

## Who we are

The Local Government Ombudsman looks at complaints about:

- > councils
- > some other authorities, including education admissions appeal panels
- > all types of care service for adults, including care in a residential home or care at home.

This leaflet deals with complaints about councils and the other authorities.

A separate leaflet explains what to do if you or a member of your family has a complaint about a care home or care in your home – it applies whether you or your local council are paying for your care. Contact the LGO Advice Team or see our website for details.

We investigate complaints in a fair and independent way – we do not take sides.

Our service is free.

If you have a problem with a council service, you should first complain to the council. But if you are still not satisfied, we may be able to help. Call the LGO **Advice Team** on **0300 061 0614** or go to our website at **www.lgo.org.uk**

One of our advisers will listen to you and say whether we can consider your complaint. If we can, the adviser will take the details, explain our role and tell you what will happen next.

## What we can do

We can look at complaints about most council services, including those covering:

- > housing
- > social care
- > planning
- > housing benefit
- > education
- > council tax
- > transport and highways
- > environmental health
- > neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour

We can consider complaints about things that have gone wrong in the way a service has been given or the way a decision has been made, if this has caused problems for you. For example, you may want to complain about:

- > **administrative fault**, such as the council making a mistake or not following its own rules
- > **poor service or no service**
- > **delay, or**
- > **bad advice.**

If we find that the council has done something wrong, we will try to get it to put the matter right. We do this in more than a quarter of the cases we investigate. What we ask the council to do will depend on the particular complaint, how serious the fault was and how you have been affected by it.

**Note** – where this leaflet refers to 'councils' and 'councillors', it applies to all the authorities that the Local Government Ombudsman can investigate (for a full list, phone the LGO Advice Team or see our website at **www.lgo.org.uk**).

## What we can't do

We cannot usually question what a council has done simply because you do not agree with it. There must be some fault by the council. But even then we may not investigate your complaint if you're only slightly affected by what has gone wrong.

There are some things we may not investigate because there is a more appropriate body to deal with your complaint, or because we don't have the legal power to do so. If we can't help, we will tell you about other organisations that may be able to help.

## When to complain

If you have a complaint, the first step is to complain to the council. You can find out how to complain from the council, or you can ask a councillor to help. In most cases, we will only consider a complaint after the council has had a fair opportunity to deal with it. Councils often have more than one stage in their complaints procedure. You will usually have to complete all stages before we will look at your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the council's final answer, or if it does not give you an answer within a reasonable time, you can complain to us. We think up to 12 weeks is a reasonable time for the council to investigate your complaint and reply to you.

But where the complaint is urgent, for example because it is about a school place for next term or because you are particularly at risk, we may be able to deal with it straight away.

Usually, you should complain to us within 12 months of when you first knew about the problem. If you leave it any later, we may not be able to help.

## Key facts about the Ombudsmen

- > There are two Local Government Ombudsmen in England.
- > We make our decisions independently of all government departments, councils and politicians.
- > We examine complaints without taking sides. We are not consumer champions.
- > We are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen.
- > We have the same powers as the High Court to obtain information and documents.
- > Our decisions are final and cannot be appealed. However, you can challenge them in the High Court if you think our reasoning has a legal flaw.
- > We do not have to investigate every complaint received, even if we have the power to do so. For example, we may decide not to investigate if we think the problem you mention would have affected you only slightly.
- > Our investigations are private and people will not be identified in published information.
- > We are committed to providing a fair service and spending public money effectively.
- > We do not charge for using our service.
- > When we find that a council has done something wrong, we may recommend how it should put it right. Although we cannot make councils do what we recommend, they are almost always willing to act on what we say.

## How to contact us

Call the LGO Advice Team on 0300 061 0614\* to discuss your complaint. We can take all the details by phone so you don't have to complain in writing. We welcome calls from textphone users using Text Relay.

Go to our website at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk) for more about our service, plus an online complaint form and enquiry form.

Write to the Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH. Please include a daytime telephone number so we can contact you to discuss your complaint.

Text 'call back' on 0762 480 3014. Fax us on 024 7682 0001.

\*Calls to 03 numbers will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers (starting 01 or 02) from both mobiles and landlines. They will be included as part of any inclusive call minutes or discount schemes in the same way as geographic calls. We may record calls for training and quality purposes.

## Other contact details

To find out about other ombudsmen, contact the Ombudsman Association. See their website: [www.ombudsmanassociation.org](http://www.ombudsmanassociation.org)

To find contact details for your council, go to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

For bulk orders of this leaflet, please use the publications order form on our website ([www.lgo.org.uk/publications/](http://www.lgo.org.uk/publications/)).



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Printed in the UK on paper containing 100% post-consumer waste.

## More help

Please let us know if you have difficulty using our service, for example if you have a disability or if English is not your first language.

If you need an interpreter, we can arrange this.

We can also produce information in large print, in Braille or on CD.

The Local Government Ombudsman looks at complaints about council services such as housing and social care. For further information phone 0300 061 0614. An interpreting service is available.

يقوم محقق الشكاوى في الحكومة المحلية بفحص الشكاوى المتعلقة بخدمات المجلس مثل الإسكان والرعاية الاجتماعية. لمزيد من المعلومات، رجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف 0300 061 0614. تتوفر خدمة الترجمة الفورية.

লোকাল গভর্নমেন্ট ওম্বডসম্যান (স্থানীয় সরকার ন্যায্যপাল) কাউন্সিলের সেবার ব্যাপারে বিভিন্ন অভিযোগ, যেমন: পূর্তায়ন ও সমাজ সেবা, দেখে থাকেন। আপনার অভিযোগ জন্য 0300 061 0614 নম্বরে ফোন করুন। দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।

地方政府的司法特派员考察有关议会服务的投诉，例如有关住房和社会护理的投诉等。有关详细信息，请致电 0300 061 0614。届时可提供口译服务。

ਪ੍ਰੀ ਬੋਡਰ ਨਵਮੋ-2 ਓਮਬਡਸਮੈਨ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟ ਸੇਵਾਓ ਡੇਪ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟ ਅਤੇ ਸੋਸ਼ਲ ਡੇਰ ਵਿਭਾਗੀ ਟ੍ਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਟਪਾਸਥੇ. ਵੱਖ ਮਾਫਿੰਗੀ ਮਾਏ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਨੰ. 0300 061 0614 ਪਰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ. ਆਪਾਂਨਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਏ.

स्थानीय सरकार का लोकपाल, आवास और सामाजिक देखरेख जैसी परिषद की सेवाओं से संबंधित शिकायतों पर विचार करता है। अधिक जानकारी के लिए 0300 061 0614 पर फोन कीजिए। दूभाषिया सेवा भी उपलब्ध है।

Rzecznik praw obywatelskich przy władzach lokalnych analizuje skargi na usługi świadczane przez radę, takie jak wynajem mieszkań i opieka społeczna. Więcej informacji można uzyskać pod numerem 0300 061 0614. Dostępna jest usługa tłumaczenia.

ਲੋਕਲ ਗਵਰਨਮੈਂਟ ਓਮਬਡਸਮੈਨ ਕਾਉਂਸਿਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਵਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ 0300 061 0614 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। ਦੁਬਾਸੀਆ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

Yerel Hükümet Ombudsmanı konutlandırma ve sosyal bakım gibi belediye hizmetleri hakkındaki şikayetlerle ilgilenir. Daha fazla bilgi için 0300 061 0614 no'lu telefonu arayınız. Tercüme hizmeti mevcuttur.

مقامی حکومت کے متنبسب، کونسل کی خدمات، مثلا پائونگ اور سوشل کیر، کے بارے میں شکایات کو دیکھتے ہیں۔ مزید معلومات کے لئے 0300 061 0614 پر فون کریں۔ مترجم کی خدمات موجود ہیں۔

Tổng Thanh tra của Chính quyền Địa phương đang xem xét các đơn thư khiếu nại về những dịch vụ của hội đồng, ví dụ như các dịch vụ về nhà ở và chăm sóc xã hội. Để biết thêm thông tin, hãy gọi đến số 0300 061 0614. Chúng tôi có bộ trí dịch vụ thông dịch để hỗ trợ quý vị.

[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)  
Advice Team 0300 061 0614



## Complained to the council?

*Still not satisfied?*

To complain to the  
**Local Government  
Ombudsman**, phone  
our **Advice Team**  
on **0300 061 0614**.

See back cover for information in:

Arabic العربية	Urdu اردو
Bengali বাংলা	Chinese 简体中文
Gujarati ગુજરાતી	Vietnamese Tiếng Việt
Hindi हिन्दी	Turkish Türkçe
Punjabi ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Polish polski

[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)