

EXTERNAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL OMBUDSMAN AND THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman provides a free independent and impartial service to the public. They provide an initial point of contact for those wishing to make a complaint through a telephone contact centre in Coventry, or if a person remains dissatisfied following the examination of a particular matter by the Council. Protocols are in place between the Council and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman that provide for the majority of cases to be considered through the Council's own procedures before any investigation is considered by their office.

Leaflets and information about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are available at Council offices and all those who exhaust the Council's and the Gateshead Housing Company's procedures (where appropriate) are provided with the leaflet. The day to day management of the relationship with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is undertaken by a dedicated officer who acts on behalf of the Chief Executive in this respect.

During the year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigated twenty four complaints. Of these, thirteen were closed after initial enquiries and four were not upheld. A summary of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's findings and the actions taken by the Council for each of the seven cases upheld partially or fully is detailed below:-

Case	Ombudsman's Decision	Remedy
1.	Some evidence of fault causing injustice following a complaint about works completed as part of a Disabled Facilities Grant for their disabled son	The Council agreed to discuss their overnight care needs, pay £250 for failing to discuss direct payments and to remind officers of the importance of discussing direct payments with service users/families
2.	The Council refused to accept an application for a taxi driver's licence based on a blanket application of its policy without taking account of individual circumstances	The Council apologised to the complainant and agreed to reconsider his application
3.	The Council's assessment for adaptations was faulty	The Council apologised to the complainant and arranged a new assessment
4.	There was fault in how the Council had handled this complaint	The Council had responded to the complainant's concerns and apologised

5.	The Council was not a fault for the service provided to the complainant's father but had wrongly stated that the complainant had signed an agreement to assessment form	The Council apologised to the complainant
6.	The Council did not follow the correct Care Call procedure	The Council apologised to the complainant and had taken suitable action to remedy it
7.	The Council did not properly consider a request for home to school transport for a fostered child	The Ombudsman's final remedies are awaited

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review is available on their website at www.lgo.org.uk.

The Housing Ombudsman

From 1 April 2013, the Localism Act 2011 extended the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman to cover all social landlords, including Councils. The Housing Ombudsman is able to consider housing complaints in so far as they relate to the provision or management of housing. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman continues to investigate complaints about allocations and the lettings policy.

During 2017/18, the Council was contacted by the Housing Ombudsman in respect of four cases. Of these:

- Three cases had not exhausted the Housing Company's complaints procedure.
- One case, the Housing Ombudsman determined that there was service failure that the complainant's reports of anti-social behaviour had not been dealt with in accordance with the Housing Company's anti-social behaviour procedure.