

Appendix 7 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO)

1. This section of the report provides information on cases that the Ombudsman has made decisions on in the period.
2. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman deals with enquiries and complaints that are related to all council services. This includes non-landlord housing issues such as housing allocation, homelessness, and temporary accommodation, which are categorised in LGSCO reports as "Housing." The Housing Ombudsman deals with enquiries and complaints related to services provided by the Council as a social landlord, e.g., repairs to properties.
3. The LGSCO and HO produce annual performance reports, and the data, feedback, recommendations, and remedies made in these are reviewed by the Central Complaints team, who ensure the relevant service areas act on them in a timely manner.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

4. The LGSCO publishes an annual review of Local Government Complaints. The 2024/2025 report shows a rising number of complaints received and a modest increase in the number of complaints LGSCO upheld, from 16 to 18. The highest proportion of findings of issues in complaints is related to Allocations.
5. The LGSCO issued two public interest reports concerning Camden Council's administration of COVID-19 business grants and the failure to promptly implement a recommendation to issue an apology to a complainant.

[Public report results - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Data 2023/2024

From LGSCO Annual Review Letter 2023~2024

Click on link: [London Borough of Camden - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

2024/2025

Service area	Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/Invalid	Not Upheld	Referred back for local resolution	Upheld	Grand Total
Adult Care Services		3	3		5	2	13
Benefits & Tax		4			4		8
Corporate & Other Services		10	1			1	12
Education & Children's Services		3			10	2	15
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation		6	1	1	7	1	16
Highways & Transport		15			5		20
Housing	9	13	6		13	11	52
Other	3						3
Planning & Development		3		1	1	1	6
(blank)							
Grand Total	12	57	11	2	45	18	145

As stated, the number upheld 23/24 was 16.

6. LGSCO Outcome decisions

Where the ombudsman finds fault, the outcome decision can be (in order of seriousness):

- Maladministration with injustice
- Maladministration without injustice
- Upheld (No Further Action required/ Remedy Actions complete)
- Service Failure

7. There were 16 cases upheld, and all of these had an outcome decision of maladministration with injustice.

2024/2025

8. There were 18 cases upheld that had an outcome decision relating to maladministration with injustice.

Service area	Count of upheld
Allocations	6
Antisocial behaviour	1
Council: assessment	1
Council: DFG	1
Domestic Abuse	2
Education Council: SEN Provision and EHC plans	2
Homelessness	3
Leisure and culture	1
Trees	1
Grand Total	18

145 cases were referred to the ombudsman with 18 having adverse findings, which is 12%, and 88% having no finding of fault.

9. LGSCO Data for Camden Council

2024/2025

Description	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Complaints Investigated	20	19	20
Complaints Upheld	90% of those investigated 12% of all referred (18 cases)	84% (16 cases)	70% (14)
Upheld - average similar orgs	84%	85%	77%
Compliance with recommendations	100% (18 cases)	100% (14 cases)	100% (13 cases)
Compliance – average similar orgs	100%	99%	99%
Satisfactory remedy provided by authority	11% (2/18 cases)	0% (0/16 cases)	0% (0/14)
Satisfactory remedy – average similar orgs	12%	12%	15%
Enquiries received	160	137	96
Decided	145	135	93
Compliance with remedies	18	14	13

Late completion of remedies	4	6	2
Public Reports	2	0	0

10. Complaints Upheld

The LGSCO selects the complaints it looks at in detail by prioritising those in the public interest to investigate and is less likely to investigate 'borderline' issues. It is therefore much more likely that they will find fault with those that they do investigate. Thus, the average uphold rate for all investigations has increased this year, and the same trend is seen in the uphold rates for similar organisations.

11. Compliance with recommendations

We continue to be fully compliant with LGSCO recommendations in all cases, but there were 4 cases where remedies were completed late compared to 6 cases in 2023/2024.

12. Areas for improvement

The LGSCO has identified the timeliness of responses to its information requests as an area for improvement. To support progress in this area, an email has been sent to all relevant Heads of Service and managers, reinforcing the importance of promptly responding to requests from both the LGSCO and the Housing Ombudsman. Further communications will be shared with relevant staff to emphasise the need to prioritise Ombudsman cases and to review internal processes to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible. The Borough Solicitor has and will continue to raise these issues at a senior level in the organisation.

LGSCO Annual Review Letter and Performance available here: [London Borough of Camden - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

13. Housing Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's role has been expanded under the new Social Housing Regulation Act (SHRA), with new expectations to issue guidance and measure landlords against it, alongside powers to order landlords to review their policies and practices.

SHRA sets out an expanded role for the Housing Ombudsman, widening its powers and encouraging the Ombudsman to take further action in the following areas.

- It encourages the Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing RSH to take steps as they see fit to work together to carry out their respective functions.
- The Act expands the Ombudsman's power to issue guidance against which it is able to measure landlords, including a code of practice for procedures relevant to complaint handling. This Complaints Handling Code was introduced in 2020 and became statutory in 2024, with landlords expected to comply with the provisions of the Code. The Ombudsman will assess this as part of its mandate to monitor.
- It gives new powers to order landlords to review their policies and practices where they are continuously leading to complaints arising against the landlord.
- Appendix 8 is the report concerning the special investigation which went to Scrutiny

14. Key areas in the Code

- Universal definition of a complaint
- Providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it, including their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service
- The structure of the complaint procedure - only two stages necessary and clear timeframes set out for responses
- Ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused process
- Taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
- Creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
- Demonstrating learning in annual reports
- Annual self-assessment against the Code.
- Annual Complaint Handling & Service Improvement Report

The HO's Complaint Handling Code and the Council's self-assessment for 2024/2025 together with the Annual Complaint Handling & Service Improvement Report 2024~2025 can be found at: [Complaints - Camden Council](#)

Where a landlord does not comply with the Code, the Ombudsman may issue a Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO). In 2024/2025 Camden was issued with 1 CHFO compared to 4 in 2023/2024.

Decisions

16. The Housing Ombudsman made 95 determinations compared to 61 in 2023/2024. This is not the number of cases received in 24/25 but the number they decided on in the year. Some will have been received in 2023/24 (or earlier) and taken time to investigate. This increase in the number of cases for Camden is reflected in the other Local Authorities that have retained their housing stock.

2024/2025

Across those 95 determinations, HOS made 238 findings compared to 171 findings in 2023/2024. Those findings are down a level of severity with a 35% decrease in severe maladministration from 22/23.

Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Property Condition	10	57	17	2	2	6	6	0	100
Complaints Handling	2	39	25	1	1	0	0	0	68
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	17	3	0	0	3	1	0	24
Moving to a Property	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	10
Charges	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	0	8
Estate Management	0	2	2	0	0	1	2	0	7
Information and data management	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	7
Staff	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	7
Reimbursement and Payments	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	
Buying or selling a property	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Health and Safety (inc. building safety)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Occupancy Rights	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	13	124	53	3	5	15	25	0	238

17. Maladministration Rate

The maladministration rate is the number of findings of severe maladministration, maladministration and service failure, expressed as a percentage of the total number of findings (excluding findings of Outside Jurisdiction and Withdrawn).

Camden's Maladministration rate is 89% for 2024/2025.

The average for Local Authorities of a similar size is 83%.

18. Orders (Remedies)

Orders are made where the investigation has resulted in a finding of some level of maladministration. They are intended to put things right for the resident. Of the 124 maladministration findings, 247 orders were made compared to 28 orders in 2022/2023.

19. Ombudsman-awarded financial remedies

2024/2025

	2024/2025	2023/2024
Housing Ombudsman orders	£101,407	£77,928
LGSCO orders	£7,712.98	£5,430
Total	£109,119.98	£83,358

This is the total amount ordered by the Ombudsman to be paid as redress for delays and service failures. It does not include the amounts refunded for amounts complainants have paid out due to the service failure (e.g., rents, service charges, replacement items). This significant increase over the past few years is again reflected elsewhere.