



Leicestershire County Council's Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Performance

Annual Report 2024-2025

Table of Contents

Annual Report 2024-2025	1
Executive Summary	3
About the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.....	3
Data Source and Interpretation	5
Complaints and enquiries received by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman	6
Decisions made by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.....	8
Complaint decisions upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman in Leicestershire	10
Remedy and Compliance Outcomes	13
Public Reports	15

Executive Summary

Leicestershire County Council, “Leicestershire”, greatly values the independent and impartial service provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, recognising its vital role in promoting accountability, continuous improvement, and public trust in local government services.

Leicestershire has received its annual letter and accompanying data from the Ombudsman for 2024/25. This report presents analysis and insights drawn from the latest year, alongside comparative data from previous reporting periods and other comparator county local authorities.

Demand for the Ombudsman’s services is growing both locally and in England, with the Ombudsman receiving fewer complaints and enquiries in respect of Leicestershire than approximately half of the comparable authorities. In 2024/25, 122 cases were received, with the majority, relating to Education and Children’s Services, a theme seen over the years.

Not all contact the Ombudsman receives represent failings and so the report, helpfully, distinguishes cases that go onto be investigated and upheld. In terms of upheld cases, Leicestershire’s performance is better than average and is positioned mid table for the number of upheld decisions per 100,000 residents amongst its peers. Cases categorised as Education and Children’s Services feature most in upheld cases, a theme seen at the Ombudsman level also.

There is a good record of early, satisfactory remedies compared to the average and full compliance with Ombudsman recommendations. No public reports were issued in 2024/25.

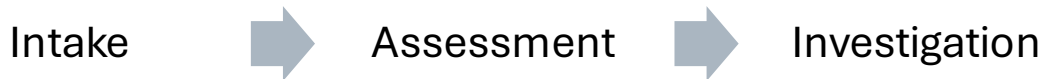
A continued focus on benchmarking against top-performing authorities and understanding the factors behind mid-table placement will support ongoing improvement.

About the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is the final stage for complaints about councils in England and its powers to investigate and make recommendations, are established by the Local Government Act 1974. Its core purpose is to provide an independent, impartial, and free service to the public, investigating complaints where individuals believe they have suffered injustice due to maladministration or service failure by these bodies. If fault is found, the Ombudsman can recommend remedies, which may include apologies, service improvements, or financial payments.

The Ombudsman publishes annual reviews, performance data for each council, and public reports in cases of wider public interest or systemic issues.

The Ombudsman uses the following pathway for cases it receives:



- The Intake Team¹ are the gateway to accessing the services of the Ombudsman. Their role is to identify premature complaints, to filter out all misdirected and incomplete contacts and to send viable complaints to the Assessment Team.
- The Assessment Team² determines which cases should be investigated and follows a two-stage format (Jurisdictional and Discretionary).
- The function of the investigation³ process is to consider every case referred from Assessment in an objective and proportionate manner.⁴

As set out in The Local Government Act 1974, the Ombudsman cannot consider complaints about:

- a matter that is going to court
- criminal matters
- some commercial matters
- employment issues, and
- some educational matters.
- matter appealed to a Tribunal/Minister

The Ombudsman accepts complaints made within twelve months (unless good reason for delay) by members of the public or a suitable representative (the Ombudsman cannot consider complaints made by or on behalf of public bodies or made by employees about their employment). The Ombudsman normally refers premature complaints back to the organisation for local resolution.

¹ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/intake-team-manual?chapter=1>

² <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/assessment-code>

³ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/investigation-manual>

⁴ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/investigation-manual?chapter=1>

Data Source and Interpretation

lginform.local.gov.uk/ is the Local Government Association's Research and Information team, which provide reports to assist local authorities to gain a deeper level of information and intelligence. The reports are based on requests from users and partners.⁵

These reports form the data source for this report in conjunction with further information provided by Leicestershire's Business Intelligence Service.

The Ombudsman provides data in respect of complaints and enquiries received or data in respect of complaints and enquiries decided. When interpreting data, cases may have been received and decided in different reporting years, meaning that the number of complaints and enquiries received will not always match the number of decisions made.

The averages shown throughout this report are based on all English county local authorities.

⁵ <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/>

Complaints and enquiries received by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

The number of enquiries and complaints received means the number of new cases received in the reporting period. The Ombudsman provides this data in count form; this data has been converted into the number of complaints per 100,000 residents to provide a more equitable basis for comparison between authorities of different population sizes.

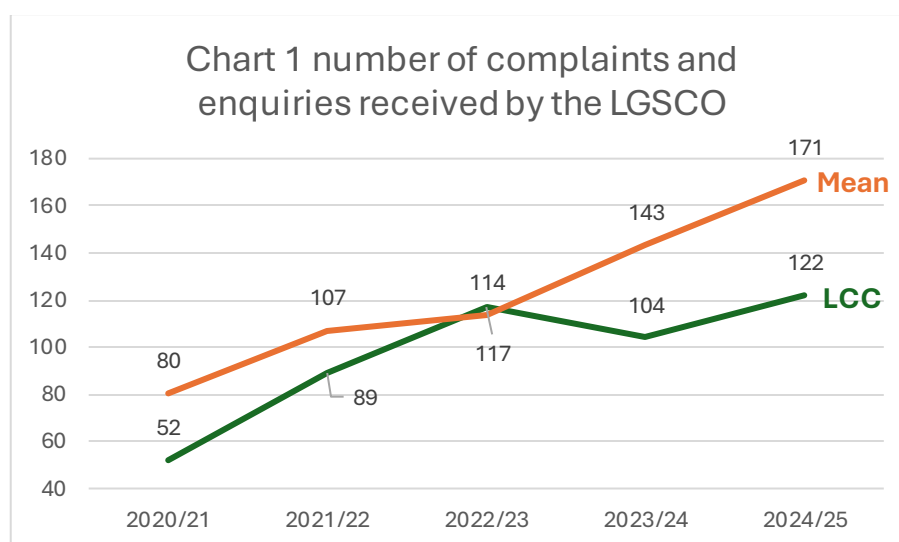
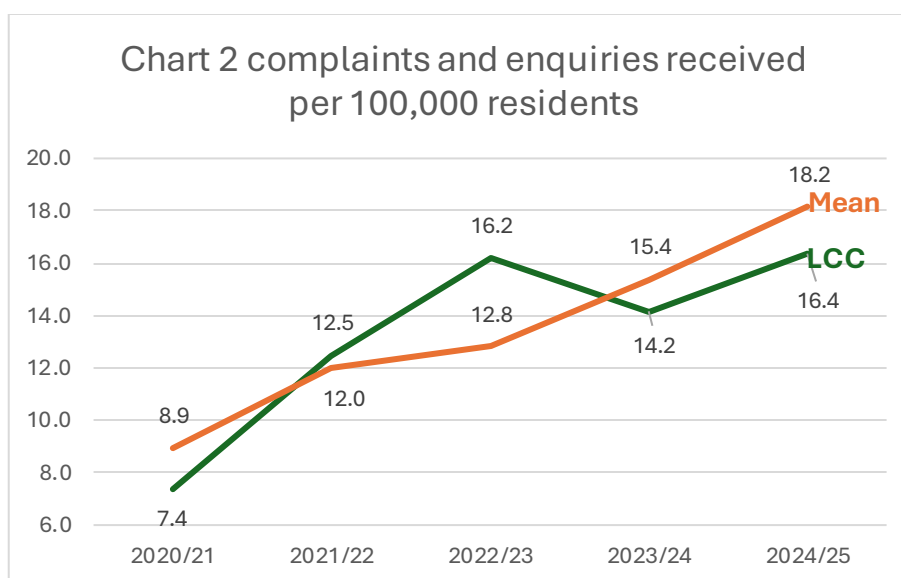


Chart 1 reveals the number of complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman in respect of Leicestershire has generally increased since 2020/21, increasing from 52 to 122 in 2024/25. Unfortunately, the downward trend in 2023/24 has not been sustained, with the increased complaints in 2024/25 representing an uplift of 17.3 %.

The table below presents both the volume and percentage share of complaints and enquiries by area. This breakdown provides insight into where concerns are most frequently raised, with Education and Children's Services consistently accounting for the majority. While the number of cases has risen, other categories have also seen increases. The dominance of Education and Children's Services mirrors the profile of Leicestershire's local complaint numbers and is the highest category reported by the Ombudsman in their overall figures in each year shown.

Case Category	2022/2023		2023/24		2024/25	
Education and Children's Services	67	57%	67	64%	73	60%
Adult Social Care	29	25%	26	25%	30	25%
Highways and Transport	15	13%	8	8%	14	11%
Corporate and Other Services	-	-	-	-	2	2%
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
Housing	-	-	1	1%	-	-
Planning and Development	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Other	3	3%	-	-	1	1%

The top three categories make up between 95 – 97% of cases in each year shown.



A lower figure for the number of enquiries and complaints received per 100,000 residents (referred to as rate) signifies stronger performance. Leicestershire's rate has increased from 7.4 in 2020/21 to 16.4 in 2024/25, but this growth is in line with the trend for English county local authorities.

In 2024/25 Leicestershire's rate (16.4) placed it mid table (11th), with the best performing local county authority being Nottinghamshire, with a rate of 11.1 and the lowest performing being Devon, with a rate of 29.

Although demand for the Ombudsman's services is growing both locally and in England, the Ombudsman received fewer complaints and enquiries in respect of Leicestershire than approximately half of the comparable authorities. This may indicate Leicestershire's local complaint handling is more effective than those with higher rates

(meaning less complaints escalate to the Ombudsman), with room for improvement given mid table position.

2024/25 Leicestershire rates at category level are:

- 9.8 compared to mean of 11 - Education and Children Services (placement 10th)
- 4.0 compared to a mean of 4.2 - Adult Care Services (placement 13th)
- 1.9 compared to a mean of 2 - Highways and Transport (placement 13th)

All three categories demonstrate performance better than the average, with the average for cases categorised as Education and Children's Services outperforming the average by 1.2 points. However, it is important to note that Leicestershire's placement remains approximately mid-table across all three categories.

Decisions made by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Decision Outcomes⁶

When the Ombudsman decides in a case, it records its decision as one of the following:

Invalid or incomplete means the Ombudsman was not given enough information to consider the issue.

Advice given means the Ombudsman provided early advice or explained where to go for the right help.

Referred back for local resolution means the Ombudsman found the complaint was brought to them too early because the organisation involved was not given the chance to consider it first.

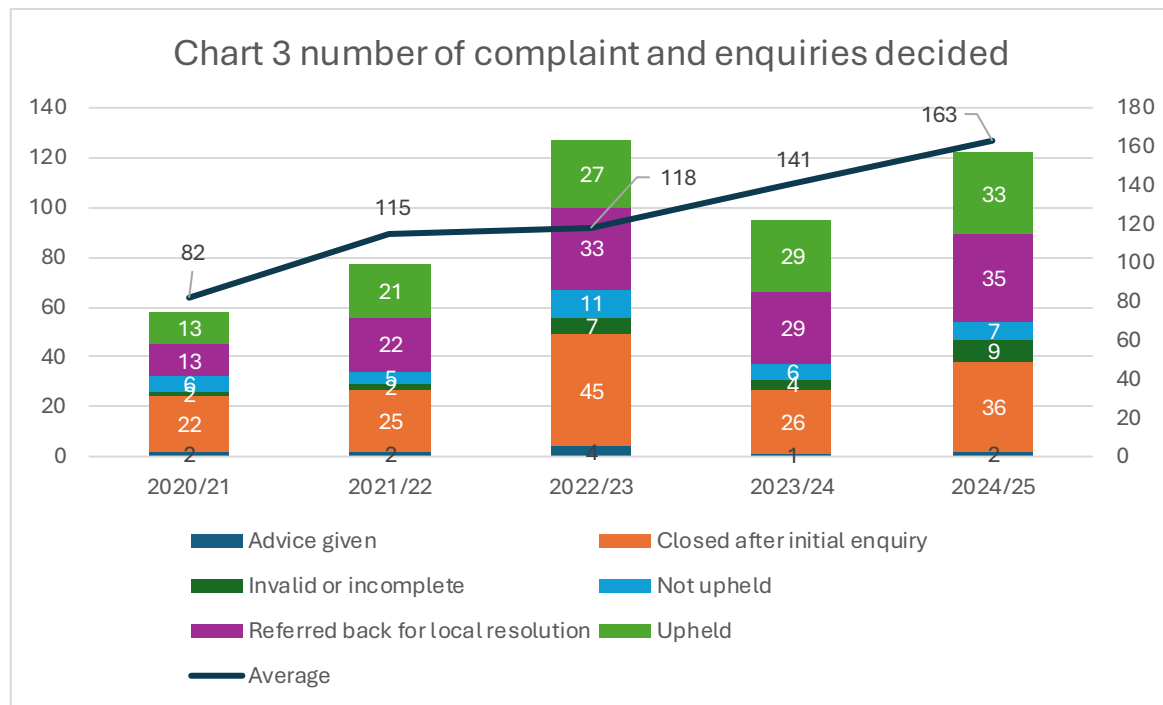
Closed after initial enquiries means the Ombudsman assessed the complaint but decided against completing an investigation. This might be because the law says they are not allowed to investigate it or because it would not be effective use of public funds if they did.

Cases categorised as '**Not Upheld**' or '**Upheld**' are cases that were investigated.

Upheld means the Ombudsman completed an investigation and found evidence of fault or it found the organisation offered a suitable remedy early on.

⁶ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/interpreting-local-authority-statistics>

Not Upheld means the Ombudsman completed an investigation and did not find evidence of fault.



The number of enquiries and complaints ‘decided’ in respect of Leicestershire has fluctuated over the five reporting years and remains below the mean for all English county local authorities, except in 2022/23, where it sits slightly higher (127 vs. 118). Leicestershire’s trend is variable in comparison to the average trend increase. The number of cases decided increased by 28% between 2023/24 (95) and 2024/25 (122).

The distinction between decision categories helps demonstrate that not all contacts represent failings, offering a more nuanced view of Ombudsman demand and performance.

The key decision category here is ‘Upheld’ as these are cases which have been investigated and the Ombudsman found evidence of fault, or it found the organisation offered a suitable remedy early on. The next section focuses on Upheld cases in more detail.

Complaint decisions upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman in Leicestershire

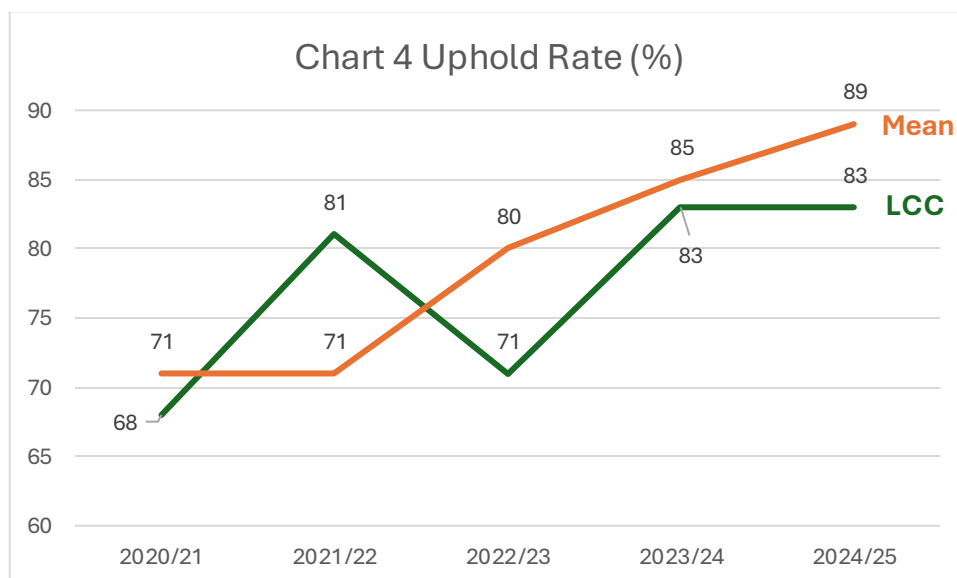
The following data relates to cases where detailed investigation took place, and the complaint was upheld by the Ombudsman. Upheld means the Ombudsman completed an investigation and found evidence of fault, or they found the organisation offered a suitable remedy early on.

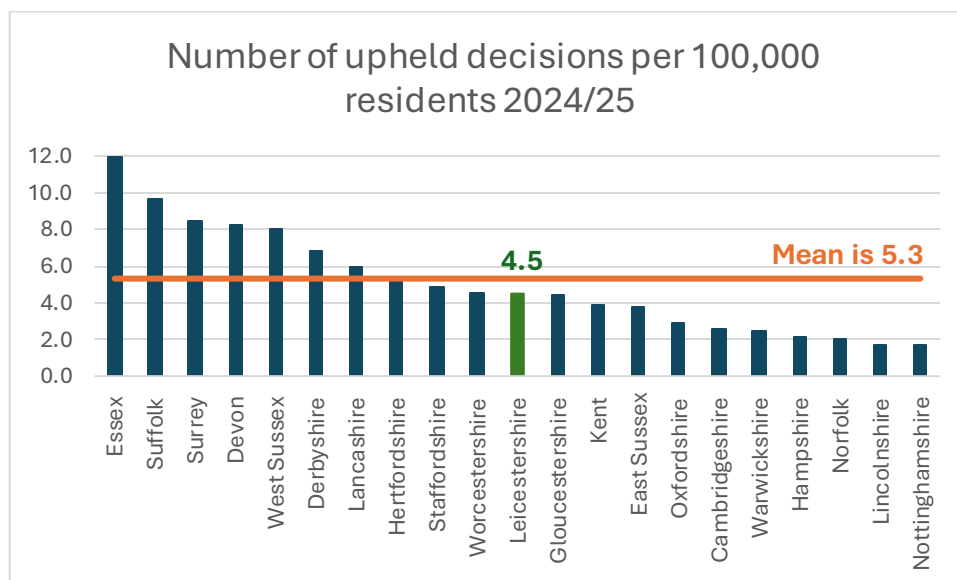
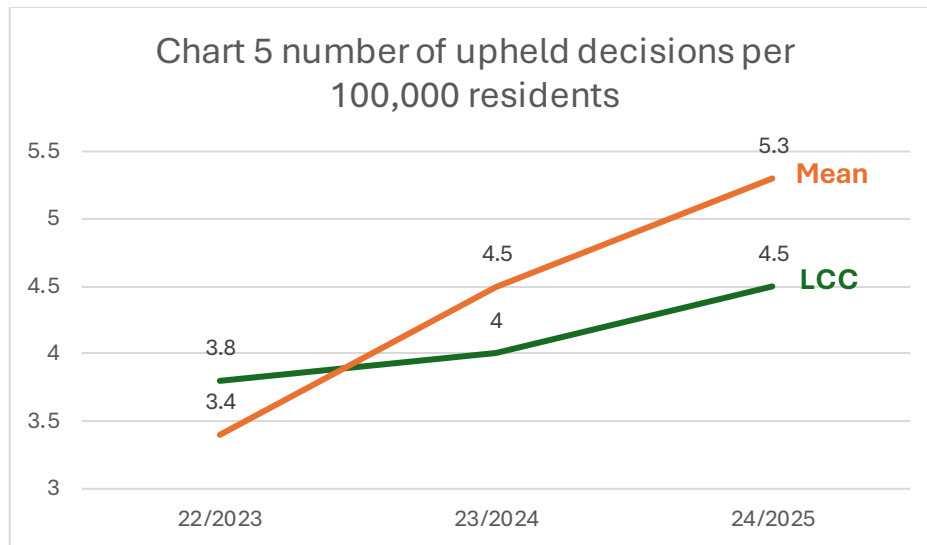
The Ombudsman uses two key metrics in relation to upheld cases:

- ‘Uphold Rate’ which shows how often an organisation gets things wrong and is expressed as a percentage of the investigations the Ombudsman completes.
- Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents (metric available since 2022/23).

The ‘Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents’ metric, helps to contextualise performance in relation to population size, offering a more equitable basis for comparison. Additionally, the Uphold Rate should be considered alongside the ‘Satisfactory Remedy’ metric, which relates to cases that were upheld, and the Ombudsman found the Leicestershire had already satisfactorily remedied the fault.

A lower value for each metric signifies better performance.





The Uphold Rate for Leicestershire has shown a generally positive trend over the past five reporting years by remaining lower than the average, less for 2021/22 (81% (LCC) vs 71% (mean)). It should be noted that changes implemented by the Ombudsman to its investigation processes in 2022/23 have contributed to an increase in the average Uphold Rate across all complaints.

The number of upheld decisions per 100,000 residents metric positions Leicestershire firmly in the middle of the 2024/25 distribution, which reflects better than average performance whilst also indicating room for further improvement and the potential to learn from those performing better than Leicestershire (Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire 1.7 - Gloucestershire 4.4).

The table below provides both the uphold rate and upheld decisions per 100,000 residents for county local authorities with a lower value than Leicestershire for the number of upheld decisions per 100,000 residents (as shown in the graph above).

County local authority	Total complaints & enquiries decided	Number investigated	Number of cases upheld	Uphold rate 2024/25 Avg. 89%	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents Avg. 5.3
Nottinghamshire	85	16	14	88%	1.7
Lincolnshire	76	16	13	81%	1.7
Norfolk	106	24	19	79%	2.0
Hampshire	179	38	30	79%	2.1
Warwickshire	72	17	15	88%	2.4
Cambridgeshire	79	23	18	78%	2.6
Oxfordshire	84	22	22	100%	2.9
East Sussex	106	28	21	75%	3.8
Kent	291	76	63	83%	3.9
Gloucestershire	97	34	29	85%	4.4
Leicestershire	122	40	33	83%	4.5

It is difficult to determine, from the data alone, which of the above county local authorities are a true comparator without understanding their model for complaint handling service structures. For information regarding models, please refer to the Ombudsman's 'Guide for complaint managers: Designing and delivering effective complaint systems'⁷.

2024/25 in more detail

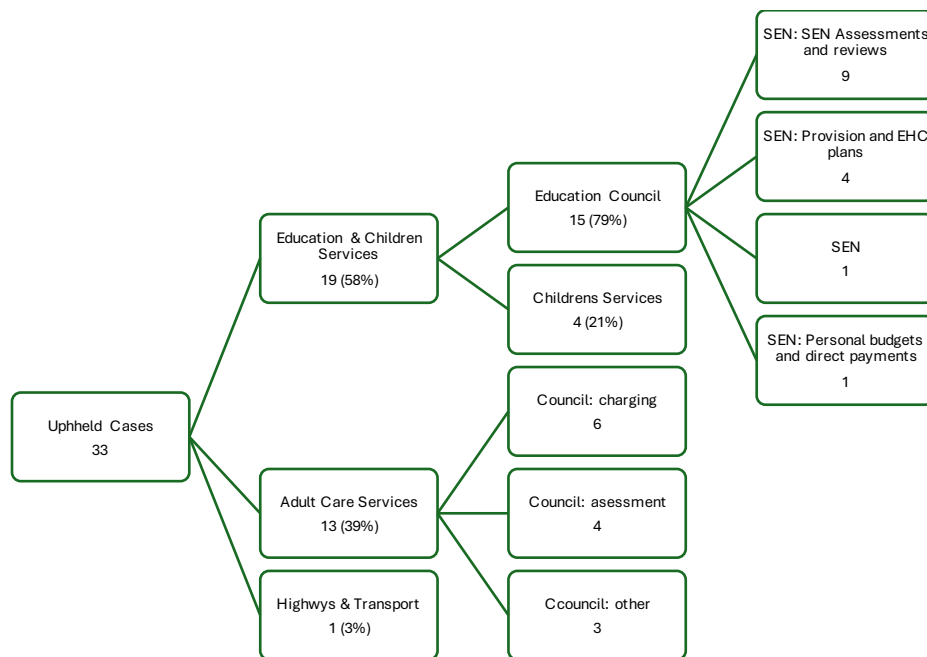
33 (83%) of the 40 cases investigated were upheld, this compares to 29 (83%) out of 35 cases in 2023/2024. A determination of an 'Upheld' outcome is typically more straightforward in instances where statutory timescales have not been met, for example statutory timescales for Special Education Needs Assessments.

Chart 7 shows the breakdown of Upheld cases by category, with 19 (58%) of upheld cases relating to Education & Children's Services, with 79% of those 19 relating to Special Educational Needs cases. This is to be expected given the volume profile of complaints and enquires received by the Ombudsman in respect of Leicestershire.

⁷ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/information-for-organisations-we-investigate/councils/guidance-notes/guide-for-complaint-managers-designing-and-delivering-effective-complaint-systems?chapter=11>

Additionally, the Ombudsman’s national caseload profile, as indicated in its Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2024-25 report where it said, ‘Education and Children’s complaints, and in particular the growing issues with special educational needs provision, made up 27% of the cases we received during the year, and made up 48% of cases we upheld. We found fault in more cases this year, with 91% upheld. We continue to maintain the view that urgent change is required to national policy on support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and we await the Government white paper, now expected in Autumn 2025.’

Chart 7 breakdown of upheld cases by category for 2024/25.



Remedy and Compliance Outcomes

When the Ombudsman finds fault in the way Leicestershire carries out its duties, they consider if this caused an injustice to the person affected. If so, the Ombudsman makes recommendations about what Leicestershire should do to put things right.

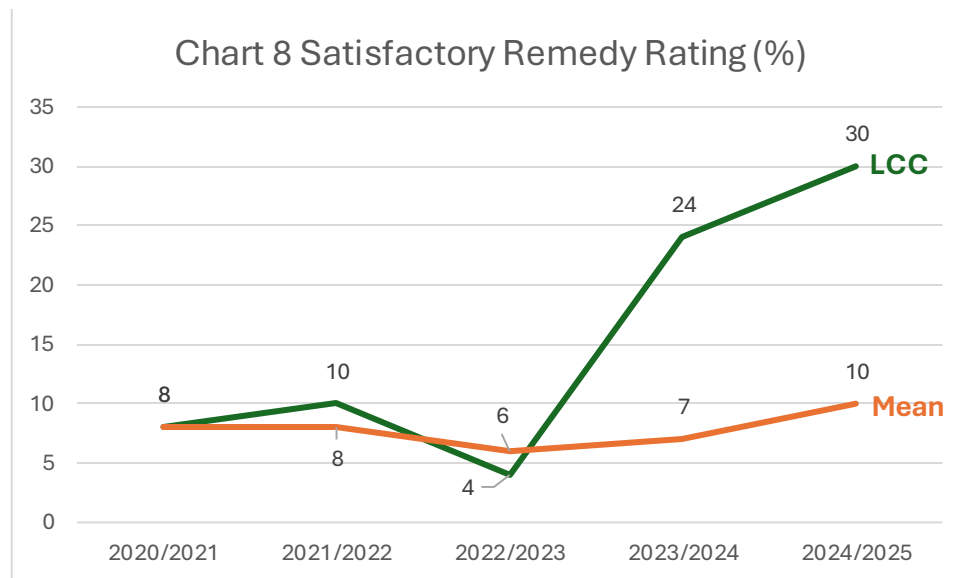
The Ombudsman has two key metrics in relation to remedy and compliance, which are covered below.

Satisfactory Remedy

The Ombudsman recognises cases where Leicestershire has taken steps to put things right before the complaint reaches the Ombudsman. These are complaints

Leicestershire upheld, and the Ombudsman agreed with how Leicestershire offered to put things right.

Chart 8 shows Leicestershire's 'Satisfactory Remedy Rating' compared to the average for all English local authorities.



The trend reveals a significant improvement for Leicestershire with the Satisfactory Remedy Rate increasing from 8% in 2020/21 to 30% in 2024/25, with the most notable jump occurring between 2022/23 (4%) and 2023/24 (24%).

In contrast, the average remained much lower and relatively stable, rising only from 8% to 10% over the same period. This indicates that Leicestershire has become more effective at resolving complaints early and to the Ombudsman's satisfaction, reflecting positively on Leicestershire's approach to complaint handling and its commitment to putting things right before escalation.

Recommendation Compliance

Cases where the Ombudsman recommended a remedy to put things right for the person affected are monitored for compliance. Its recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault occurred. The 'Compliance Rate' is the percentage of cases where an organisation provided satisfactory evidence of its compliance with the Ombudsman's recommendations.

The table below shows the 'Compliance Rating (%)' for Leicestershire compared to English county local authorities for five reporting periods.

Reporting Year	Leicestershire	Minimum for all English county local authorities	Mean for all English county local authorities	Maximum for all English county local authorities
2020/21	100	98	100	100
2021/22	100	100	100	100
2022/23	100	96	100	100
2023/24	100	98	100	100
2024/25	100	96	100	100

Leicestershire has maintained 100% compliance for all years shown.

Remedy Payments Recommended by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Ombudsman may recommend a remedy in the form of a payment which may contain elements for failure to provide a service together with an element to recognise the complainants time and trouble to pursue the complaint. The table below shows the total payments made because of recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

Reporting Year	Remedy Payment Value
2022/23	£40,750
2023/24	£27,222.15
2024/25	£21,113

The direction of travel across the three reporting periods shows a reduction in the total value of remedy payments, with a 22% decrease between the two most recent periods.

23 complaints were decided with a financial redress remedy, a decrease from 27 in 2023/24. 9 upheld complaints with financial remedy were due to SEN assessments. 8 upheld complaints with financial remedy were due to assessments and charging within adult care.

Public Reports

The Ombudsman issues public reports in cases where there is a wider public interest, including:

- Significant injustice
- Systemic issues
- Major learning points
- Non-compliance with recommendations

These reports are published and remain available for ten years.

No public reports were issued in 2024/25. Three reports have been issued in respect of Leicestershire during the last 10-year period, with the most recent being 2023 and oldest 2020.⁸

⁸ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/leicestershire-county-council/public-reports>