

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Annual Report 2021-2022

Report number:	PAS/WS/22/015	
Report to and date(s):	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	29 September 2022
Cabinet member:	Councillor Carol Bull Portfolio Holder for Governance Email: carol.bull@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
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Decisions Plan: This item is not included in the decisions plan.

Wards impacted: No specific wards are impacted by this report

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee notes the content of this report.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is appointed by the Government to resolve complaints which cannot be resolved by the Council itself. Each year, it considers thousands of complaints from members of the public about the way that councils operate and seeks to independently and fairly adjudicate on them, reaching a final conclusion.
- 1.2 Before the LGSCO will consider a complaint, the complainant must first seek to exhaust the Council's own complaints process. The intention being to resolve complaints before they escalate and consider any learning across services throughout the process.
- 1.3 As such, the LGSCO will only consider the small number of cases where the complainant feels it necessary, having exhausted the Council's own procedures (even where the complaint has been upheld), to progress the matter further. By their nature, such cases can be very complicated, and have arisen over a long period of time.
- 1.4 Each year, the LGSCO issues an annual report on its activity, which maps the volume and nature of complaints it has received across the Country. This is available on the LGO's website. Each Council is also issued with its own performance report.
- 1.5 This report to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee seeks to inform members of the outcome of the complaints considered by the Council and the LGSCO about West Suffolk Council for the period 2021-2022.

2. Outcome of complaints considered by LGSCO

- 2.1 When the LGSCO receives a complaint, they will first assess it against their criteria to ensure that it is valid, that the complainant has exhausted the Council's own complaints process and that there is public interest in investigating the matter further.
- 2.2 If the LGSCO decides to investigate a complaint further, they will either uphold the complaint or not uphold it. They may agree with any remedial action taken by the Council or ask the Council to undertake further actions. The LGSCO's annual report (Appendix 1) sets out the decisions made against complaints made against West Suffolk Council:

Advice given	0
Referred back for local resolution	4
Closed after initial enquiries	12
Not upheld	0

Upheld	0
Total	16

- 2.3 Of the 16 complaints considered by the LGSCO none progressed to further investigation.

3. Implications arising from the proposals

- 3.1 Legal Compliance

The Monitoring Officer is required to report to Council where the LGSCO makes a significant adverse finding (public interest report). No such cases have arisen in the period 2021-2022.

4. Appendices referenced in this report

- 4.1 Appendix 1: The LGSO annual review letter 2022.

5. Background documents associated with this report

- 5.1 Further details together with an interactive map can be found at [Your council's performance \(lgo.org.uk\)](https://lgo.org.uk)