

Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting	16 th November 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate
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Public/Private Document	Public

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2020-21

Executive Summary

1. The report provides Members with the Annual Review of complaints made to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) about Rochdale Borough Council in the year ending 31 March 2021.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the content of the report and Annual Review letter.

Reason for Recommendation

3. Part of the Council's performance management process is to ensure the Authority's ambition to continuously improve services is realised. The Annual Review provides an overview of the effectiveness of the Council's complaints procedures and customer satisfaction with Council services.

Key Points for Consideration

4. The Annual Review letter provides local authorities with the LGSCO's assessment of the Council's performance in complaint handling for the previous financial year. In addition, the review provides a general update on developments affecting the LGSCO and includes details of the Council's compliance rate with the Ombudsman's recommended remedies.
 - 4.1 The review shows the relatively small number of complaints received against Rochdale Council by the Ombudsman during 2020/21. In total 39 complaints and enquiries were received which was a decrease on the number received last year which was 51. The number of decisions made by the LGSCO differs from the number of complaints and enquiries received, as complaints may be

received and decided upon in different financial years. To allow authorities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the LGSSCO did not accept new complaints and stopped investigating existing cases between March and June 2020. This reduced the number of complaints received and decided in the 2020-21 year.

- 4.2 Of 31 decisions made during 2020/21, only 6 complaints were subject to detailed investigation. 7 complaints were referred back to the Council as premature to be considered under the Council's own complaints procedure, 14 complaints were closed after initial enquiries, 2 complaints were incomplete/invalid and advice was given on a further 2 complaints.
- 4.3 Of the 6 complaints that were investigated, all were found to be upheld. This compares to an average of 72% in similar authorities. The LGSCO recommended remedies for all of the upheld complaints, which were accepted and implemented by the Council.

Details of the complaints that were upheld can be found below.

LGO Category	Nature of complaint
Adult Care	Process for carers assessment
Adult Care	Information re care charges
Adult Care	Withdrawal of support from placement
Adult Care	Safeguarding investigation
Adult Care	Financial Assessment
Planning & Development	Planning application process

- 4.4 In addition to Annual Review letters, the LGSCO also publishes an Annual Review of Local Government Complaints and a summary of complaint statistics for every Local Authority in England. Appendix 2 contains an extract from the review which highlights Rochdale Council's performance in comparison with neighbouring authorities.

As can be seen from the extract, both the number of enquiries / complaints received by the LGSCO and the number of complaints decided in 2020/21 were similar for Rochdale Borough Council with other neighbouring authorities and lower in a few cases. The compliance rate for Rochdale Borough Council implementing the LGSCO's agreed remedies was 100%.

- 4.5 Alternatives Considered

None. Information is provided annually by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

5. 4 of the upheld complaints resulted in a financial remedy. The total cost of agreed local settlements for LGSCO complaint decisions during 2020-21 was £1,000. A breakdown is shown below. This is a significant decrease on the previous year when the total cost was £11,810.56.

Service	£
Adult Care	250
Adult Care	150
Adult Care	400
Adult Care	200
Total	£1,000

Risk and Policy Implications

6. There are no specific risk issues for Members to consider arising from this report.

Consultation

7. Not applicable.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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| 8. None | |
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