncertainty which the Council should remedy	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	We have now instructed our TA Suppliers to deal with infestation cases more swiftly and update the Council of their actions. In cases where the infestation affects other flats, there should be a contingency set out by the Supplier to either get the entire block treated or move the tenant immediately.

Homes For Haringey	Housing Demand	1. The Council's children's and homeless services failed to act in line with legal duties and council policy in dealing with Ms G and her children 2. The housing benefit service failed to respond to a request for a review in late 2013. 3. There were failures in complaint handling, in particular an officer who responded to the complaint had been involved with the case.	The Council told Ms Z about her housing priority band and how to apply for housing without fault. It delayed assessing her medical information but she did not suffer injustice as her housing priority did not change. The Council delayed making a previously agreed payment to Ms Z for nine months causing her financial hardship.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The initial complaint relates to delays in assessing medical information and this issue was addressed in the Sept 2016 restructure. There have been no delays since this date and we are currently doing all medical assessments within 28 days. The independent medical advisor was previously visiting the offices once a month to carry out medical assessments but we have changed this process and the assessments are done remotely on a rolling basis to ensure that assessments are undertaken in a timely manner. It was unfortunate that the complaint was responded to by an officer who had been involved in the case, however in this instance, multiple officers and managers had been involved due to the complexity. If this occurs again, we will ask that another Head of Service investigates the complaint. The third strand of the complaint relates to delay in compensation payment. HfH Feedback Team have now taken on responsibility for the payment and oversight of compensation payments for Housing Demand so this will not occur in the future.

Libraries and Customer Services	Customer Services	Mr X complains that he sought a change to his parking permit, due to a change in his car. But this took over two months for the Council to process. During this time he says he had to pay for parking by using visitor parking permits he had bought for use by guests. He also complains about the number of telephone calls and emails he had to make to resolve the issue.	The complaint is about a delay in changing a parking permit and the time, trouble and expense this caused the complainant. My view is there is evidence of fault. But there is not enough unremedied injustice to warrant an additional remedy.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Our processes have been reviewed and also the overall demand and backlog have reduced significantly from the level that it was at the time this application was received.
Planning	Development Management and Planning Enforcement	Complaint arises from a previous complaint: refuse to withdraw the planning permission as agreed.	The Council belatedly completed the review of its planning decision as agreed in an earlier Ombudsman decision apart from a delay for which it has apologised	Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	The service has reviewed its processes to ensure that there are no longer delays in implementing Ombudsman decisions.
Planning	Development Management and Planning Enforcement	The Council has failed to complete all parts of the agreed remedy following a previous Ombudsman investigation. In particular Mrs Y says the Council has not expedited, as far as possible, the implementation of an outdoor management plan for a nearby school.	The Council did not complete all parts of the agreed remedy following the Ombudsman's previous investigation, because it failed to expedite the implementation of an outdoor management plan. This was needed in order to discharge a planning condition. The applicant has now submitted the required information and the Council is consulting on the matter before it decides whether to discharge the condition.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The service has reviewed its processes to ensure that there are no longer delays in implementing Ombudsman decisions.

Shared Services Centre	SSC-Revenues	The Council wrongly decided to refund previous council tax payments to her mother, failed to respond to her repayment offers, or put forward an affordable repayment plan, unreasonably pursued enforcement action, did not respond properly to her correspondence, unreasonably threatened to enforce a charging order, did not take proper account of her disability.	I have found fault in the way the Council dealt with recovery of the debt from Miss X. It should have used its discretion to make a special arrangement with her from the outset. I am satisfied with the action the Council has agreed to take to remedy the injustice to Miss X and so I have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Instructions have been given to staff to ensure they are aware that an arrangement should be made at any point of recovery and it is not necessary to issue a summons/liability order before making an arrangement
Shared Services Centre	SSC-Revenues	The Council unfairly sought a liability order when the complainant had offered to repay a council tax benefit and council tax support overpayment.	There was fault by the Council in failing to consider a payment arrangement for council tax arrears until after it issued a summons.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Instructions have been given to staff to ensure they are aware that an arrangement should be made at any point of recovery and it is not necessary to issue a summons/liability order before making an arrangement

Shared Services Centre	SSC-Revenues	the Council have not refunded him for Council Tax he should not have had to pay.	Mr X has disputed his liability for council tax since 2012. Disputes over liability are a matter for the Valuation Tribunal. The Council has not directed Mr X to the Tribunal leading to a lengthy dispute and enforcement action. The Council is at fault. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mr X and tell him of his right to take the matter to the Valuation Tribunal. It will also place all enforcement action on hold until the result of the Tribunal and refund Mr X all legal and enforcement costs he has incurred since 2012.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	Staff have been reminded to advise of the right to go to the Valuation Tribunal.

Shared Services Centre	SSC- Revenues	Been billed for CT arrears and he believes his tenants were responsible for the CT from 14 - 20 years ago.	The Council's ten year delay in taking action to recover council tax debts meant Mr X no longer had any realistic chance to provide evidence about the tenants he had living in Property A during three periods during 1997 to 2002. The Council has agreed to repay Mr X the council tax he paid in 2015 for Property A for those three periods. This remedies the injustice caused by its fault.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	provided further details on the case for comments
Shared Services Centre	SSC - Benefits	The Council delayed making a decision on her HB claim. This has left her with a threat of homelessness.	I uphold the complaint. The Council has agreed to my recommendations, so I have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The service has employed more staff in order to help work through the backlog

Shared Services Centre	SSC - Benefits	the Council has issued her a housing benefit overpayment notice because she was sharing a kitchen. She disputes this and says she was not sharing a kitchen, and she was entitled to the benefit she received	There was fault by the Council which caused Ms B an injustice. However, the Council has already taken suitable action to remedy that injustice, so I have completed my investigation.	Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	The officer who dealt with this claim has been reminded about the rules regarding Local Housing Allowance when assessing claims