

Audit and Governance Committee

Date of Meeting:	09 March 2023
Report Title:	Six Monthly Complaints Report
Report of:	David Brown Director of Governance and Compliance / Alex Thompson Director of Finance and Customer Services
Report Reference No:	AG/03/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report aims to provide members with information and analysis of complaints and compliments and of the improvements undertaken by services to remedy issues identified.
- 1.2. The report provides a summary and analysis of the complaints considered under the complaints representations procedures between 1st July and 31st December 2022 and of the compliments received during that period.
- 1.3. It also provides an update on the Decision Notices issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman “the Ombudsman” when his investigations have found maladministration causing injustice to complainants.
- 1.4. The report contributes to the Corporate priorities of being “open and honest” and recognises the importance of complaints in driving the priority of improving customer experience.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. In September 2022 Audit & Governance Committee approved proposals to amend the frequency and content of reports received regarding complaints. It was agreed that reports would continue to advise of all maladministration

notices but also provide a more comprehensive view of all complaints, an analysis of lessons learned and details of the actions and improvements undertaken by Services. This is the first of these revised reports covering the 6 month period between July and December 2022.

- 2.2. During the 6-month period, the council received 1,345 complaints and 220 compliments. This compares to 1,608 complaints and 256 compliments received in the previous 6 monthly period of January to June 2022.
- 2.3. During the same period the Council recorded 265,776 contacts from customers received via the Corporate Contact Centre, on line or via e mail. Complaints received therefore represent 0.5% of all contact made to the Council and compliments represent 0.08%.
- 2.4. The number of complaints received has reduced from the previous 6 monthly period. This previous period was impacted by a peak in the volume of complaints arising from staffing issues within the Waste and Recycling service which has now stabilised.
- 2.5. A total of 40 new enquiries were received from the LGSCO during this period and 7 Decision Notices were received in which the Ombudsman concluded that there has been maladministration (fault) causing injustice. The complaints concerned Adult Social Care, Planning, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children's Social Care. A summary of these is included at paragraphs 6.10 to 6.28 and further details can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6. The Customer Services Team continue to raise the profile of complaints as a tool for service improvement. Quarterly reports have now been developed and have been shared with Directorate Management Teams within Children's Services and Adults, Health & Integration. Quarterly reports for Place and Corporate Directorates have been scheduled.
- 2.7. Training for those Officers responsible for complaints investigation has been arranged with the Ombudsman and procedures have been put in place to improve the quality of responses to complaints.
- 2.8. Systems for recording and reporting on complaints have been reviewed and further improvements agreed which should enable greater analysis of complaints in future reports.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the Committee
 - 3.1.1. Notes the content of the report and acknowledges the Council's compliance with the Corporate Complaints Policy, and with the recommendations of the Ombudsman.
 - 3.1.2. Agrees that this report be provided to the Chair of each Service Committee.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. To ensure that the Committee is kept informed, at appropriate intervals, of the Ombudsman's findings and to provide assurance that the Council is complying with the Corporate Complaints Policy and any recommendations made by the Ombudsman.
- 4.2. To ensure that the Committee is provided with assurance of service departments' improvements to customer service to reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Not applicable

6. Background

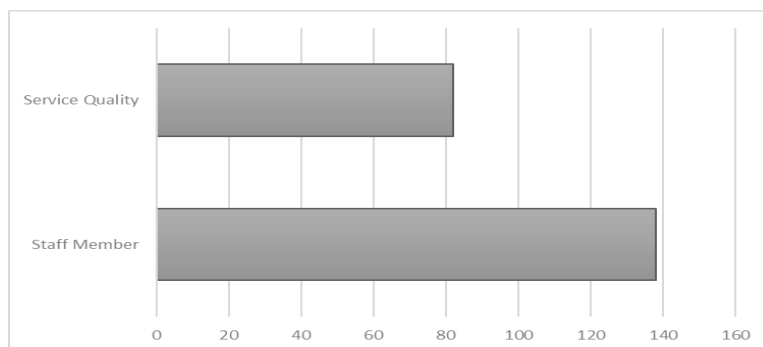
- 6.1. **Compliments:** During the period 1 July to 31 December 2022, 220 compliments were recorded corporately.
- 6.2. The Complaints Team record all compliments referred to them by services. It is worth noting however that during this period, not all departments have formally logged their compliments and reminders have been issued to all staff to ensure these procedures are followed.
- 6.3. Table 1 shows the number of compliments received by each directorate.

Table 1: Compliments received by Directorate

Directorate	Total
Adults	36
Children's	35
Corporate	63
Place	86

- 6.4. Data on the reasons for compliments is currently limited to compliments about the service or compliments about the member of staff. Work is ongoing to revise these categories to provide more informative analysis.

Table 2: Compliments by category.



- 6.5. **Complaints:** During the same period, the Council received or escalated 1,345 complaints. Of these 239 were not progressed into the complaints process as they were withdrawn, rejected, suspended or not pursued by the complainant. Table 3 identifies the outcome of the remaining 1,106.

Table 3: Outcome of complaints received in period

Directorate	Total	Fully Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Ongoing (overdue)
Adults	73	20	9	44	0
Children's	162	54	42	57	9
Corporate	150	64	19	64	3
Place	721	415	78	212	16
Total	1106	553	148	377	28

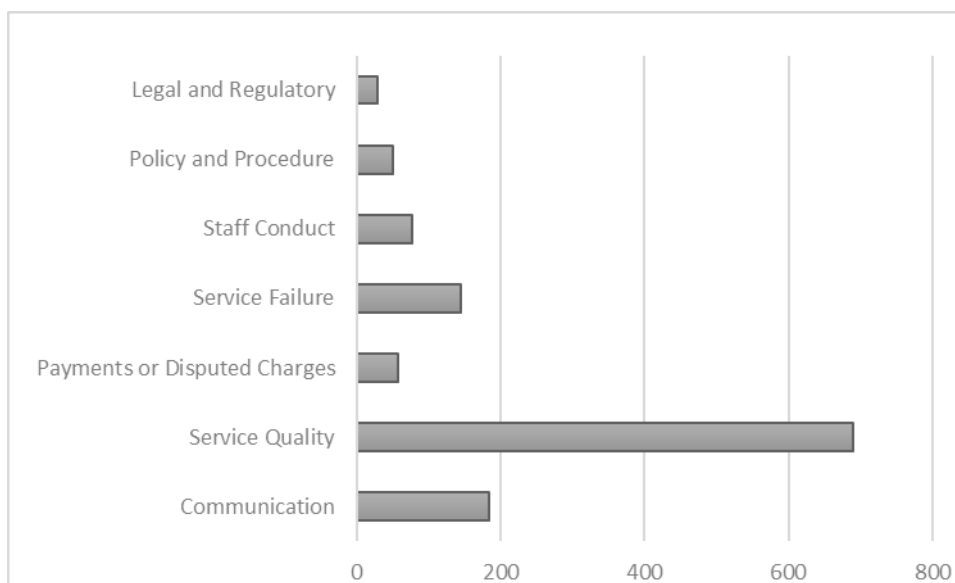
- 6.6. Table 4 identifies how many complaints were at each stage in the Complaints process, by directorate.

Table 4: Number of complaints at each stage by directorate for the period

Directorate	Total	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Adults	73	65	8	0
Children's	162	153	9	0
Corporate	150	142	8	0
Place	721	655	66	0
Total	1106	1015	91	0

- 6.7. The most common reason for customers making a complaint was 'Service Quality'. Table 5 details the reasons why customers are making complaints and how many complaints were received for each category.

Table 5: Complaint Reasons (NB some complaints have multiple primary causes)



6.8. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) - A total of 40 complaints were submitted to the LGSCO during this period. Table 6 summarises the outcomes of those complaints submitted and of those outstanding from previous periods.

Table 6: Outcome of complaints to LGSCO

Team	Raised this period	Ongoing investigation from prior periods	Final Decisions this period			
			Rejected	No Fault	Fault but no Injustice	Fault with Injustice
Adults	9	2	4	0	0	3
Children's	8	2	4	0	0	3
Corporate	3	0	1	0	0	0
Place	20	5	6	10	0	1
Total	40	9	11	10	0	7

6.9. Ombudsman Maladministration Cases. During the period between 1 June and 31 December 2022, the Council received 7 Decision Notices in which the Ombudsman has concluded that there has been maladministration (fault) causing injustice. The complaints concern Adult Social Care, Planning, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children's Social

Care. A summary of these complaints is listed below with the details and actions taken found in **Appendix 1**.

6.10. Complaint 1 – Adult Social Care

The complaint was originally received in June 2021 via the Ombudsman and concerned the lack of care that the complainant said her father received in his care home before his death. The complainant had already complained to the care home before approaching the Ombudsman.

6.11. A Final Decision was issued by the Ombudsman on 15 June 2022. The Ombudsman found a number of failings with the care home as summarised in Appendix 1.

6.12. The Ombudsman recommended that the Council apologise to the complainant for the failings and recommended a payment of £500 of which half was paid by the Council and half by the care home. The Ombudsman also recommended that the Council amend its contract with care providers to request the care providers' routine complaints monitoring reports on a quarterly basis. This is so the Council has a greater awareness of complaints being made by service users direct to care providers which it has commissioned to provide care services.

6.13. Complaint 2 – Adult Social Care

The complaint was originally received in April 2022 via the Ombudsman and concerned the complainant's son's previous care provider who terminated the contract to look after him due to comments that the complainant was alleged to have said to carers. The complainant denied any wrongdoing and complained that the care provider did not follow the correct complaints procedures and had failed to communicate openly with her.

6.14. A Final Decision was issued by the Ombudsman on 7 November 2022. The Ombudsman found that the care provider had failed to follow its own complaints procedure when responding to the complainant.

6.15. The Ombudsman recommended that the Council apologise to the complainant for the failings identified and for the anxiety caused by the sudden change of his care provider. They recommended a total payment of £500. The Ombudsman also recommended the Council provide feedback to the care provider about the lessons learned from this complaint.

6.16. Complaint 3 – Planning

The complaint was originally received in October 2021 and concerned a lack of planning enforcement. A Stage 1 response was issued on 4 November 2021 followed by a Stage 2 response on 22 February 2022. The complaint responses apologised for the fact that the latest version of a Habitat Land Management Plan (HLMP) was not available on the Council's website, however found no breach of planning conditions relating to the land in question.

- 6.17.** The complainant remained dissatisfied and took his complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman issued a Final Decision on 22 November 2022. The Ombudsman found fault with the service failure that led to the non-publication of the revised HLMP on its planning portal and with delayed responses to the complainant.
- 6.18.** The Ombudsman recommended an apology and a payment of £300 to the complainant. They also recommended a timely progression of the Council's planning enforcement investigation.
- 6.19.** Complaint 4 – SEND
- This complaint was made in March 2022 and related to the complainant's daughter's Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and the fact that she had not received a copy of the Education Psychologist's report. The Complainant complained about the delay in issuing the EHCP.
- 6.20.** A Stage 1 response was issued on 29 March 2022 apologising for the delay in sending the complainant a copy of the Education Psychologist's report. However, the complainant remained unhappy with the subsequent delay in issuing an updated EHCP.
- 6.21.** A Stage 2 review was declined and the complainant took her complaint to the Ombudsman. A Final Decision was received on 24 November 2022. The Ombudsman found the Council was at fault for its delay in issuing an updated EHCP. The Ombudsman recommended a letter of apology and a payment of £100.
- 6.22.** Complaint 5 – Children's Social Care
- This complaint was originally received in April 2019 and concerned how the complainant felt he had been treated by Children's Services staff who were involved with his daughter. A Stage 1 response was issued on 24 June 2019. The complainant remained unhappy with the response and requested escalation to Stage 2 of the children's statutory complaints process.
- 6.23.** The independent investigator's Stage 2 report was received in September 2020 and the Council's response issues to the complainant in October 2020. The complainant initially requested escalation to the Stage 3 review panel, however following discussion with his advocate, he agreed for an early referral to the Ombudsman instead.
- 6.24.** The Ombudsman issued its Final Decision on 14 December 2022. The Ombudsman found fault with the lack of guidance provided to parents concerning the child protection process, the failure to appoint an advocate for the complainant and the failure to take into account reasonable adjustments due to the complainant's disability. The Ombudsman recommended a payment of £550 to the complainant along with reviews of its policies on appointing advocates, managing parents with communication difficulties and improving guidance on the child protection process.

6.25. Complaint 6 – SEND

This complaint was made in March 2022 and concerned the complainant's son's EHCP. The complainant complained that in the EHCP her son remained on roll at a school he no longer attended and that she had not received any information about personal budgets. A formal Stage 1 response was not issued in this case and the complainant requested to escalate to Stage 2. A Stage 2 response was issued on 19 May 2022. The complaint was partly upheld.

6.26. The complainant pursued her complaint with the Ombudsman and a Final Decision was issued on 14 December 2022. The Ombudsman found fault with the failure to provide the complainant with the information about personal budgets and to arrange a meeting to discuss this. The Ombudsman recommended an apology and a payment of £100.

6.27. Complaint 7 – Adult Social Care

This complaint was originally made in November 2021 as the complainant was dissatisfied with the outcome of a safeguarding investigation carried out by the Adult Safeguarding Provider Team, into the care provided by a care provider to her brother. A complaint response was issued on 17 December 2021.

6.28. The complainant subsequently took her complaint to the Ombudsman. A Final Decision was issued on 20 December 2022. The Ombudsman found fault with the Council for failing to ensure the care provider had completed a thorough investigation into the complaint. The Ombudsman recommended an apology and that the Council order the care provider to complete a new investigation into the original complaint.

7. Lessons Learnt and future actions

7.1. The SEND Service has an action plan for improvements in their department and the lessons learnt from complaints will be incorporated into the action plan.

7.2. In relation to the upheld complaints about Adult Social Care, contracts for care providers are to be changed to require them to submit details of complaints received by each provider to the Council on a quarterly basis. The service also intends to require care providers to pay any financial penalty imposed by the Ombudsman where the fault identified lies with the provider and not the Council.

7.3. In response to Complaint 5 the Corporate Complaints Policy on the use of advocates to support vulnerable customers has been revised.

7.4. A pilot involving complaints relating to the Planning department began in January 2023, where the Complaints Team will be monitoring and quality checking complaint responses before they are issued to the customer. This is to ensure that the complaint has been responded to fully and prevent

escalations to Stage 2. If successful, this will be rolled out to other services during 2023.

- 7.5.** Training is being commissioned from the Ombudsman to improve the quality of written responses that are issued by the Council. This will be taking place from April 2023, with colleagues from the Complaints and Planning teams attending the first session. The Customer Services Team is also working on preparing training to deliver to staff internally on writing effective complaint responses.
- 7.6.** There will be a push in the next period and beyond to ensure that all compliments received by colleagues or service areas are logged corporately, to ensure that the hard work of council staff is recognised and celebrated.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

There are no legal implications flowing directly from the content of this report

8.2. Finance

If fault causing injustice is found, the Council can be asked to pay compensation to a complainant, the level of which is determined on a case-by-case basis. The cost of such compensation is paid for by the service at fault. In the cases outlined in this report the Council was required to make compensation payments totalling £1800.00.

8.3. Policy

There are no direct implications to policy from this report, however, whilst the primary purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Ombudsman's findings, and to seek to secure improvements in performance, resource implications arise from high numbers of Ombudsman findings. These primarily relate to the increased demand upon officers in researching the background to, and in administering complaints. However, if a high volume of complaints were received about a specific policy, a review of the relevant policy could be triggered and referred to the relevant service committee.

8.4. Equality

When responding to complaints, the Council must ensure that people are treated fairly and that we comply with the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments where necessary. This may include providing responses in large font, using coloured paper or communicating by specific means such as email only.

8.5. Human Resources

Whilst the primary purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Ombudsman's findings, and to seek to secure improvements in performance, resource implications arise from the high numbers of complaints. These

relate to the increased demand upon officers in researching the background to complaints and responding appropriately. Where complaints relate to specific staff members, for example because of behaviour or attitude, these are escalated to the appropriate manager.

8.6. Risk Management

If recommendations made by the Ombudsman are not followed, this could trigger a public report.

8.7. Rural Communities

There are no direct implications for rural communities

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

Children and young people are affected by complaints to SEND, particularly in cases where their needs are not being met. Reference to children's issues is made earlier in the report.

8.9. Public Health

There are no direct implications for Public Health

8.10. Climate Change

There are no direct implications for climate change

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Helen Gerrard Helen.gerrard@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Ombudsman Decisions where Maladministration with Injustice has Taken Place
Background Papers:	

Appendix 1 - Ombudsman Decisions where Maladministration with Injustice has Taken Place

June 2022 to December 2022

	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken	Comments from Service
Complaint 1 – Adult Social Care	<p>The Ombudsman's Final Decision – 15.6.2022</p> <p>Summary: Ms B complained on behalf of Mr & Mrs C about the care they received from Four Seasons (No 9) Ltd when it operated a care home they were both resident at; in Mrs C's case with that care provided on behalf of the Council. We uphold the complaints, finding no evidence the Care Provider considered Mr or Mrs C's need for contact with each other (or between Mr C and his wider family), after they moved to rooms on different floors of the care home. The Care Provider also failed to sufficiently communicate a decline in Mr C's health before he died. There were also some failings in its management of Mrs C's diet and nutrition. These failings have caused distress. The Council and Care Provider accept these findings. At the end of this statement, we set out the action they have agreed to take to remedy that injustice.</p>	<p>Agreed action</p> <p>76. The Council and Care Provider accept the findings set out above. To remedy the injustice identified at paragraph 65 and 66 it is agreed that within 20 working days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both the Care Provider and the Council will provide a written apology to Ms B and Mrs C accepting the findings of this investigation; • both the Care Provider and the Council will pay Mr C's family of £500 in recognition of their distress; I suggest each contribute £250 to this; the Council and Care Provider can check with Ms B to whom this payment should be made. <p>77. To remedy the injustice identified at paragraph 72 the Council has agreed that within 20 working days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will ensure Mrs C receives a payment of £250 in recognition of the failure of the Care Provider to always ensure her dietary needs and preferences were met. This payment may be made direct by the Council or from the Care Provider subject to discussion between both. Should the Council make the 	<p>Apology Letter issued to Mrs c on 26.7.2022.</p> <p>A Payment of £250 was made to Mrs C.</p> <p>Paid by the care provider.</p>	

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		<p>payment it will not be prevented from seeking recovery of the amount from the Care Provider if it believes it was contractually at fault for not meeting Mrs C's dietary needs and preferences.</p> <p>78. In addition, the Council has said it will learn wider lessons from this complaint. Within 20 working days of a decision on this complaint it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brief the current operators of the care home to advise of our findings; it will encourage the new owners ensure they are keeping adequate records around residents wishes for social interactions with family and nutrition/dietary needs; the new provider will also be encouraged to offer a meeting with Ms C, with a member of her family present if she wishes this, to discuss any ongoing concerns about her diet and nutrition; <p>79. The Council has also said that three months of a decision on this complaint it will amend its contract with care providers to request providers' routine complaints monitoring reports on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's provider monitoring process. It will also ask providers to provide this information quarterly, albeit on a non-contractual basis with effect from Quarter 1 (April to June 2022).</p> <p>This is so the Council has more awareness of complaints being made by users of services and that it can better monitor complaint outcomes.</p>	<p>A response was sent to the Ombudsman with a copy of an email from the Director of Commissioning confirming this action has been actioned.</p>	
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<p>Complaint 2 – Adult Social Care</p>	<p>The Ombudsman’s Final Decision – 7.11.2022 Summary: Mrs X complained about the way a care provider, commissioned by the Council, ended its contract to provide care for her son. There was fault in the care providers actions, for which the Council is responsible. This caused Ms X considerable distress. The Council should apologise, make a symbolic payment to Mrs X to recognise the injustice caused, and take appropriate action to prevent recurrence.</p>	<p>Agreed action 41. When a council commissions another organisation to provide services on its behalf it remains responsible for those services and for the actions of the organisation providing them. So, although I found fault with the actions of the care provider, I have made recommendations to the Council. 42. Within one month of the date of the final decision, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologise to Mrs X for the care provider’s failure to follow its own process when allegations were made, and for failings in its complaints handling; • pay Mrs X, for the benefit of Y, £100 to acknowledge the anxiety caused by the sudden changes to his routine as a result of the change in his care package at short notice; and • pay Mrs X £400 to acknowledge the considerable distress caused to her by the failings identified. <p>43. Within three months of the date of the final decision, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide guidance to the care provider about the lessons learned from this complaint. This should include the need to be open about concerns and take reasonable steps to try to resolve them before ending a care contract, and to ensure it reminds staff about the need to follow its own processes, including its complaints process, in line with regulation 16. 	<p>Letter of apology issued 14.11.2022.</p> <p>A payment of £500 was made to Mrs X.</p> <p>To be completed by 7 Feb 2023.</p>	
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<p>Complaint 3 – Planning</p>	<p>The Ombudsman’s Final Decision – 22.11.2022 Summary: Mr X complains about the Council’s handling of the planning application process relating to his home and subsequent enforcement action. There was service failure which meant the correct information was not published on the Council’s planning portal. The Council also took too long to respond to Mr X’s concerns and complaints. The Council has agreed to apologise and make a payment to Mr X for the delay and uncertainty caused. It will also ensure its ongoing planning enforcement investigation is progressed in a timely way and will keep Mr X regularly updated on its progress.</p>	<p>Agreed action 37. Within one month of my final decision, the Council has agreed to: • apologise to Mr X for the service failure that led to the non-publication of the revised HLMP on its planning portal and for the frustration caused by its delayed responses; • pay Mr X £300 for the uncertainty, time and trouble caused by the faults identified in this decision statement; and, • ensure timely progression of its planning enforcement investigation into the maintenance of the pond in front of Mr X’s home and commit to providing Mr X with regular updates on its progress and details of its decision on conclusion.</p>	<p>Letter of apology issues 16.12.2022.</p> <p>A payment of £300 was made to Mr X.</p> <p>An update on the planning enforcement investigation was provide in our letter of 16.12.2022.</p>	
<p>Complaint 4 – SEND</p>	<p>The Ombudsman’s Final Decision – 24.11.2022 Summary: Miss X complained that the Council failed to issue her daughter’s Education, Health and Care plan within the statutory timeframe. She also complained that the Council failed to deal with her complaint in line with its policy. Miss X said this meant a delay in her daughter getting provision she needed. She also said it caused her unnecessary distress and frustration. We find the Council at fault for delays issuing the plan. This fault caused Miss X injustice. The Council has agreed to apologise and make a payment to reflect the injustice caused. We do not find the Council at fault for its complaint handling.</p>	<p>Agreed action 45. Within four weeks of this decision, the Council has agreed to apologise to Miss X for the uncertainty, undue significant stress, and frustration caused by failing to issue C’s EHC plan within the timeframe set out in the Regulations. The Council has also agreed to apologise to Miss X because the delay issuing the EHC plan denied her right to appeal (which is injustice). 46. Within four weeks of this decision, the Council has agreed to make a payment to Miss X of £100 to remedy the uncertainty, undue significant stress, and frustration caused. 47. In arriving at this figure, I have considered the Ombudsman’s published guidance on remedies. I have considered the length of time involved. I have also</p>	<p>Letter of apology issued 23.12.2022.</p> <p>A payment of £100 has been made to Miss X.</p>	

		<p>considered the Council's efforts to chase the educational psychology service and keep Miss X informed regularly about progress, delays, and managing her expectations, which I consider somewhat mitigated the injustice.</p> <p>48. I therefore consider a payment of £100 is an appropriate and proportionate remedy for the injustice caused.</p>		
Complaint 5 – Children's Social Care	<p>The Ombudsman's Final Decision: 14.12.2022 Summary: Mr B complained about the actions of the Council in responding to his complaint about children's services. We found some fault including a failure to appoint an advocate to assist Mr B with his complaint, failing to implement agreed reasonable adjustments for him and a failure to provide a personal remedy to Mr B and C to recognise the impact of the fault on them as part of the complaints process. The Council has agreed to pay £550 to Mr B, including £250 for the benefit of his daughter C, and to improve its procedures for the future.</p>	<p>I recommended the Council within one month of the date of my final decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pays Mr B £550 (£300 for his distress and time and trouble in pursuing a complaint to us and £250 for the benefit of C, for the distress caused by the danger statement and the failure to holistically explore her case); • explains what progress it has made with guidance for parents about the child protection process; and • explains what steps it has taken to ensure Mr B's reasonable adjustments are met in the future. <p>50. I also recommended that the Council, within three months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works with Mr B's advocate to consider what steps it could take to improve its response to disabled (particularly neurodivergent) parents interacting with both children's services and the complaints process; and • reviews its guidance for complaints staff in when and how to appoint advocates for complainants. 	<p>Awaiting bank details from Mr B.</p> <p>The Corporate, Adults and Children's Complaints Policies are to be reviewed in 2023. The provision of advocates for complainants with communication difficulties will be included in this review.</p>	
Complaint 6 – SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's Final Decision: 14.12.2022 Summary: Miss X complained her son remains on roll at a school he does not attend and that the Council has failed to provide information</p>	<p>Agreed action 34. The Council has agreed to apologise to Miss X and pay her £100 in recognition of the frustration and distress she has</p>	<p>Letter of apology issued on 13.1.2023</p>	

	<p>about personal budgets. Miss X also complained the Council has delayed in securing the provision set out in her son's EHC plan. There is no evidence of fault in the way the Council has secured Y's educational provision. However, the Council's failure to provide the information Miss X requested and the delay in arranging a meeting to discuss a personal budget is fault. This fault has caused Miss X an injustice.</p>	<p>experienced and the time and trouble she has been put to by the delay in providing information and in arranging a meeting to discuss a personal budget. 35. The Council should take this action within one month of the final decision on this complaint and provide us with evidence it has complied with the above actions.</p>	<p>Awaiting bank details from Miss X.</p>	
<p>Complaint 7 – Adult Social Care</p>	<p>The Ombudsman's Final Decision: 20.12.2022 Summary: Mr X complained about the quality of care provided by a Council commissioned care provider, Safe Hands Care and Support Service. Mr X also complained about Safe Hands Care and Support Service's handling of his complaint and accusations that he was racist. We found fault with the Council for failing to ensure the care provider completed a suitable investigation into Mr X's complaint. The Council agreed to our recommendation to apologise to Mr X and ask the care provider to complete a suitable investigation in line with its policy.</p>	<p>Agreed action 35. Within one month of the Ombudsman's final decision the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Mr X for failing to ensure Safe Hands Care and Support Service provided a suitable complaint response in line with its policy. • Instruct Safe Hands Care and Support Service to complete a full investigation into Mr X's complaint, in line with its policy, and provide a suitable written response to Mr X's complaint. This written response should include a summary of the issues, details of the evidence relied on, a presentation of Safe Hands' findings including an explanation and conclusion. 	<p>Letter of apology issued 20.1.2023</p> <p>Ongoing – to be reviewed 20.3.2023</p>	