

AGENDA FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



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To: All Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors : D Vernon (Chair), J Southworth, M Rahimov, A Arif, T Pilkington, D Green, T Rafiq, E Moss, C Birchmore, G Marsden and J Harris

Dear Member/Colleague

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Tuesday, 25 November 2025
Place:	Council Chamber, Bury Town Hall
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider whether they have an interest in any matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on matters considered at the last meeting and set out in the minutes or on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

4 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Questions are invited from Elected Members about items on the agenda. 15 minutes will be set aside for Member Question Time, if required.

5 MINUTES *(Pages 3 - 8)*

Minutes from the meeting held on 9th September 2025 are attached.

6 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE *(Pages 9 - 28)*

7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL PERFORMANCE DATA *(Pages 29 - 58)*

8 URGENT BUSINESS

Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair agrees may be considered as a matter of urgency.

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 9 September 2025

Present: Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)
Councillors J Southworth, M Rahimov, A Arif, T Pilkington,
D Green, T Rafiq, E Moss, C Birchmore, G Marsden and
J Rydeheard

Also in attendance: Kate Waterhouse Executive Director (Strategy &
Transformation)
Neil Kissock Director of Finance
Councillor S Thorpe Cabinet Member for Finance and
Transformation
Robert Summerfield Director of Regeneration and Project
Delivery

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence:

OSC.62 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

OSC.63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

OSC.64 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

OSC.65 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor R Bernstein.

“What action does the Council feel is appropriate to respond to the results from the GM Crime Survey where more than one third of people are not confident of getting help from GMP in an emergency”

OSC.66 MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC.67 2025/26 CORPORATE PLAN - QUARTER ONE UPDATE

A report from Councillor Thorpe, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, was circulated ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thorpe was invited to present a brief overview, highlighting the Council's Q1 performance. The report demonstrated strong alignment with corporate performance indicators, particularly those linked to core priorities

such as reducing inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. Councillor Thorpe noted that delivery across services had been substantial, with minimal slippage, and that councillors had been actively engaged in key areas.

He drew attention to the significant progress made in Children's Services, where all areas previously rated as "Requires Improvement" had shown advancement. Notably, leadership had moved from "Inadequate" to "Good," reflecting the impact of targeted improvement efforts. Financial transformation was reported to be on track, with the implementation of zero-based budgeting progressing well, although there were some delays in specific areas such as the MAP programme. Councillor Thorpe also mentioned ongoing efforts to secure a permanent site for the PRU, with alternative locations currently being explored.

During the discussion, several councillors raised questions. Councillor Moss queried the reduction in HMOs from 80 to 10, referencing page 26 of the report. Councillor Thorpe and Robert Summerfield responded, explaining that the decline was reflective of market conditions and the high cost of construction. They noted that developments with fewer than 10 units often fall below the threshold for affordable housing contributions, although the number of affordable homes built is expected to increase in 2023–24. The Brownfield Housing Fund and Homes England grants were acknowledged as helpful, but insufficient to fully offset rising construction costs. Developments in Radcliffe and Seedfield were cited as examples of ongoing work, with support from GMCA and other partners.

Councillor Rydeheard asked about the Milltown Street bridge, which was destroyed in 2015, and whether there were plans for its reconstruction. Robert Summerfield advised that a response would be sought from Highways, and Neil Long would provide an update. Councillor Rydeheard also raised questions about the Elton and Walshaw sites, which were addressed by Councillor Birchmore.

On housing delivery, Councillor Birchmore referred to page 13 and asked about the timeline for the housing register delivery pipeline. Kate Waterhouse responded that the Homeless Strategy outlines a delivery period of approximately 18 months.

Councillor Moss raised a question regarding EHCPs, noting that while the number of new plans issued within 12 months had decreased, the number of children with EHCPs in schools had increased. Councillor Thorpe explained that this reflected a more realistic and targeted approach, with improved assessments and robust input from educational psychologists. He acknowledged that while fewer plans were being issued, those who needed them were receiving appropriate support, and the right to appeal remained in place. Councillor Marsden expressed concern about a potential backlog and questioned whether the reduced issuance might be due to increased stringency. Councillor Thorpe responded that the process had become more objective and rigorous, and that previous practices may have been overly generous. Councillor Marsden asked whether this could leave the Council open to scrutiny, and accepted the premise of a more balanced approach.

Councillor Pilkington commented on the evolving landscape, suggesting that some parents view EHCPs as a "silver bullet." He asked whether the work of Children's Services and strategic partnerships with schools could help mitigate pressures. Councillor Thorpe agreed, highlighting the importance of the graduated approach within schools, which enables early interventions and support without necessarily requiring formal plans. He emphasised that while partnerships are critical, they do not replace the need for appropriate interventions where necessary.

Councillor Rydeheard asked for clarification on the risks addressed in the Fishpool local transport strategy. A full written response will be provided.

The committee held a general discussion on the growing pressures around homelessness in Bury. Councillor Moss raised concerns about the increasing difficulty residents face in securing accommodation, which Councillor Thorpe attributed to limited funding and broader systemic challenges. The issue was described as serious and worsening.

Councillor Birchmore asked whether the Council tracks homelessness caused by Section 21 evictions, and Kate Waterhouse agreed to explore whether this data could be reported. Councillor Rahimov inquired about seasonal patterns in homelessness, and Kate noted that rough sleepers often return in late summer, particularly around August, in anticipation of colder weather.

The conversation reflected a shared concern about the scale and complexity of homelessness locally, with members seeking greater clarity on data and trends to inform future scrutiny and policy responses.

Councillor Vernon asked how the significant financial gap would affect the Council's performance going forward. Councillor Thorpe explained that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires the Council to find savings to ensure financial stability over the coming years. He acknowledged that this would impact delivery, as not all areas of the plan may be completed.

Councillor Vernon asked about the current stage of financial planning, and Councillor Thorpe expressed confidence in the re-profiling of the capital programme, noting that many initiatives are already underway. He added that economic forecasts would continue to influence future decisions.

It Was Agreed that:

- The Report be noted
- The Committee confirmed that scrutiny of the report had taken place and that Cabinet would be informed accordingly at the meeting scheduled for the following evening.

OSC.68 REGENERATION UPDATE

In the absence of Councillor O'Brien, Councillor Thorpe attended the meeting to provide an overview of the regeneration and housing portfolio. He began by outlining the scale of the current regeneration programme, which includes over 30 active projects with a combined value of approximately £140 million. These projects span a wide range of physical regeneration initiatives and intersect with the work of other strategic boards, including the Housing Growth Board and the Commercial Board, particularly in relation to the Millgate Shopping Centre. There is also significant crossover with highways and place-based workstreams, reflecting the integrated nature of the council's approach to regeneration.

Councillor Thorpe acknowledged the considerable challenges facing the delivery of regeneration projects, particularly in the current economic climate. He highlighted the impact of inflation on construction materials and labour, as well as the broader issue of high interest rates, which are affecting the viability of schemes. He referenced the Farmer Review, *Modernise or Die*, which critiques the inefficiencies of the construction industry and the urgent need for modernisation. Recruitment and succession planning were also noted as ongoing concerns, although the regeneration team continues to perform strongly under pressure.

The Committee was updated on a number of housing growth projects, many of which have been supported by external grant funding. This has enabled the council to bring forward brownfield sites for development and support wider housing objectives. Among the sites discussed were Seedfield, which is now progressing; Pyramid Park and Humphrey House, where safeguarding and decontamination work is underway alongside a design competition; and the Wheatfield site, which is being developed in collaboration with Adult Care to support integrated housing delivery.

The Elton Reservoir site was described as particularly complex, involving significant infrastructure requirements and legal work. Councillor Thorpe noted that while the site has potential, it remains contentious and is not yet at a stage where development can proceed. The Elms site is being explored for direct development without a delivery partner, which may improve viability. A number of smaller sites within the ALDP are also being progressed to maintain a steady pipeline of housing delivery.

The Committee was informed of close working between the regeneration and children's services teams, particularly in relation to proposals for new children's homes. Section 106 funding has also been allocated to support the acquisition of homes as part of the council's wider housing strategy.

In Radcliffe, several key regeneration projects are progressing well. The Radcliffe Hub and Market Chambers have moved past initial sewer works, with piling now complete. The Bury Market Canopies project is significantly ahead of schedule and has been delivered without disruption to traders. Similarly, the Flexi Hall is progressing rapidly, with structural works well underway and the project currently nine weeks ahead of programme. The Millwood site, being developed in partnership with Bruntwood, is in the masterplanning phase.

Councillor Thorpe also provided an update on education infrastructure, including the delivery of new pupil referral units. One such unit is being developed on Whittaker Street in Radcliffe, as part of the council's broader commitment to improving educational provision.

A discussion followed regarding parking provision, prompted by a question from Councillor Birchmore. Concerns were raised about the potential loss of parking in Prestwich and whether sufficient provision was being made in Radcliffe. Officers clarified that in Prestwich, two parking locations are being consolidated, but there will be no net loss of spaces. In Radcliffe, parking needs are being actively monitored, particularly around the medical centre. Modelling work is underway to assess future requirements, and recommendations will be brought back to the Committee once data collection is complete. It was noted that current provision stands at 222 spaces, but demand could exceed 300, indicating a likely shortfall.

The Committee welcomed the update and acknowledged the scale and ambition of the regeneration programme. Members expressed interest in undertaking more detailed scrutiny of individual projects at future meetings and agreed that ongoing oversight would be important, particularly in relation to funding, delivery risks, and cross-departmental collaboration.

Following the main presentation, members raised a number of specific questions and comments relating to ongoing regeneration projects and associated strategies. Councillor Birchmore queried the current position regarding the tendering process for the Bury Market basement. In response, Robert Summerfield confirmed that a market analysis is currently being undertaken by the Economic Growth team. This work is intended to identify viable and appropriate uses for the basement space, recognising the significant opportunity it presents. He noted that the Council is seeking external advice to ensure the space is used effectively and that mistakes are avoided. While there is no confirmed date for the procurement process, it is anticipated that this will progress in the coming months once the external advice has been received.

Councillor Birchmore also raised concerns regarding the provision of adult education space in Radcliffe. She noted that previous plans had included enterprise and adult learning space within the Hub, but this no longer appears to be the case. As a result, there is currently no adult education facility within the borough of Radcliffe, which is increasing costs and limiting access. Officers confirmed that a response had been provided by the adult education team via email, and it was agreed that this correspondence would be circulated to Councillor Birchmore. It was also noted that UK Shared Prosperity Funding had supported the inclusion of two designated teaching rooms within the Radcliffe Hub.

Councillor Moss asked whether the Council had sufficient resources to deliver the scale of regeneration activity underway. Robert Summerfield responded by highlighting the shift in how such initiatives are delivered, with a strong emphasis on leveraging private sector expertise and funding. He explained that many officers are funded through external funding streams, and that the Council has become adept at managing supply chains and commissioning external support. However, he acknowledged that the development environment remains challenging, particularly in relation to recruitment and retention. He referenced the Hackitt Review and noted that it is currently more lucrative to work as a planner than a surveyor, which is impacting the availability of key skills. He added that the delivery of regeneration is increasingly reliant on revenue sources such as BGI (Bury Growth Initiative), and that managing these resources effectively is “an art, not a science.”

Councillor Moss also asked about the viability of affordable housing delivery, particularly in relation to the Pyramid Park development. Officers confirmed that 24 of the 48 units on that site are designated as affordable, but that viability remains a key issue. Rising energy costs, increased business rates, and the requirement to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain on large sites are all placing pressure on development budgets. In some cases, this is resulting in trade-offs between environmental and social outcomes.

Councillor Rydeheard sought clarification on how much of the £140 million regeneration programme is funded through borrowing. In response, Robert Summerfield confirmed that two major schemes — the Bury Market and Radcliffe Hub — had each received £20 million through the Levelling Up Fund. The Council has drawn down the full allocation for both schemes and is one of the first local authorities to progress from inception to construction. He also confirmed that Sport England funding had been fully spent on delivering specific outputs, with regular monitoring visits taking place.

Councillor Rydeheard also asked about the former fire station site, which had previously been earmarked for a hotel. Officers confirmed that the hotel deal had fallen through and that the site is now being considered for housing. A final decision will be made by elected members once the masterplan has been completed.

Councillor Marsden raised a question about staffing levels within the Radcliffe Hub, specifically how many council staff would be based there. Officers confirmed that a written response would be provided, but noted that the Hub will include office space for community-based staff cohorts. Traffic flow and parking surveys are currently being undertaken to inform future planning.

Councillor Rafiq requested clarification on the number of accessible homes being delivered within the 4–6 development. Officers confirmed that 34 apartments are being delivered as accessible homes.

Councillor Southworth asked what consideration had been given to improving children’s health and activity levels through regeneration. In response, Robert Summerfield explained that most developments include outdoor spaces and that these are considered as part of individual planning applications. Councillor Southworth followed up by asking about the provision of parks and recreation areas for children and young people. Officers acknowledged that this is

an area of focus and confirmed that discussions are ongoing with Public Health colleagues to ensure developments support active lifestyles and walkability. Councillor Thorpe added that the Council's wellness strategy is being aligned with the regeneration strategy to ensure a more cohesive approach to health and wellbeing.

Finally, Councillor Rydeheard asked whether it would be possible to meet with officers involved in the procurement of play areas. Officers agreed to facilitate a conversation with the relevant officer, to explore procurement processes and project delivery in more detail. It was also noted that further detail would be provided on the Elton Reservoir site as plans progress.

It Was Agreed

- The update be noted

OSC.69 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR D VERNON
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm)

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: Tuesday 25th November 2025

SUBJECT: Bury Community Safety Partnership update

**REPORT FROM: Councillor Sandra Walmsley, Cabinet Member
for Communities and Inclusion**

**CONTACT OFFICER: Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of
Strategy and Transformation / Chris Woodhouse, Strategic
Partnerships Manager**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Bury Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory, multi-agency partnership that brings partners together to prevent harm, reduce and mitigate criminality, and to promote measures that increase the safety and resilience of local communities.
- 1.2 This paper is the latest update on the delivery of activities against the five priorities of the CSP, which collectively support the wider delivery of Bury's *LET'S Do It!* ambitions.
- 1.3 The priorities within the CSP Plan, which were developed with partners and our communities, are:
 - Tackling Offences Against Children
 - Prevention and earlier intervention on serious violence
 - Domestic Abuse, in the context of the trio of vulnerabilities
 - Safeguarding inclusive communities
 - Safe places and spaces
- 1.4 For each of these priorities the update from Section 3 onwards highlights partnership delivery activity and the data in relation to these. The report highlights key partnership activity and steps taken to increase safety and the feeling of safety within local neighbourhoods.

2. DELIVERY OF THE CURRENT CSP PLAN

- 2.1 Bury Community Safety Partnership is chaired by the Chief Superintendent of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) as District Commander, and Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation at Bury Council.

- 2.2 Bury CSP meets every two months and combines standing items on funding, communications, data and links to the safeguarding ecosystem – alongside deep dives across the priorities and any specific matters arising.
- 2.3 Increasingly the work of the Bury Community Safety Partnership dovetails with the work of the Bury Safeguarding ecosystem. Opportunities are taken across each of the CSP priorities to maximise awareness and connectivity across the respective partnerships, to maximise the embedding of learning and ensure a system response to threats and opportunities.
- 2.4 The delivery of community safety activity is a key component of *Let's Do It!* and Bury's Public Service Reform agenda. This report outlines examples of community safety colleagues across public and voluntary sector partners working together following the LET'S principles of targeting collective resources, working in collaboration and focusing on prevention.

3. PRIORITY: TACKLING OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN

Measure	24/25 Q1	24/25 Q2	24/25 Q3	24/25 Q4	25/26 Q1	Trend
Number of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) cases open	11	9	12	14	15	↑
Number of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases open	12	9	10	8	6	↓
Domestic Abuse victims aged Under 18 (% of total victims)	5.5	4.4	6.7	7.19	7.15	↓
Domestic Abuse incidents where a child was present	81	73	80	93	104	↑
GMP data on Offences committed by under 18s	558	254	351	529	541	↑
Missing from home incidents reported to GMP	375	259	194	243	286	↑
Number of young people as first-time entrants into the youth justice system	10	12	7	10	10	-

- 3.1 In previous Bury CSP plans, children and young people were not specified as a designated priority; rather a focus ran through each of the previous priorities that considered impact in relation to young people. As part of strengthening the approach to Children's safeguarding and the police's commitment to Child Centred Policing, an explicit priority has been included on tackling offences against children to reiterate that this an absolute priority for the partnership.
- 3.2 Central to this is the CSP work with the Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership, that is in turn informed by a number of subgroups including the Complex Safeguarding Subgroup. In Bury we are committed to protect children robustly and the co-located, multi-agency Complex Safeguarding team are efficient and effective. They review and scan daily for risk and respond accordingly. They liaise directly with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and together devise a bespoke response and care packages as appropriate.
- 3.3 The work of the team is intelligence led, suspect focused but victim centred. Over the last twelve months there remains a dynamic relationship between reactive and proactive investigations. Operation WASDALE involves monthly

days of action where GMP and Council colleagues work with partner agencies to be on the front foot targeting locations and offenders suspected to be involved in exploitation. This includes responding to system and community intelligence, such as linking in with Operation ERATH which responds to concerns raised in relation to a business property in the borough which may result in prompt action to lower the potential risk to children including colleagues from the Council's Trading Standards and Licensing team working alongside child protection specialists.

- 3.4 This approach has achieved significant results. In October following an investigation and court case spanning years two males were convicted of over 30 offences against children and we expect them to receive a significant custodial sentence.
- 3.5 Work continues to strengthen the governance and assurance in relation to such activity. Complex Safeguarding Team casework is included in the Children's Services Quality Assurance framework and recent audits and reviews point to the teams performing at a high level, including capturing the voice of young people in influencing interventions. The CSP has sought this year to build on this, through partnership representation at the annual Circles of Influence session with young people at the Elizabethan Suite, and a facilitated session with the SEND Changemakers group. In both cases this was to hear directly from young people to tailor approaches, messaging and support and increase mutual understanding of risks and opportunities.
- 3.6 Increasing awareness and understanding of the warning signs, threats and support to victims is a key feature of the work of the partnership. In February 2025 an Educational Safeguarding Conference took place for Designated Safeguarding Leads, Headteachers and Pastoral Managers across the borough. This session included inputs on harmful sexual behaviour, coercive control, and a session by Michael Conroy on dialogues with male children on being safe and being safe to be around. Bury is also actively engaged with the Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub, both feeding in local good practice and cascading learning through the Bury ecosystem, including to voluntary and private sector partners. Through the CSP there has been promotion of the GM Complex Safeguarding Week of Action in November 2025 which included inputs around online abuse and extortion, Country Lines, embedding trauma informed practices and, on the 18th November, included a session on Police Youth Voice Work in Bury, showcasing approaches used by the local district police teams in partnership with Bury Youth Service to enhance the role of young people in shaping the work of the police.
- 3.7 Further work is taking place on strengthening links with the Adult Safeguarding Board, including with Adult Social Care to support transition. There has also been increased engagement with Housing Services within this. The CSP continues to work to build connections to other services as part of this work, with Licencing and Trading Standards increasingly connected into intelligence building and enforcement activity.
- 3.8 Section 5 of this report details activity around tackling domestic violence in the borough and notes that the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognised children as victims in their own right. Bury's Family Safeguarding Model is central to our local response on this, ensuring a Team Around the Family approach best mitigates and threat and harm. Of note in the data above, whilst there has been an increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents with a child present

during the summer of 2025, the rolling average figure for the year is lower than recent years, and there has been a year-on-year decrease since 2021.

4 PRIORITY: PREVENTION AND EARLIER INTERVENTION ON SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Measure	24/25 Q1	24/25 Q2	24/25 Q3	24/25 Q4	25/26 Q1	Trend
Rate of Violent Crime	3.5	3.7	3.2	3.2	3.5	↑
Violence with injury crimes	380	407	349	434	383	↓
Possession of weapons offences	65	58	66	60	80	↑
Number of knife enabled robberies	14	7	14	17	17	-
Hospital admissions due to violence (rate per 100,000 population)	3.3	2.1	2.4	2.0	3.0	↑
Total number of A&E attendances by residents due to assault	133	125	122	125	83	↓

- 4.1 Bury CSP has continued a focus on tackling serious violence, following the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty and subsequent focus on Safer Streets by national government. As a borough, Bury is one of the safest districts in Greater Manchester. The borough's rate of all crime and of violent crime remains below regional average. This is something that the CSP is not complacent about and works hard to maintain, whilst also being fully aware that as a result when incidents do happen they are more noticeable and concerning to local communities.
- 4.2 This priority involves working collaborative to identify offenders and crucially to address some of the underlying conditions that enable or facilitate criminality. This is alongside working as a partnership to use the different means of engagement and (civil / criminal) enforcement activity to prevent or intervene earlier on serious violence which includes but is not limited to knife enabled crimes.
- 4.3 A prime example of this has been Operation VARDAR. This has seen different teams within GMP work alongside Housing Services colleagues within the Council and with ASB officers, Youth Services and community sector leads to deliver a programme of partnership problem solving. Responding to a linked series of targeted violent incidents in Whitefield, partnership colleagues came together to address both the immediate safety concerns and to look at underlying factors driving some of the offences. Through building on community-led insight, activity progressed in relation to joint safety patrols, targeted outreach activity, reinforced tenancy engagement work, multiagency awareness activity on cuckooing and the delivery of environment improvements.
- 4.4 Taking a blended approach has included a Sensitive Lets Policy, more visible community walkabouts, targeted maildrops, increased awareness of anonymously submitting information, investment in video doorbells and a Public Space Protection Order for alleygating between Sawley Avenue and

Malton Avenue. This combination has led to strengthened community resilience, as demonstrated by a bustling community action day in September and a district policing award for Problem Solving Operation of the Year.

4.5 VARDAR embodies a number of elements which have been used more broadly within CSP activities, including:

- Direct engagement with school settings to co-produce more meaningful interventions. School knife crime inputs are being rolled out as part of broader crime prevention resources for education establishments through the Pol-Ed platform. Pol-Ed supports schools in delivering expertly planned lessons designed to develop a deep awareness of risks, citizenship and the law. Currently 83% of Bury Schools are signed up to this, the highest rate in Greater Manchester. This allows for ongoing resource access to supplement direct inputs into schools from the GMP neighbourhood teams and for all Year 8 pupils who once again took part in B.Safe during October 2025.
- Staff across the Council and GMP licensing team have been working together to support the Council's Trading Standards team to target activity on premises where intelligence suggests the sale of illicit items and to undertake spot checks with retailers to ensure harmful weapons or paraphernalia are not on sale to children.
- Weapons sweeps on a routine basis, including the use of the Knife Arch on the Bee Network system and work with the Bury Business Improvement District on sensitive environmental improvements that remove natural opportunities for weapons to be stored.
- Mix of overt and covert policing and detached outreach deployments; sharing information on reporting mechanisms such as Fearless (part of Crimestoppers).



- 4.6 Whilst these activities take place throughout the year there is a specific focus during Operation SCEPTRE – GMP Force level week of actions addressing knife crime, the most recent being mid-November including visits to habitual knife carriers; arrests of outstanding knife-enabled offenders and focus on Operation CONCEPT warrants which is police led activity in conjunction with agencies including the Royal Mail and the Border Force to tackle the importation of illegal blades. There is also going to be further work on supporting partners to identify risk through a knife identification aide memoir through the College of Policing and National Police Chief's Council national weapons guide which will be distributed in next couple of months and delivered locally.
- 4.7 Work has continued to focus on identifying and supporting the young people most susceptible to serious violence. Through the Violence Reduction Unit, there has been continued work to focus on diversionary activity, including empowering people to build confidence and resilience, and to find alternative positive avenues to express themselves.
- 4.8 The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) works to reduce violent crime by funding initiatives that support vulnerable communities and prevent violence at its roots. It brings together strategic partners from the local authority, community safety partnership, health, probation, criminal justice and voluntary an community sector leads to deliver community-focused solutions. GMP featured the local work of the VRU with the Bury Defence Academy as part of promoting the role of strengthening community ties and reducing violence through sport and mentorship through a feature on the GMP website in August 2025.
- 4.9 Further VRU related activity includes regular detached sessions (602 young people individually engaged with in the last quarter); mentoring support (19 young people directly supported alongside a girls peer support group); upskilling of Holiday Activity Fund providers to increase the awareness of prevention support offers; and 'Stop the bleed' training on emergency street first aid. This is being further strengthened by greater connectivity to the STEER programme – an Early Intervention project through the Youth Endowment Fund to change behaviours and reduce the risk of offending.
- 4.10 The Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Board has also established a Serious Youth Violence subgroup which is looking at the opportunities of a Weapons Protocol for schools which is designed to safely reduce the number of exclusions and to maximise out of court resolutions to youth offending.

5. PRIORITY: DOMESTIC ABUSE (INCLUDING IN CONTEXT OF SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH)

Measure	24/25 Q1	24/25 Q2	24/25 Q3	24/25 Q4	25/26 Q1	25/26 Q2	Trend
Number of DVA Incidents (GMP)	1062	1394	1030	1092	1265	1112	↓
Percentage of Domestic Abuse victims that are repeat victims	10.6	13.7	12.2	11.2	10.8	N/A	↓
Percentage of DA suspects who are repeat offenders	17.1	19.4	16.2	17.3	16.3	N/A	↓
MARAC* Cases	108	166	115	116	158	N/A	↑
MARAC* Percentage of Repeat Cases	41	35	22	35	37	N/A	↑
Number of (all) crimes linked to influence of drugs	211	217	245	248	356	324	↓
Early Break: Percentage of young people reporting a reduction in substance use	100	75	77	79	79	100	↑
*MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference							

5.1 The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, a statutory partnership under the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021, has continued to lead this agenda, focusing on the following priorities:

- Ensuring victims can access timely and effective support with appropriate risk management through MARAC, including evolving processes in line with the Family Safeguarding model,
- Improved partnership working with a focus on prevention so that individuals and communities recognise the signs of domestic abuse and the promotion of healthy relationships, and
- Working with perpetrators to identify and stop harmful behaviours.

5.2 Domestic Abuse remains a key priority for Bury Community Safety Partnership and increasingly for Bury Safeguarding Partnership. Whilst there was previously a CSP Plan priority on Domestic Abuse, the refreshed strategy emphasises the outcomes from safeguarding learning reviews of the importance of considering domestic abuse in the broader context of a person/family's circumstances, particularly considering any co-occurring experiences, such as those relating to substance use and mental health.

5.3 This is reflective of the work to broaden partnership awareness of the nature of such circumstances, to increase professional curiosity for agencies to consider broader features of a household (including whether these might be causal factors or one factor exacerbating another) and to increasingly consider the opportunities to collaborate in supporting victims and changing the behaviours of offenders. This approach has been central to the ongoing work of the Family

Safeguarding Model within Children's Services and is reflected in the new Bury Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in April 2025. The strategy commits the Partnership to supporting more integrated commissioning of all forms of safe accommodation, and is being enshrined in the new contracts for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and Substance Misuse provision which have both been reviewed within the past year.

- 5.4 Since the last report to Scrutiny, Domestic Abuse Protection Orders have been introduced. The pilot began in Bury in late November 2024, and now covers Manchester, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. Within this time period regionally there have been the successful application of more than 400 DAPOs (over 60 of which related to the Bury district), including five which are indefinite, which is helping us to ensure survivors are much safer from harm, without them needing to go through the court process themselves.
- 5.5 In February, the Safeguarding Minister visited Bury to meet the specialists from the Domestic Abuse team to explore how DAPOs are being used to protect victims from all types of domestic abuse offences, whether that be physical, sexual, or coercive and controlling behaviour. They can be granted for any length of time, may require 'positive requirements' for perpetrators such as electronic monitoring or attendance at a behaviour change programme, and any breach is an arrestable criminal offence. One key benefit for victims is that DAPO applications do not require a victim to attend or provide evidence at court. Police work with local partners to compile all necessary information for the courts to authorise the sought-after orders.
- 5.6 DAPOs are just part of the approach to addressing perpetrator behaviour. Talk Listen Change continues to develop our services for both adults (through the Aspiring to Change Programme) and children and young people in Bury, supporting both those who are displaying harmful behaviours and those who are affected by them. Currently, TLC delivers the Respect Young Peoples Programme, the Encouraging Healthy Relationships Programme and provides counselling for children and young people impacted by domestic abuse.
- 5.7 The cohort accessing Using Harm programmes tend to be older children and has a higher percentage of referrals of young people with a learning, access, or behaviour need. The Respect programme has seen parents report a 74% reduction in conduct problems and 71% reduction in harmful behaviour in addition to 90% reporting a positive change in relation to their overall wellbeing. 61% of young people have reported a positive change in their home environment, learning outcomes and positive change in their support networks, as well as their understanding on how they affect others.
- 5.8 The GMP Domestic Abuse Team have recently conducted a week of action to embed evidence led trauma informed responses, focusing on bringing offenders to justice. This has included delivering evidence led Prosecution training to colleagues (which will provide additional focus in cases where there are mental health concerns or substance use concerns that could previously have led to the withdrawal of the individual supporting the prosecution); improving evidence capture at first response; strengthening compliance and welfare checks; shared partner training on applying for DAPO; and inputs from Respect to Bury officers on securing sustainable positive requirements on DAPO applications.
- 5.9 With respect to supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse, the Risk Management of cases includes a daily priorities meeting to discuss all high-risk

cases with representation from GMP, Social Care (adults and children), commissioned support including Safenet¹, Achieve, Probation, Criminal Justice Mental Health. Any cases including young people are automatically screened through the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and there is a fortnightly MARAC meeting, co-chaired between GMP and the Council. Work has taken place through the partnership to further evolve the 'decision tree' to ensure the total system capacity of support is appropriate and used most effectively, including efficient triage via the MASH and to increase system understanding of connectivity into specialist support, either through the Family Safeguarding Model or specialist IDVAs where appropriate.

- 5.10 Across Greater Manchester work is underway through GMP to review MARAC governance arrangements to seek to increase consistency of approach and support the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) tool.
- 5.11 In terms of volumes of activity, Bury has seen a fairly consistent rate of domestic abuse over the past 12 months, and this has typically been the third lowest rate across the ten GM authorities, behind Stockport and Trafford. Of the Domestic Abuse crimes recorded by GMP on the Bury district, the prominent nature of crimes included stalking and harassment (33%); violence without injury (30%) and violence with injury (14%).
- 5.12 The highest prevalence of domestic abuse reports in the borough are concentrated within the Moorside, Bury East and Radcliffe East wards. Attention is being given to focus support offers into these areas, including prioritisation for training, opportunities to locate staffing and awareness sessions in these areas, and to provide a focus for public service leaderships teams in these locations. Positively there has been a sustained reduction in cases from Radcliffe West following targeted promotion of activity, along with reductions in Elton and Unsworth.
- 5.13 Of the individuals being supported through Safenet Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), just under 90% of these are female (there was a slight increase in males in the most recent quarter); 16% of individuals are from BAME communities and 20% identify as having a disability. In addition, 14.5% of cohort have an alcohol support need (up annually from 11.1%); 11.8% a drug support need (up from 10%) and 52.6% a mental health support need up from 48.9%.
Admission abuse types principally recorded as emotional and psychological abuse (37%); physical abuse (30%); controlling and coercive control (22%) sexual abuse (13%) and economic abuse (12%)
- 5.14 A key component of the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board continues to be the ongoing awareness raising and training on domestic abuse provision. There has been an increased focus on the fact that domestic violence and abuse takes many forms and that it is much more than physical abuse between intimate partners. This awareness has included:
- Dame Jasvinder Sanghera provided an input on Forced Marriage and Honour based abuse at Education Safeguarding Conference in February 2025 and input to professionals including probation, social care, safeguarding, acute health and migration colleagues is taking place as part of White Ribbon campaign on 27th November at Gigg Lane.

¹ Safenet are a commissioned provider in relation to Domestic Abuse Services, including Independent Domestic Violence Advisors; community outreach support; and safe accommodation refuge <https://safenet.org.uk/our-services/bury-services-bury-idva-bury-outreach-bury-refuges/>

- Domestic Abuse in Older Life training has continued across public and community sector leads.
- GMP led a week of action focusing on increasing awareness around stalking and harassment.
- Domestic Abuse awareness alongside substance misuse information as part of Adult Safeguarding Community Engagement stalls during November and December.
- Work is taking place with the University of Manchester Policy Unit on parricide (child to parent) abuse.
- The Partnership have supported the recent launch of the Mayor's latest campaign to tackle gender-based violence in GM, with a focus on coercive and controlling behaviour which can often escalate over time and can initially be difficult to spot. These behaviours can include controlling someone's finances or isolating them from their family and friends.
- Attendance at Women of Worth Seasonal Celebration in November including Neighbourhood Policing Team and DA staff to engage with public and try and improve public trust and confidence in the police. There will likely be females who have struggled with substance use and/mental health present.

5.15 Learning sessions have also taken place as part of ongoing Domestic Homicide Reviews and as part of the implementation of a tracker to embed such learning a refreshed series of seven-minute briefings on these is being developed with safeguarding colleagues. These will look at the cross-over between domestic abuse and wider vulnerability to harm including radicalisation and substance misuse, in addition to raising the awareness of child-to-parent domestic abuse.

5.16 With reference specifically to substance use, over the past 12 months, a significant achievement has been the development and launch of the new Bury Drug and Alcohol Strategy and Action Plan for 2025–2030. This strategy outlines six key priority areas, which include:

- Priority 1: Prevention: Neighbourhoods in Bury will be healthy spaces and people will be protected from drug and alcohol exposure and harms.
- Priority 2: Harm Reduction: Fewer people in Bury will experience drugs and/or alcohol harms - where people use drugs and/or alcohol they make better, safer, and informed choices.
- Priority 3: Treatment and support: More people in Bury who are in need will be supported by drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Priority 4: Social and community harms from drug and alcohol use: People in Bury will not be victimised, exploited, or be victims of crime and disorder associated with drugs and/or alcohol.
- Priority 5: Children, young people and families: Children and young people in Bury are protected from drug and alcohol harms and supported towards bright futures.
- Priority 6: Recovery: In Bury we are ambitious about recovery, and recovery is visible and celebrated.

5.17 The Bury Co-occurring Conditions (CoC) group continues to meet quarterly and provides progress reports and updates devolved from the Greater Manchester CoC framework. Bury has a local plan with a number of key priority areas, which the drug and alcohol and mental health commissioner are jointly leading and coordinating to improve collaboration between services for adults and children, with good progress being made. Operationally, weekly huddles and regular meetings take place between the two adult service providers (Pennine and Achieve), helping to support individuals who require treatment for co-

existing severe and enduring mental health difficulties alongside drug and/or alcohol use issues.

- 5.18 Big Life Group (part of the Achieve Partnership) who deliver outreach services, is now attending Health and Care Integrated Neighbourhood Team meetings to represent the service and the Achieve treatment and recovery partnership. Their involvement will help support individuals known to caseloads and contribute to improved outcomes and access to services and support, while enhancing partnership working.
- 5.19 Closer working between the Bury Safeguarding Team and the Achieve Bury service is an important focus. The services have implemented simplified communication channels to raise concerns or seek information and advice, similar to those established locally by GMP and Community Mental Health Team with the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team. Both services will attend each other's team meetings to raise awareness of their offer and the benefits of partnership working.
- 5.20 The Bury Drug and Alcohol Related Death (DARD) partnership has been strengthened over the past year, with improved representation and attendance from Community Mental Health Team, GMP, Bury GP Lead, and the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team in the quarterly 2025/26 panels. This enhanced engagement and reporting is improving partnership case reviews and discussions and improving local system learning. A GP masterclass session is scheduled for January, led by a Greater Manchester Mental Health Consultant, to raise awareness of the risks associated with long-term use of dependency-forming medicines. This session responds to a local theme identified by the Bury DARD panel and aims to support safer prescribing practices and reduce Bury drug related deaths.
- 5.21 Some examples of partnership activity to tackle drug related harm within our communities from an enforcement perspective include:
- In October 2025 a man who ran one of the country's biggest drug trafficking networks with connections in the borough was sentenced to over 18 years for possession and supply for Class A and B controlled drugs, in addition to money laundering offences.
 - Officers dedicated to Programme Challenger (Greater Manchester's partnership response to serious and organised crime) made significant arrests and jailed a persistent offender for drug supply offences in Bury and Radcliffe. Programme Challenger work to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks involved in drug trafficking, exploitation, firearms offences, and money laundering.
 - Drone teams supported GMP colleagues chasing a suspect which led to the discovery of a large cannabis farm. By using the specialist unit of the drone unit for a wider view, it enabled them to spot something that was suspicious which ultimately led to the significant find. What was uncovered was precisely 658 plants and six vacuum packed bags ready for distribution and was able to be prevented from getting onto local streets.
- 5.22 Specific inputs have been provided by the Council's Trading Standards and Licensing colleagues to tackle illicit sales. Within the last year this has included:
- In March 2025, officers from the Licensing Service and Trading Standards Service worked in partnership with Greater Manchester Police, Immigration and HMRC. They visited 7 premises in total and seized 1503 Illegal Vapes which equated to £20,000 in street value. Whilst undertaking the visits, a

fire safety issue was identified relating to a person living upstairs and there was no means of escape in the event of a fire. This has been referred to the Fire Service to take the necessary enforcement action they deem appropriate.

- During Operation AVRO licensing breaches were identified and a large quantity of illicit tobacco, illegal vapes and counterfeit goods were seized. This included 384 packs of Cigarettes (7480 sticks), 43 packets of hand rolling tobacco (2.15 kg) and 1218 vapes. In total £25,000 of items were seized, protecting public health from these unsafe items.
- Joint operations in August as part of Keeping Town Centres Safe this summer the following items were seized - 447 illegal vapes; 34,260 illicit sticks of tobacco (1713 packets); 8.4 kg of illicit hand-rolling tobacco (168 packets) with a collective value close to £40,000.
- In October 2025, Licensing Enforcement Officers visited seven premises across the Borough as part of Operation MACHINIZE alongside officers from Greater Manchester Police, HMRC, Immigration, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and a tobacco dog. This Operation is an ongoing National Crime Agency coordinated operation to tackle money laundering and criminal use of cash-intensive high street businesses. 888 packets of Illicit cigarettes and 108 pouches of hand rolling tobacco were seized as well as 199 illegal disposable vapes and 76 counterfeit toys and 10 counterfeit pairs of headphones with an approximate street value of £22,500.

6. PRIORITY: SAFEGUARDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Measure	24/25 Q1	24/25 Q2	24/25 Q3	24/25 Q4	25/26 Q1	25/26 Q2	Trend
GMCA Survey: % of people who feel their community is a place where people from multiple backgrounds get along	74	75	79	79	72	77	↑
GMCA Survey: My local area is a place where people look out for each other	78	71	78	75	72	74	↑
Number of Hate Crimes	168	194	164	144	184	252	↑
How confident are you that you could get help from Greater Manchester Police in an emergency?	60	67	66	63	69	67	↓
Violence Against Women and Girls	2,006	1,254	1,087	1,117	1,156	1,146	↓
GM Survey: Percentage of women who feel safe in their local area	87	93	90	89	92	89	↓

- 6.1 Community Cohesion has been an existing priority of the Community Safety Partnership for a number of years. Engagement on the current strategy took place in the context of regional, nation and international tensions being felt

within and across communities in Bury, which strengthened the CSP's commitment to this priority.

- 6.2 The recent year has seen significant challenges that have increased community tension locally and have been the focus on co-ordinated community safety activity to address.
- 6.3 On 2nd October the terror attack on Heaton Park Synagogue, taking place during Yom Kippur, brought significant grief to our Jewish communities; concern to our Muslim communities, and shock to the broader neighbourhoods of Bury. Emergency response activity saw Bury resources deployed to assist those in need within the borough and to support colleagues in Manchester and the wider region. Emergency command structures, including a Response Co-ordination Group sought to ensure urgent health and humanitarian aid was provided as GMP colleagues led the immediate response to the threat.
- 6.4 Patrolling activity had already been enhanced as part of specific operations to support High Holy Days, but significant additional resources were provided to increase security presence in the immediate days and weeks after the attack, to provide reassurance. This included engagement with wider community settings concerned over the potential for reprisals. The aftermath of the attack coincided with the anniversary of the 7th October 2023 Hamas attack and points below reference to the ongoing work under Operation WILDFLOWER which has continued to co-ordinate activity associated with tensions relating to the Gaza conflict. Council colleagues continue to assist through liaising with GMP on CCTV linkages to support investigations and as part of joint tension monitoring.
- 6.5 Responding to the synagogue attack there has been a mixture of formal and informal engagement with community leads, the tailoring and sharing of support information, including victim support, trauma informed wellbeing information and further guidance on reporting any form of hate. There have also been additional meetings with representatives from Prestwich to further conversations on ongoing reassurance and support. There has been reinforced messaging on reporting antisemitism and islamophobia, emphasising the need to call out all forms of hatred.
- 6.6 Targeted liaison has taken place with headteachers to support the return of pupils to school; with community health partners on the opportunities to ensure culturally appropriate support and provision is both available and known about; and bespoke approaches to communication are being developed in conjunction with community partners to increase the depth of dialogue between CSP partners and local communities
- 6.7 The events of the 2nd October are compounded by the timing of a court case concerning a foiled terror attack following arrests by counter-terrorism officers in 2024. Whilst a positive piece of policing to negate the threat of that attack, the information disclosed as part of the court case naturally brings additional concerns to members of the community, as such the activities set out in 6.5 and 6.6, and broader work on cohesion look to address the totality of experience being felt locally with the need for ongoing reassurance activity and that addressing cohesion is an everyone-everywhere issue.
- 6.8 Operation WILDFLOWER activity has continued throughout 2025. Working with colleagues in Salford and Manchester, alongside the Community Security Trust and Shomrim, this allows for sharing community level concerns, tensions and reports of incidents. It allowed for the two-way flow of updates in relation to

these between statutory agencies and partners the cross-referencing of any reported incidents between agencies; co-ordination of work together to protect and maintain community cohesion including linkages to and learning from activity elsewhere across the region (with Bury inputting into regional WILDFLOWER governance); and shared intelligence on any risks to cohesion, such as demonstration or acts of hate. The WILDFLOWER meetings have allowed a means to respond quickly to any potential point of tension, eg identification and removal of hateful graffiti and a more co-ordinated approach as partnership to ensuring that different faiths can observe days of significance and local customs in ways that don't increase local tension. Notably there was positive feedback to the joint patrol plans around Purim and Ramadan in 2025, applying learning from previous years and increasing mutual awareness and understanding across different communities.

- 6.9 Activity to safeguard against hateful extremism has continued to evolve following another strong outcome in local benchmarking of Prevent Duty delivery through the Home Office, where benchmarking standards were met in all categories and exceeded in two-thirds of standards). The new tiered training approach has been rolled out, Prevent Partnership membership extended to include licensing colleagues, the leaving care team and broader housing providers; whilst work on reducing permissive environments has seen Bury lead on guidance around mitigating the use of 3D printers for harm. To further promote safeguarding against hateful extremism, the CSP has worked with SAFE (Security Advice for Everyone) via the Community Security Trust who are delivered a session on awareness in relation to The Far Right, Incels and Martyn's Law (Protect Duty).
- 6.10 Safeguarding against hate includes a relentless focus on increasing hate crime reporting by supporting options for reporting and awareness across communities. GMP and Bury Council have continued to work together to engage with existing hate crime reporting centres and to broaden the array of hate crime ambassadors within communities. During the past twelve months this has included inputs as part of Greater Manchester Hate Crime Awareness week in February, national Hate Crime Awareness week in October, and on an ongoing basis. Examples of activity include:
- Awareness raising and ambassador training at Chesham Fold Community Centre and to tenancy engagement officer across housing services.
 - Training to Citizens Advice staff to support disclosures and share awareness.
 - Showcase of young people of Bury and Radcliffe promoting hate crime messaging at The Met.
 - A Hate Crime awareness round table event with over 70 attendees at the Mosses Centre.
 - Information stalls at the Millgate, Bury Interchange and wider Bee Network, community action days.
 - Drop ins at existing community activities and networks, including the BAME Project and Women of Worth.
 - Input to matchday volunteers at Bury Football Club and joint engagement with Her Game Too.
 - Inputs through B.Safe including from the Sophie Lancaster Foundation
 - Information and awareness through cohesion related events outlined in section 6.12
- 6.11 On the key events of Hate Crime Awareness week in October was a session with the British Red Cross and Eagles Wing which had a particular focus on

increasing awareness and support in relation to hate crime relation to asylum seekers, refugees, and those agencies supporting this population. The CSP has sought to provide support against challenging national rhetoric and partners have worked closely to share any insight and intelligence of any concern including to debunk any mis/disinformation that might be in circulation where possible, and to ensure individuals are aware of, and confident, in reporting any concerns of crimes – and that these will be thoroughly investigated.

6.12 As part of Bury's approach, we have been keen to showcase and celebrate the different cultures and heritage we have within and across our communities. We have continued to be proud to recognise key dates within Bury's civic and cultural diary. Following Community Cohesion roundtables in 2024, partners including community leads have continued to meet with a focus on developing co-designed events and activities, sharing opportunities to raise awareness and learning through these. This has included:

- Supporting Sisters developed a Community Garden at Cateaton Street as a focal point for community and social interaction, fostering a stronger and more connected neighbourhood.
- Bury Met – Patchwork Voices, a creative project gathering personal reflections, memories, and responses from people across Bury. Through conversations, interviews, and prompts, the project invited individuals to explore themes of identity, belonging, creativity, and community, using the metaphor of a patchwork quilt; something stitched together from many stories, colours, and textures, representing the diverse voices of the borough. The Patchwork is completed and organisations have been invited to host the display during 2026.
- Collabor8 is a family event that celebrates Bury's diverse communities, with a range of stalls and events run by various cultural, community and faith groups from the Borough. The purpose of the event was to bring people together from the communities of Bury; creating an opportunity for attendees to develop their own cultural awareness and understanding, to ask questions and learn in a respectful and fun manner, enabling us to break down stereotypes, eradicate prejudice and allow a platform to tackle hate crime and to raise awareness. More than 650 attendees took part in the grounds of Derby High School.
- Bury Mela took place once again at Burrs Country Park – with a broader array of community representation involved and in attendance, with the use of town centre 'flash dances' to raise awareness.
- LGBTQI Forum- Queer Fest. A day and evening of cultural celebrations, Queer Fest included imaginative storytelling for families, poetry and art workshops, two question and answer sessions with LGBTQI+ authors, information stalls and Bollywood dancing.
- Community Cricket Match. The event organised by ADAB, took place at Bury Cricket Club and welcomed over 300 attendees including members of the public and various stallholders. The event provided a free opportunity for young people to come together to try out cricket with people from different communities recognising the role of sport as a common bond.
- Bury Interfaith Schools event – 20 schools from across the Borough engaged in a safe space to learn about 7 faiths, getting to speak first hand to different faith leaders, explore key artefacts of each faith and be able to ask any questions that they might have.

6.13 One of the core components on work in relation to cohesion is the recognition of intersectionality and that different communities of identity and experience have different feelings of safety or experiences of crime. One particular focus for the partnership is gender based violence and addressing violence against women and girls. Over the past year, Bury CSP has built upon activity to mark the White Ribbon campaign, through a number of initiatives including:

- Contributing to the development of a Bury Women & Girls Commission, including inputs to a scoping session as part of International Women's Day in March which saw inputs from Bury Council, GMP and TravelSafe who have followed this event with demonstrations at education settings and community events, including virtual-reality goggles to allow men and boys to experience unwanted attention and abuse from a different perspective.
- Active bystander training for public service and voluntary sector leads, including direct inputs from the White Ribbon and Kindling Interventions
- A joint engagement event with local running groups at Philip's Park to address concerns from female runners over safety in green spaces. GMP and Council colleagues shared information on patrolling activities including from Mounted Police colleagues in response to concerns raised, from ASB and detached outreach colleagues; and worked to develop an information sheet for running groups to share on best practice including the means of reporting any forms of concern (to support identification of offenders and targeting of pulse patrolling). This is being built on with some work at the Policy Lab at Manchester University based on research into this area.
- Inputs to young people, including through B.Safe, on healthy relationships and the impact of microaggressions.
- Listening circles by GMP with women's groups and networks in the Borough, supplementing overt and plain clothes operations to promote women's safety within the Night Time Economy.

7. PRIORITY: ENSURING RESILIENT, SAFER PLACES AND SPACES

Measure	24/25 Q1	24/25 Q2	24/25 Q3	24/25 Q4	25/26 Q1	Trend
Bury Council – ASB Reports received	145	120	64	100	149	↑
Rates of ASB incidents reported by GMP (per 10,000 population)	48.7	48.3	42.6	54.9	64.7	↑
Number of GMFRS callouts for water incidents	1	3	2	2	2	↓

7.1 This report has highlighted some of the multi-agency activity which takes place as daily business in the borough. Many of these teams also work together to address specific events or as part of key initiatives. During June and July, Heaton Park saw a series of concerts including Parklife and Oasis with tens of thousands of visitors to the borough, with the CSP involved in the planning, delivery and debrief to ensure such events took place safely for both those attending and local communities. In terms of activities outside of the event perimeters, this involved:

- Community liaison with residents on fencing and security arrangements.
- Safe liaison of taxi provision and hackney carriage rank operations.
- Trading standards assessing pedlar certification and removal on unlicensed traders.
- Joint licensed premises checks.
- Removal of vehicles obstructing clearways.
- Intervention remove underage sales of vapes.

- 7.2 Environmental safety considerations have included a renewed focus on water safety, with updated materials developed and shared on the dangers of open water, including cascade through the Early Years partnership, safeguarding leads in education and community settings, including translated materials on warning signs and life-saving guidance such as Float to Live. This complements activity between the Council and GM Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) to further evaluate water courses in the borough and deliver on recommendations set out through Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) reports and localised surveys. This work has seen delivery against prioritised sites (those of the highest profile, footfall, most accessible and/or where there have been previous incidents or near misses. This rolling programme has progressed to phase 2 sites.
- 7.3 GM Fire and Rescue Services (GMFRS) have also been central to work throughout the year. For example, there has been multiagency activity to address concerns in relation to Pioneer Mill in Radcliffe. Local agencies have engaged regional and national colleagues from the Environment Agency and Health & Safety Executive to respond to concerns over environmental concerns, drug related criminality, concerns for welfare and in response to a series of fires, the most serious of which occurred in September 2025. Work continues to use all civil and criminal powers to investigate, set and enforce prohibitions, and work collaboratively to reduce the threat of harm and mitigate risk.
- 7.4 Within the year GMFRS have published their updated Greater Manchester Fire Plan, which dovetails with the work of the CSP and regional Safer and Stronger Plan. In particular the Fire Plan focuses on a Safer Communities and Intervention offer which includes promotion of Firestoppers (where anonymous reports can be made to support the identification of deliberate fire setting to enable joint work with GMP on criminal investigative action); targeted interventions such as through The Atlas Project (support and education for convicted fire setters); the Achilles Project (intervention for individuals involved in the criminal justice system to change behaviour and develop personal resilience) and individual offers through Home Fire Safety Assessments (HFSA) by GMFRS, involving home visits to assess and reduce fire risk. The assessments are person-centred, offering advice and signposting based on risks related to the person, environment, or behaviour.
- 7.5 Road safety forms part of GMFRS activity, as part of the Vision Zero Strategy which aims to eliminate road death and life changing injuries by 2040 with a target of a 50% reduction by 2030. There has been promotion of partnership resources on road safety including *Sharing the Road*; *Fatal 4* and *Winter Road Safety* guidance from GMFRS; promotion of DriveSafe through the Bee Network and *Safe Drive Stay Alive* in conjunction with the Northern Care Alliance and GM colleagues/ youth groups. Further work has taken place to review hotspot locations for partnership engagement, including with GMP over speeding operations or considerations to design out any vulnerabilities, alongside use of virtual reality and live extraction from vehicle demonstrations.

- 7.6 Road safety was a key feature of Operation AVRO which took place again in April. Operation AVRO is a force wide initiative that delivers extra resources and specialist officers to a different district within Greater Manchester each month. On AVRO day a total of 80 traffic offences were reported, with 11 stop searches, nine breaches of the Road Traffic Act, five motoring offences and one stolen vehicle recovered. In addition, 11 warrants were executed for broader criminal concerns, resulting in 33 arrests and the seizure of £25,000 of counterfeit electronics.
- 7.7 Activity continues to take place to tackle the illegal and anti-social use of e-scooters, e-bikes and all-terrain vehicles. Bringing together community insight and intelligence from the Bury Challenger team resulted in warrants for units on Bolton Street in Radcliffe in which fourteen vehicles were seized, all of which held under the Proceeds of Crime Act.
- 7.8 In addition, work with TravelSafe colleagues as part of the Bee Network, focuses on increasing safety, and the feeling of safety, on public transport in the Borough. The approach involves prevention and education activity, including the deployment of the Foundation 92 bus routinely to Bury Interchange providing a safe space for young people to engage, safety inputs into local clubs and networks; high visibility patrolling on the network, including jointly with the Council's youth detached teams – the latter of which driven by weekly intelligence sharing between TravelSafe, GMP, Colleges, Bury Council's ASB team and Youth Services colleagues. This includes details on any incidents on the network to allow a partnership response, including multi-agency intervention and the targeting of patrols.
- 7.9 TravelSafe inputs formed part of Bury's Keeping Town Centres Safe campaign this summer, delivering on the Home Office's Safer Streets campaign. Locally this built on Operation HEARTBEAT which is a dedicated operation to address youth related crime, anti-social behaviour and criminality in the town centre. GMP have been working in conjunction with the Council's ASB colleagues, TravelSafe, Millgate and The Rock security and the Bury Business Improvement District Stewards to share intelligence and engagement with the youth detached outreach team and complex safeguarding colleagues.
- 7.10 Town Centre safety activity has also included an additional focus in Prestwich in response to a linked series of shoplifting reports and youth related anti-social behaviour. The daytime HEARTBEAT activity is complimented by Operations LYNX and EXPEDITE within the Night Time Economy working in conjunction with licensing colleagues, licenced premises (including Pubwatch), Street Pastors and Bury Business Improvement District. This work has been built on Bury having a Purple Flag accredited town centre, an accolade the borough is rightly proud of and has once again received. The Safer Streets funded expansion of CCTV provision last year is being supplemented by joint work with the Bury BID on digital crime reporting and intelligence system to improve connectivity and sharing of information between organisations.
- 7.11 The CSP has continued to work collaboratively to tackle anti-social behaviour in the borough. The latest GMP rolling 3 month data details that Bury has the lowest level in force for ASB overall.
- 7.12 Where anti-social behaviour does occur the predominant categories are of rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour, which is nearly three times higher than the next categories of vehicle nuisance, neighbour disputes and noise concerns. It is noted that almost a third of rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour incidents are

within 250 metres of the Metrolink network. For vehicle nuisance the predominant themes are off-road bikes and anti-social parking.

7.13 A district Anti-Social Behaviour Problem Profile directs a series of strategic and tactical partnership responses to tackling the causes and mitigating the effects of anti-social behaviour across the borough and includes:

- Ongoing joint visits between police and Council ASB colleagues to properties where both organisations have received complaints to help resolve any issues that have been raised.
- Multiagency visits, including engagement with educational establishments to address behaviours of young people around Manchester Road Park.
- Joint 'surgeries' in locations across the Borough to support the awareness of how to report ASB and address any concerns raised at these.
- Ongoing joint patrols in hotspot locations examples including work with the Prestwich Neighbourhood Policing Team regarding off road bikes

7.14 With regards to neighbourhood crime, also known as acquisitive crime:

- Residential Burglary continues to show year on year reductions both across Greater Manchester and within the borough. Bury has the lowest number of residential burglaries in Greater Manchester, and has shown 15% reductions compared to the previous year to date. Whilst there are occasional pockets of activity in particular police beats, there are not persistent hotspots with pulse patrolling of both overt and covert officers deployed to target any peaks, and local areas provided with crime prevention advice to reduce any local vulnerabilities.
- Personal Robbery has seen further reductions, with volumes down 8.8% compared to the previous year to date. Bury has the second lowest volume of robbery across Greater Manchester, just ahead of Trafford. All robberies are reviewed by Bury's Neighbourhood Crime Team, with particular emphasis on identifying any patterns or linked series. The team works closely with neighbouring Districts and Force-level teams such as the Transport Unit, to ensure that crimes are not viewed in isolation, and so that disruptive actions have maximum effect.
- Vehicle crime (vehicle interference; theft from motor vehicles and theft of motor vehicles) has reduced by 8.3% in Bury compared to the previous year to date, which is double the reduction across Greater Manchester generally. Bury had 466 vehicle crime offences in the current year to date, by far the lowest amongst GM boroughs, with the next highest being 621 in Trafford. There is no room for complacency however, with an understanding that behind every crime is a victim, and it remains a crime that can have a significant impact on victims in terms of confidence and livelihood. Targeted work continues with crime prevention advice including messaging through Bee in the Loop, and proactive patrols.

8 SUMMARY

8.1 Bury's Community Safety Partnership has continued to work collaboratively to keep the people of Bury safe from harm. Through a combination of proactive and preventative activity, to responding in a multi-agency manner in response to emerging threats and incidents, the CSP is delivering against the commitments and priorities set out in the CSP plan. Examples outlined in this report demonstrate the CSP delivering on Bury's *LET'S Do It!* approach and

initiatives such as Operation VARDAR demonstrate the contribution CSP partners to neighbourhood working in Bury.

- 8.2 Delivery against the overarching strategy though is set within a dynamic and challenging context. Emerging and escalating threats of harm are addressed as the partnership, and there is the ongoing task of balancing these alongside existing priorities at a time of continued pressure on system resources.
- 8.3 The Partnership continues to iterate, and tailor focus to lead mitigations to identified and emerging risks, increasingly working with wider partnerships to maximise their connections and opportunities for engagement and addressing wider causal contributions to grievances or harm. This is also the case across the existing priorities, recognising the overlaps and intersectionality between these, particularly when considering furthering cohesion - ultimately building on, and where necessary re-framing existing commitments.
- 8.4 This will be the continued focus for the CSP over the coming months, addressing seasonal safety areas of business during winter months, whilst building on insight (data and community intelligence) to continue to re-position the partnership to be best places to protect people from harm, and demonstrate that we are safer & stronger together.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 This report provides an overview of the recent, current and planned activities taking place across the priorities of Bury's Community Safety Partnership. The Committee is asked to note the report and outline any areas of further interest.

ACRONYMS

ASB – Anti Social Behaviour
CSP – Community Safety Partnership
CST – Community Security Trust
DAPO – Domestic Abuse Protection Orders
DVA – Domestic Violence/ Abuse
GMCA – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
GMFRS – Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service
GMP – Greater Manchester Police
IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
VAWG – Violence Against Women & Girls

Contact Details:-

Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager
c.woodhouse@bury.gov.uk



Classification: Open	Decision Type: Non-Key
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Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Date: 25 November 2025
Subject:	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Performance Data & Letters 2024-25	
Report of	Director of Law & Democratic Services	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out findings and recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for 2024-2025. Additional oversight and accountability for LGO supplied information is provided by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standards Committee.

Recommendation(s)

- (a) That the content of the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter to the Council be noted; and:-
- (b) That the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman referred to the Council during 2024/25 and their outcomes be noted.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Michael Cunliffe
 Position: Principal Democratic Services Officer
 Department: Legal and Democratic Services
 E-mail: m.cunliffe@bury.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council receives an Annual Report summarising all complaints dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ("LGO"). This Report provides a brief commentary on the Ombudsman's Annual Review letter which is sent direct to the Council's Chief Executive, Leader and Chair of Overview & Scrutiny (Attached as Appendix A). A report on this subject matter was also included at the Standards Committee meeting held on the 18th September 2025, which Members duly noted.

2. Ombudsman's Jurisdiction

- 2.1. The Local Government Act 1974 established the then Local Government Ombudsman for England and for Wales. The Act defines the main statutory functions:
 - to investigate complaints against councils and some other authorities
 - to investigate complaints about adult social care providers from people who arrange or fund their own adult social care
 - to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice

- 2.2 The main activity under Part III of the 1974 Act is the investigation of complaints, which it states is limited to complaints from members of the public alleging they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration and/or service failure. The LGO jurisdiction under Part III covers all local authorities (excluding town and parish councils). The LGO changed its name to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2017 to reflect the full scope of their jurisdiction.

3. Changes for 2024/25

- 3.1 The LGO made changes to the annual performance data and letters, issuing and publishing annual statistics earlier in the year and changing the way they present key statistics along with raising any performance concerns with individual authorities in July 2025.
- 3.2 The changes were in response to feedback that issuing annual data earlier in the year will better fit with local reporting cycles and that changes to the presentation of the statistics provides clarity and context. The LGO are retaining the existing statistics (uphold rate, satisfactory remedies provided by the authority, compliance rate) but have switched the emphasis from percentages to numbers. They also include the total number of complaints decided, the number assessed, and the number investigated to provide important context.

4. Complaints and Enquiries Received by the Ombudsman in 2024/25

- 4.1. The Ombudsman provided, information on how complaints upheld against the Council were remedied and those not pursued. This year's letter and information again includes a breakdown, showing the complaints and enquiries received and decisions made. The letter is attached in Appendix A and data available to view via:- <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/bury-metropolitan-borough-council/statistics>

The number of complaints and enquiries received for 24/25 as compared to 23/24 has increased.

2024-2025-	100
2023-2024-	78
2022/2023-	72
2021/2022-	68
2020/2021 -	38 (Covid hit year)
2019/2020 -	73

- 4.2. The complaints received by the Ombudsman about the Council in 2024/25 were split across service areas as follows (Note- these are LGO designated service categories). These are compared with last year's figures.

Service Number of Complaints	2024/25	Comparison to previous year	2023/24
Adult Care Services	9	<i>Increase</i>	4
Corporate & Other Services	9	<i>Increase</i>	7
Education & Children's Services	28	<i>Decrease</i>	35
Environmental & Public Protection & Reg	18	<i>Increase</i>	6

Highways & Transport	14	<i>Increase</i>	9
Planning & Development	10	<i>Increase</i>	3
Housing	9	<i>Increase</i>	6
Benefits and Tax	2	<i>Decrease</i>	7
Other	1	<i>No change</i>	1

- 4.3 In summary, between the 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2025, the LGO dealt with 89 complaints. Of these, 38 were not for them or not ready for investigation. The LGO assessed and closed 37 complaints and investigated 14 complaints.

5. Ombudsman Complaint Decisions

- 5.1. The decision of “Upheld” is applied when the Ombudsman finds there is some fault in the way the Council acted – even if it has agreed to put things right during the course of the Ombudsman investigation; or had already accepted it needed to remedy the situation before the complaint was apparent to the Ombudsman.
- 5.2. The LGO have advised on comparing statistics across the years and that they previously changed their investigation processes. This contributed towards an increase in the average uphold rate across all complaints. Members should consider comparing individual Council uphold rates against the average rate rather than against previous years.

For Bury **71%** of complaints investigated were upheld compared to an average of **81%** in similar authorities.

Decision of Ombudsman	2024/25	2023/24
Investigated – Upheld	10	23
Investigated – Not Upheld	4	3

- 5.3. The compliance data by the Ombudsman for the Council can be viewed at:-
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/Decisions/SearchResults?fd=0001-01-01&td=2025-11-17&dc=c%2Bnu%2Bu%2B&aname=Bury+Metropolitan+Borough+Council&sortOrder=descending>

6. Education & Children’s Services, Housing & Adult Services

- 6.1. Complaints about education and children’s services are still dominating the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s casework, but housing cases are now the second biggest area of concern for people complaining.
- 6.2. The Ombudsman’s annual review of its local government complaints for 2024-25 shows a continued increase in its caseload, with a record number of complaints received, exceeding 20,000 for the first time. Of these complaints, Education and Children’s Services made up 27 per cent of the caseload and 47 per cent of all upheld investigations. The Ombudsman found fault in 91 per cent of all Education and Children’s complaints, and 94 per cent of cases involving special educational needs provision.

- 6.3 Housing cases accounted for 17 per cent of all cases received and accounted for a higher proportion than last year. Of those cases investigated, the Ombudsman upheld 85 per cent, with issues remaining particularly acute in the London area.
- 6.4 The third highest area of casework was adult care services, taking 13 per cent of the Ombudsman's workload – a slightly smaller proportion than last year. Of these, 78 per cent of investigations carried out were upheld.

7. Annual Review of Local Government Complaints in England for 2024-25

- 7.1 The LGO Annual Review of Local Government Complaints in England for 2024-2025 pulls together the national picture of trends and common issues that have arisen from complaints over the last year. This document is attached in Appendix B.

8. Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter

- 8.1 The Annual Review letter provided an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about this Council to the year ending 31 March 2025.
- 8.2 The LGO has an interactive map of performance. The map shows annual performance data for all Councils in England, with links to published decision statements, public interest reports, annual letters and information about service improvements that have been agreed by each Council. The intention of this tool is to place a focus on the authority's compliance with the recommendations. The interactive map can be accessed via the following link:
[Bury Metropolitan Borough Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

9. Other Information & Comparisons

- 9.1 It should also be acknowledged that complaints to the Ombudsman do not always involve the Council or its appeals processes of any wrongdoing; but that they come from people who would have liked something more, or better, or a different outcome. It is unlikely that public expectations of services will diminish in the short term and therefore there is no reason to suppose that complaints will fall significantly. Despite these challenges, Officers are making every effort to ensure that capacity to respond to the Ombudsman is maintained.
- 9.2 It is important that the Council takes even greater measures to ensure that it is able to evidence that it learns from complaints and uses this learning to improve and maintain the quality of the services it commissions and provides.
- 9.3 In comparison to other GM authorities, data patterns for 2024-25 are as follows:-

Authority	Bury	Rochdale	Bolton	Oldham
Complaints Upheld	10	11	8	8
Implemented recommendations	100% This compares to an average of 100% in	100%	100%	100%

	similar authorities.			
Satisfactory remedy	20% This compares to an average of 13% in similar authorities.	0%	13%	50%

10. Developments and Improvements

- 10.1 Officers monitor the LGO process and the large number of complaints in Children's Services, sometimes involving the same complainant with multiple complaints. To help Officers maintain an accurate record and meet the required deadlines, a matrix is produced by the Council's LGO link Officer. This is sent to relevant Officers and Directors to make them aware of live cases with deadlines for actions required and evidence to be produced for the LGO. The data for 2024-2025 demonstrates the improvements made.
- 10.2 The LGO Link Officer and Monitoring Officer regularly review and manage live cases and the LGO have welcomed significant strides the Council has made over the last 18 months improving its complaint functions. This involves a centralised policy & complaints team that oversees all casework and compliance. Additional oversight and accountability via the Standards Committee along with Overview and Scrutiny provides a strategic overview of compliance achievements and recommendations for ongoing improvements. These measures aim to strengthen governance, support informed decision-making, and promote continuous adherence to organisational policies.

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21 May 2025

By email

Ms Ridsdale
Chief Executive
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Ms Ridsdale

Annual Review letter 2024-25

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2024-25

July 2025



Contents

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Ombudsman's foreword

I am pleased to present our review of local government complaints for 2024-25.

We received a record number of complaints during the year, exceeding 20,000 for the first time – the result of a 16% increase in each of the past two years. Education & Children, Adult Care and Housing services continue to dominate our casework, accounting for 58% of the decisions we made.

The increase in complaints and the level of fault we find – we uphold 83% of the complaints we investigate – illustrates the systemic nature of the issues across local government.

Education & 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.

Housing complaints accounted for 17% of the cases we received, a higher proportion than last year. We upheld 85% of the complaints we investigated and, while issues remain particularly prevalent in London, there are

similar issues repeated across the country. We see people being denied access to housing registers, being given the wrong priority, and not being treated fairly when homeless or faced with homelessness, including the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation. There is no doubt that the challenges around the supply of affordable housing are acute, and we recognise the commitment made to build more homes. Whilst construction takes place, councils need to look at implementing their policies, and the law, consistently and fairly – as many do despite the challenges – with people at the heart of their services and approach.

13% of the cases we received were about adult social care. Our casework tells us that delays in the assessment process and poor communication with individuals and families continue to be key themes. We upheld 78% of the adult social care complaints we investigated, slightly less than last year, but still a high proportion. Again we believe there are systemic problems at play and hope the current independent commission into adult social care will identify short, medium, and long-term solutions that help alleviate pressure in the system.



We know that change is needed to deliver sustainable and effective local government services. We published our Triennial Review during the year setting out the changes to our powers that would help to push up complaint handling standards and give more people access to redress.

The Review proposes four solutions:

- **Recommendation One:** Simplified legislation to ensure we can investigate all local government services, now and into the future, particularly as devolution promises to impart more decision making to new regional bodies.
- **Recommendation Two:** The statutory power to monitor compliance with our Complaint Handling Code.
- **Recommendation Three:** Requiring independent care providers to signpost to us, to drive up people's awareness of their rights.
- **Recommendation Four:** Extend our remit past the school gate, so we can look at how Education, Health and Care Plans are implemented, and how children are admitted and excluded in schools.

We look forward to the government's response.

“Despite the obvious pressures within local government, pleasingly, compliance with the recommendations we make remains high at 99.7%. This demonstrates the sector’s commitment to redress and improvement and the importance of good governance and leadership within complaint handling.”

Within our current powers, we issue investigation reports to highlight recurrent or significant fault, injustice, or remedy, highlight systemic problems or non-compliance with our recommendations. We published 26 reports during the year. Just over three quarters of these were on investigations about Education & Children's Services and Housing.

Authorities are required to consider our reports at a high decision-making level, such as council meetings. These reports are a great tool for learning from our casework.

Despite the obvious pressures within local government, pleasingly, compliance with the recommendations we make remains high at 99.7%. This demonstrates the sector's commitment to redress and improvement and the importance of good governance and leadership within complaint handling.

Our Complaint Handling Code offers further support and structure for council complaint systems. Published last year, we have worked with 20 pilot local authorities to understand the opportunities and challenges presented by the Code, resulting in the publication of a series of good practice guides and free training resources to support organisations in adopting it successfully.

Finally, I encourage councils to review the data and lessons from our casework in the report, use it to draw comparisons, evaluate performance, and make improvements.

Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and
Social Care Ombudsman
July 2025

Headline statistics



20,773
complaints received



19,660
complaints
decided



4,298
complaints
investigated



3,552*
complaints
upheld



12%
satisfactory remedies**



99.7%
compliance with our
recommendations



83%
uphold rate



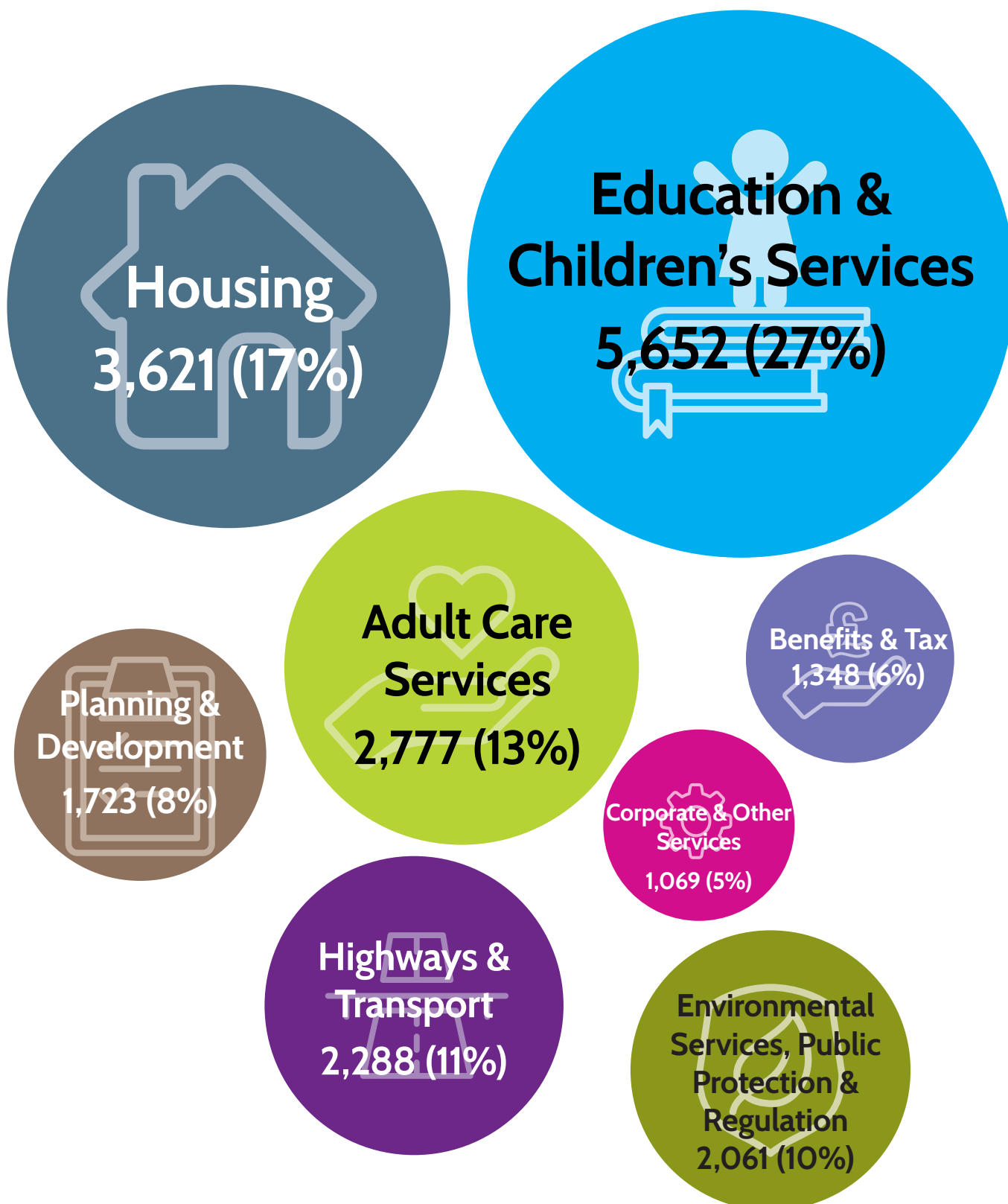
6.2
upheld complaints per
100,000 residents***

*Includes cases where we found the organisation offered a suitable remedy early on

**We agreed with how the organisation had offered to put things right

***Includes the following authority types only: County Councils, District Councils, London Boroughs, Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities

Complaints and enquiries received



Percentages add up to 98% due to rounding.

Enhancing resident satisfaction: best practice in complaint management

Listening to public concerns is an essential component of a well-run, accountable authority that is committed to public engagement, learning and improvement.

Putting things right when they go wrong

When we find fault, we make recommendations to put things right. These recommendations are non-binding yet, in almost all cases, authorities agree to comply with them. To assure ourselves we monitor compliance in a credible way, we demand evidence of what organisations have, or will, do to carry out each recommendation they have agreed to.

We were satisfied with authorities' compliance with our recommendations in 99.7% of cases.

There were 10 cases in which we were not satisfied the authority had complied with our recommendations. When this happens, we consider a range of actions, including issuing a report and opening a new investigation into the authority's failure to provide the agreed remedy. Non-compliance is also reported publicly on our website.

Timely compliance is important; it helps to rebuild people's confidence when an organisation carries out recommendations within the agreed timeframe. There were more than 500 cases (18%) where compliance was late because our recommendations were not carried out on time. To ensure remedies are implemented on time, authorities should consider:

- The timescales proposed at the draft decision stage to ensure they are achievable
- Keeping track of agreed recommendations and informing us of any delays
- Providing us with the evidence as soon as a remedy is completed
- Establishing processes that ensure apologies and payments to complainants are made promptly

Best practice: systems and oversight

Our performance data is a key part of the measures set out in the government's statutory guide for best value authorities, published in May 2024. The guidance says best value authorities:

- are willing to work with us to proactively identify areas for improvement and respond promptly to recommendations, and
- implement our service improvement recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

Our investigation reports are also considered, alongside other data, as potential indicators of failure.

We encourage staff and elected officials to use our guidance and the information we publish to implement effective processes and to determine the health of their local complaints system.

WHAT TO LOOK AT

- The [Complaint Handling Code](#) sets out a process that allows organisations to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. We will be applying the Code in our casework about councils from April 2026. We have good practice guides and training resources available to support organisations to adopt the Code.
- Our [good practice guides](#) for senior leaders and elected members explain how complaint data can be used to better understand the performance of services they are responsible for.
- Our [council performance map](#) has our council complaint statistics in a single, interactive hub. It is a mine of searchable information and allows comparisons to be made between similar councils. You can find annual review letters, investigation reports, and service improvements a council has agreed to make.

We also publish [data tables](#) with complaints information at local authority level, which can be freely analysed and segmented.

Enhancing resident satisfaction: best practice in complaint management

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- **Uphold rates** show the proportion of investigations in which we find some fault, or we found the authority accepted fault early on. How does your authority compare against the average for similar type authorities?
- **Offering a suitable remedy** to a complaint before it comes to us is a good sign your authority is offering appropriate ways to put things right. How often does your authority do this, and how does it compare with others?
- **Compliance rates** show the proportion of cases in which we are satisfied our recommendations have been implemented (based on the evidence authorities give us). Compliance below 100% is rare. Does your authority have a 100% compliance rate – if not, what is it doing to scrutinise complaints where it failed to comply?
- **Service improvement recommendations** aim to prevent a fault from reoccurring and affecting others in the same way. How do you track the way service improvements your authority agrees to make are implemented? How is their impact monitored?

We want authorities to operate, and benefit from, excellent complaint systems. Where support is needed to achieve this, we offer online complaint handling training and can deliver bespoke training to target specific issues. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Authorities that took part in complaint handling training during 2024-25 can be found on our [website](#).

Learning & improvement: reports and good practice guides

We are one of the only Ombudsman schemes to **publish the decisions** we make. We do this to share learning and be transparent.

Cases that raise serious issues or highlight matters of public interest are issued as reports. We published **26 reports** during the year. These are listed at the [end of this report](#).

Focus Reports and good practice guides collate case studies from our investigations on certain subjects where we highlight our most serious concerns or provide specialist practitioner advice. During the year, we published:

Focus reports

People not structures: putting people at the heart of integrated care

July 2024

In this report, produced with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, we said Integrated Care Systems (ICS) are not doing enough to put the vulnerable people they support at the heart of what they do.

ICS are made up of representatives from local authority social services and NHS partnerships that work together to support the needs of people in their areas. The cases we highlight show the impact when people's experiences are not put front and centre.



“Local authorities and the NHS need to work as equal partners to put people at the heart of their services on every occasion. However, we are finding cases where disagreements about responsibility and funding are having a significant impact on people’s quality of life.”

Learning & improvement: reports and good practice guides

Children need families: helping to improve council services for adoptive families and their children

November 2024

We want to help improve the support councils provide to people throughout the adoption process. While we receive relatively few complaints from adoptive families, every single upheld case reflects a vulnerable child's fresh start in life being affected. This can either be in the support provided post-adoption, or the support and information given to potential adoptive parents.

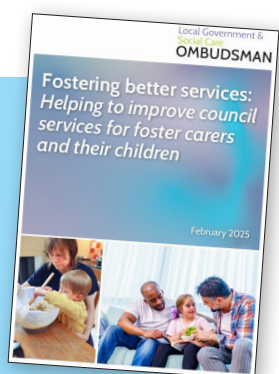


“Adopted children often have some of the most challenging starts to life, lacking in stability and continuity of care, so it is all the more important that councils get things right for them and their families. Councils need to get their processes, and the support they offer to these families right or they risk family units breaking down.”

Fostering better services: helping to improve council services for foster carers and their children

February 2025

This report is a companion piece to our Adoption report and looks at issues faced by both fostered children and the carers who support them, when councils don't get things right. The stories included a young woman, who came forward after she had left care with a claim she had suffered abuse, and her local council did not look into it properly. Other common issues include inaccurate advice to foster carers prior to placements starting, failing to follow correct processes to remove children and maintaining contact with birth family members.



“Foster carers play a key role in helping to provide stability for these children but need to be given the right tools to do it well. Councils need to ensure they provide the right information and support for the foster carers who look after the children they have ultimate responsibility for.”

Learning & improvement: reports and good practice guides

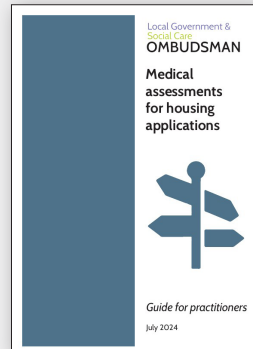
Good practice guides

Medical assessments for housing applications

July 2024

This guide shared the learning from our investigations on medical assessments in housing allocation cases, highlighting the common issues we see, based on around 20 detailed investigations we carry out a year.

The key learning points are grouped into three themes: councils making independent decisions about medical need, using good evidence of decisions, and in a timely way.



Domestic abuse and housing decisions

October 2024

This guide drew on our experience investigating housing complaints, since the new duties for councils were introduced in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which amended the definition of priority need for homelessness to include people homeless because of domestic abuse.

The guide draws out important learning for councils to use the right definitions of domestic abuse and priority need and apply the right tests to decide if an applicant is homeless.



Household waste offences

October 2024

With this guide, we urge councils to take a proportionate approach to enforcing household waste offences, after upholding several cases with heavy handed fines being issued.

Councils have different powers at their disposal to handle apparent waste offences and must properly consider the details of the offence before deciding which of these to apply.



In 2024-25

We published

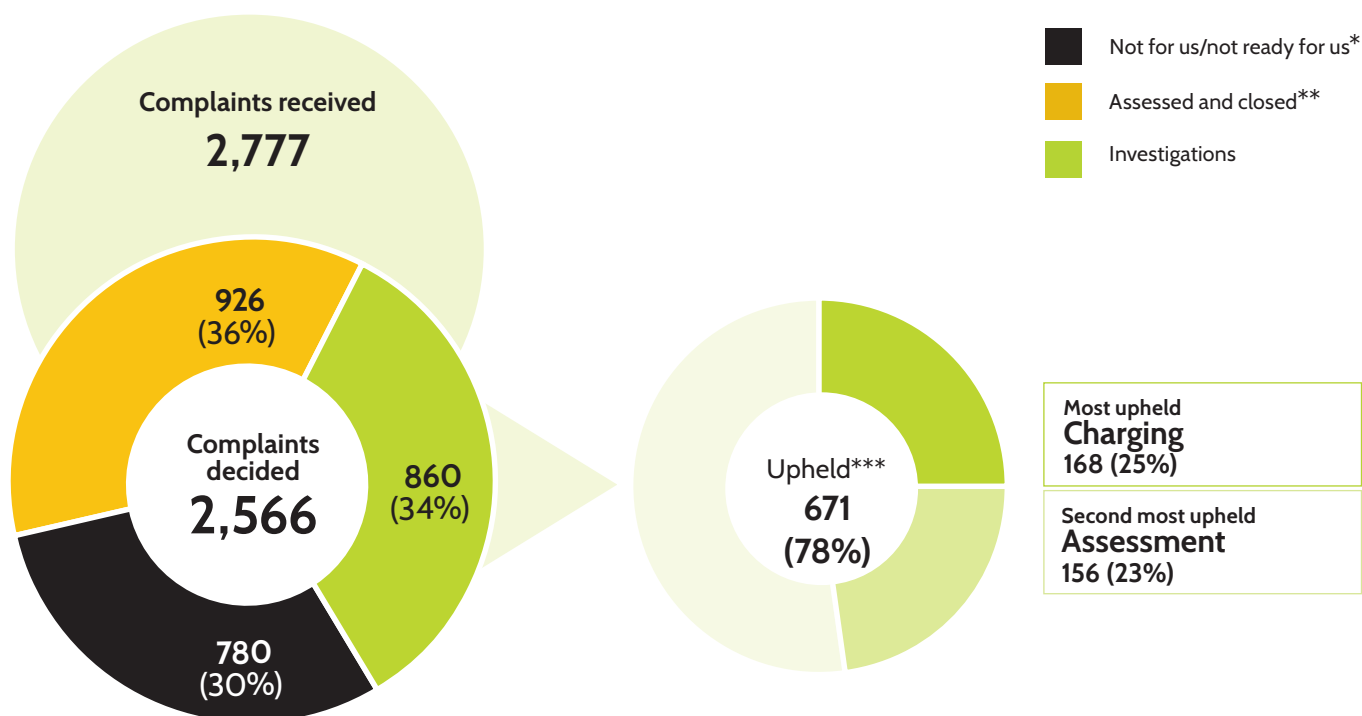
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investigation reports

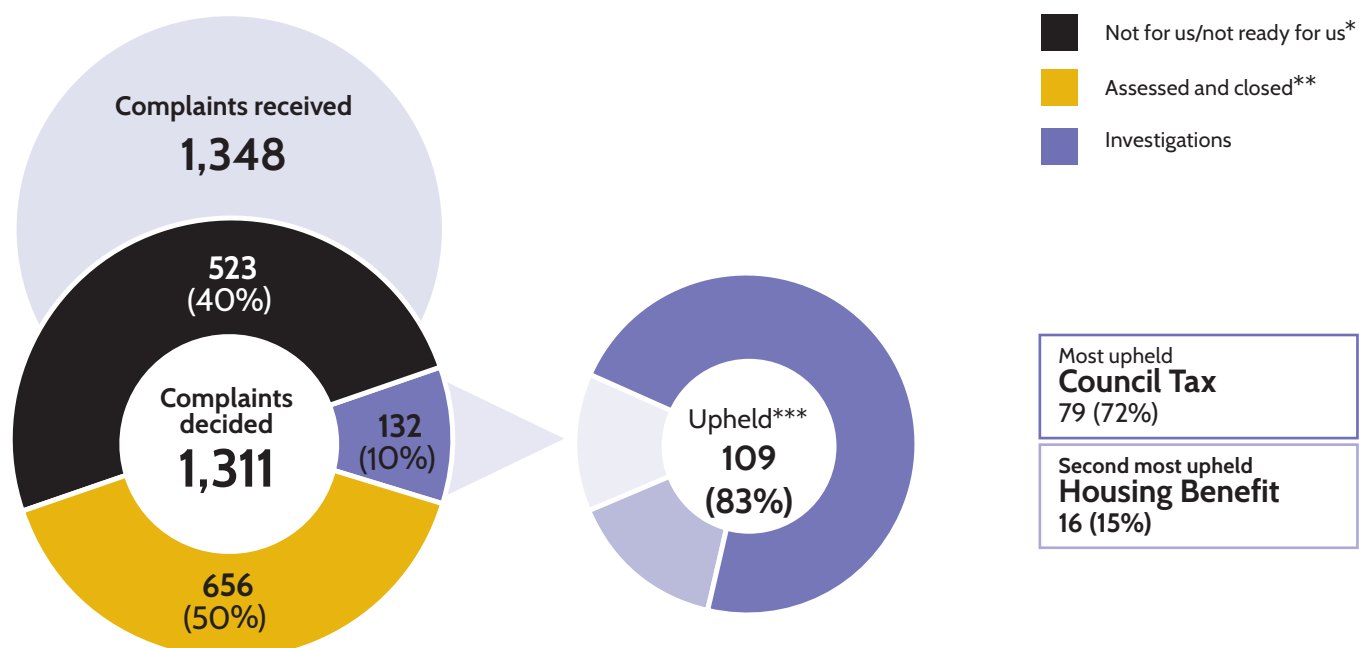
2024-25

Statistics by service area

Adult Care Services



Benefits & Tax



*Not for us – includes complaints brought to us before the council was given chance to consider it, or the complainant came to the wrong Ombudsman.

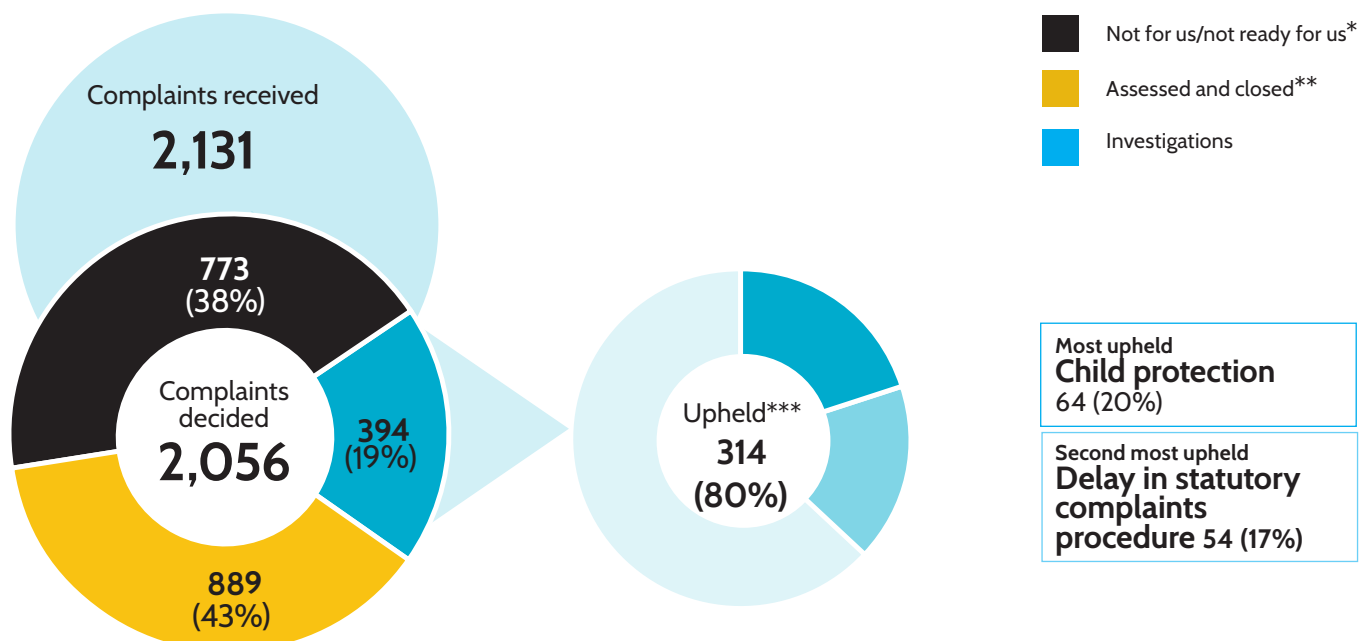
** Assessed and closed – we assessed the complaint but decided against carrying out a further investigation. This might be because the law says we're not allowed to investigate it, or because it would not be an effective use of public funds if we did.

*** Upheld: we completed an investigation and found evidence of fault, or we found the organisation offered a suitable remedy early on.

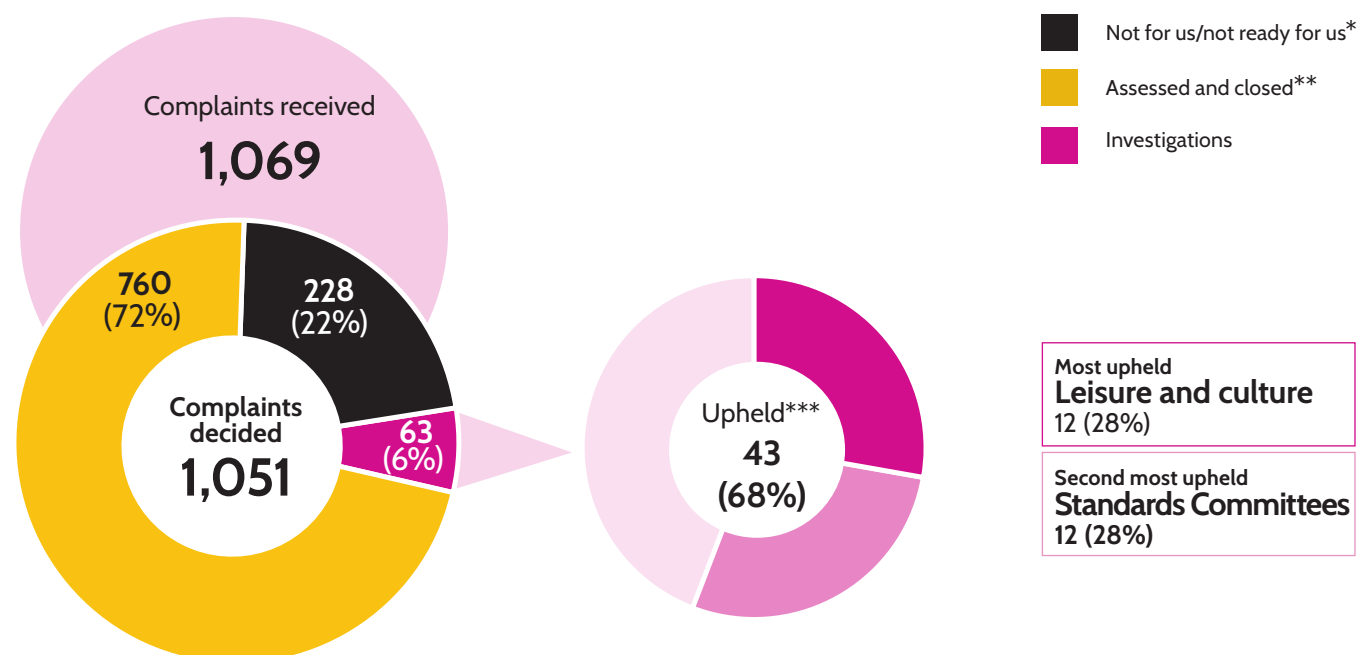
2024-25

Statistics by service area

Children's Services



Corporate & Other Services



*Not for us – includes complaints brought to us before the council was given chance to consider it, or the complainant came to the wrong Ombudsman.

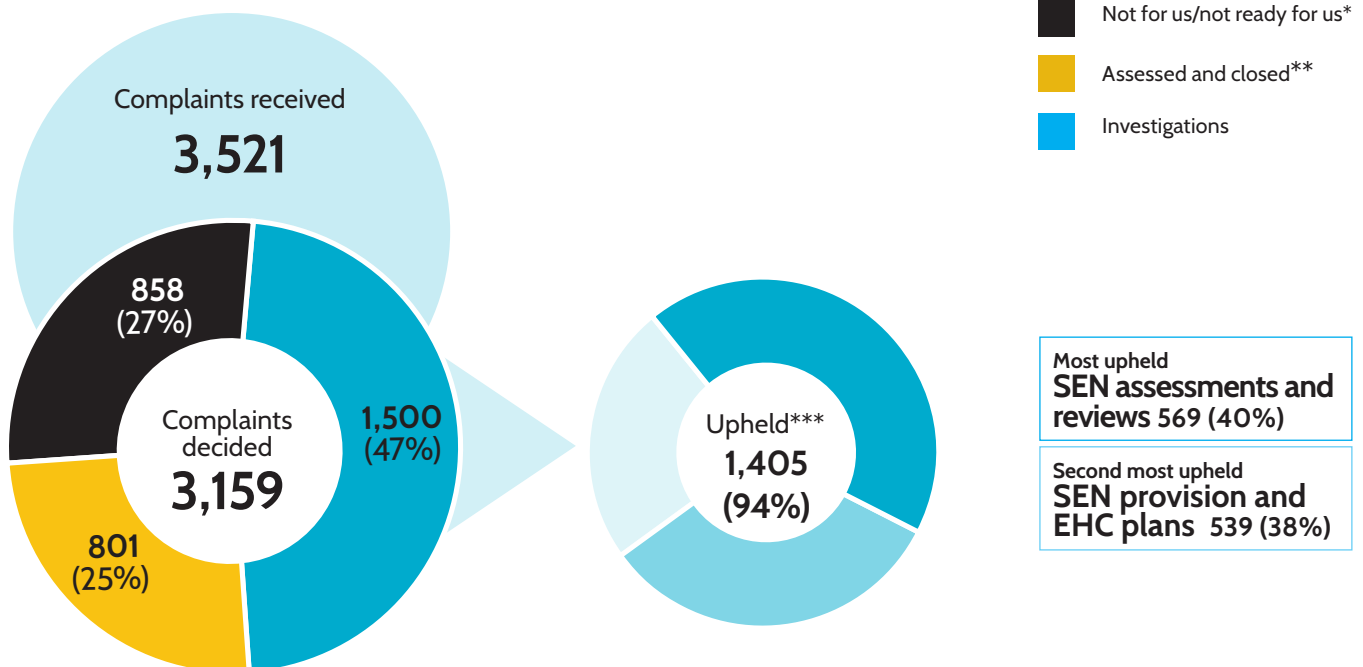
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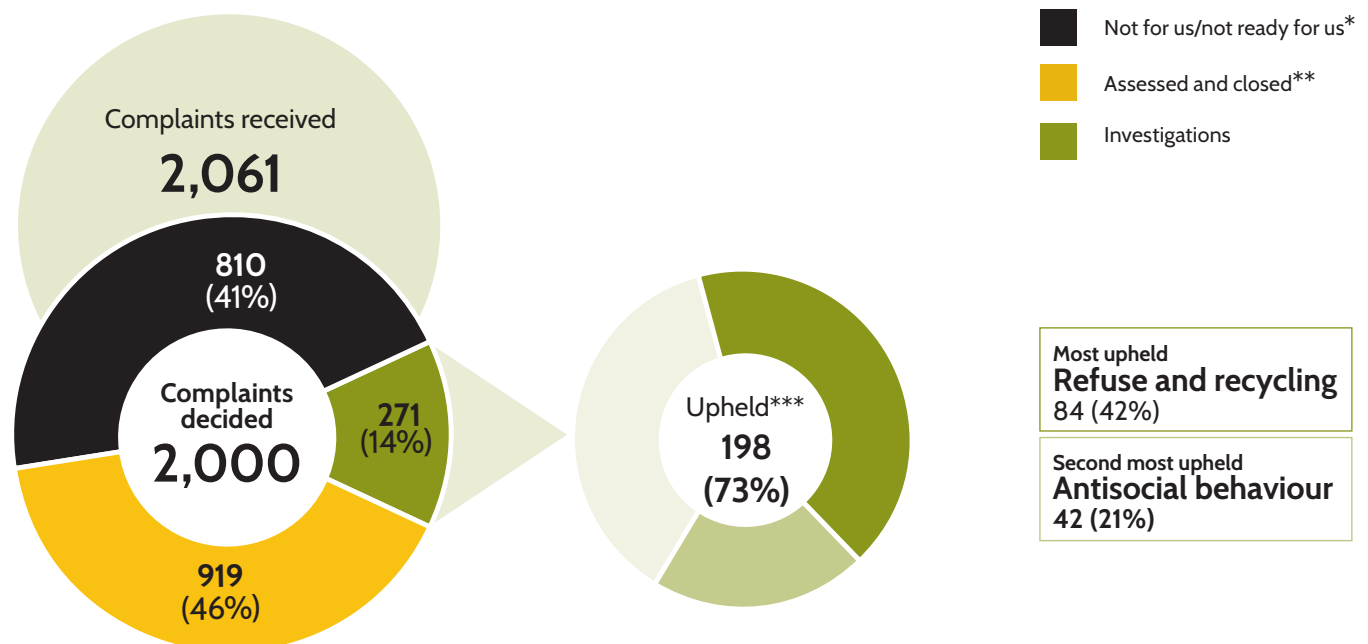
2024-25

Statistics by service area

Education



Environmental Services, Public Protection & Regulation



*Not for us – includes complaints brought to us before the council was given chance to consider it, or the complainant came to the wrong Ombudsman.

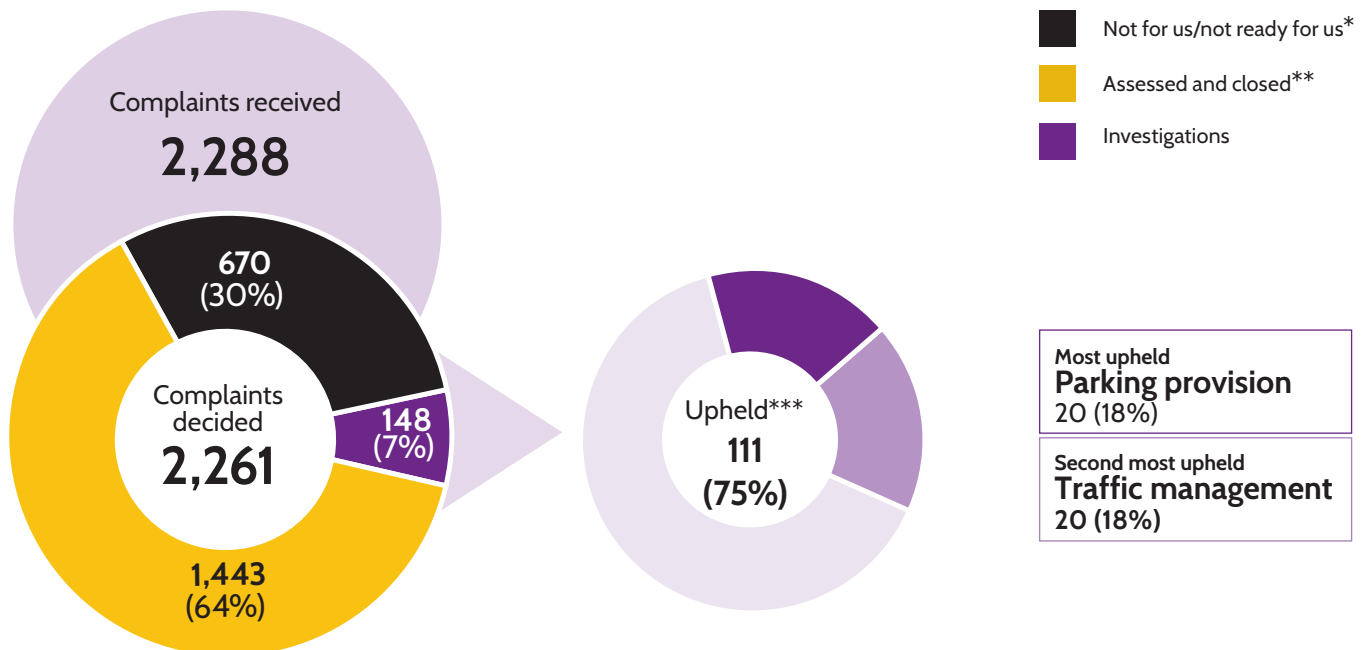
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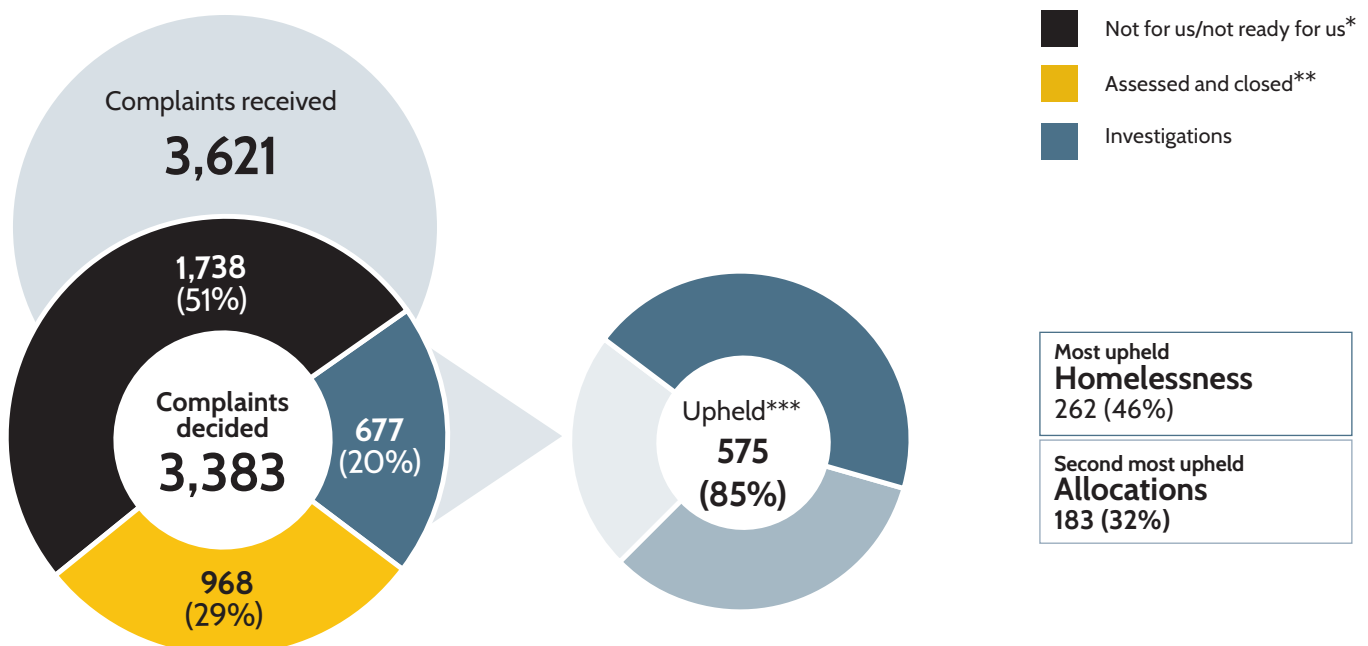
2024-25

Statistics by service area

Highways & Transport



Housing



*Not for us – includes complaints brought to us before the council was given chance to consider it, or the complainant came to the wrong Ombudsman.

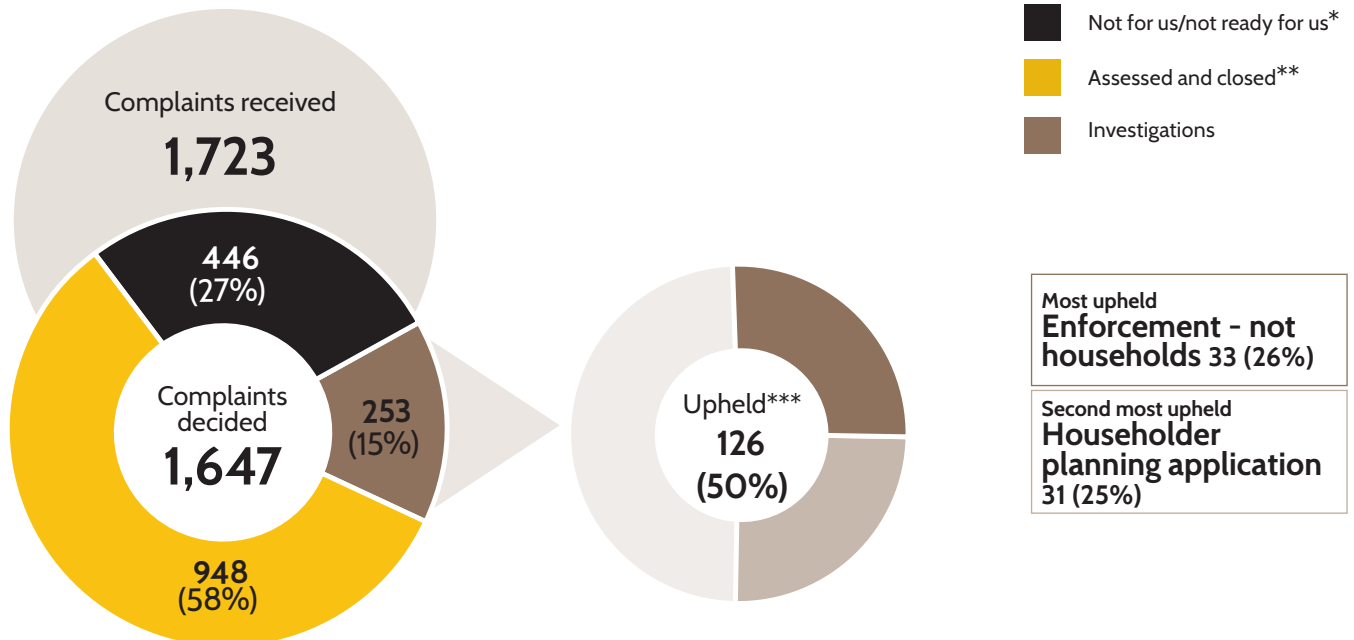
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2024-25

Statistics by service area

Planning & Development

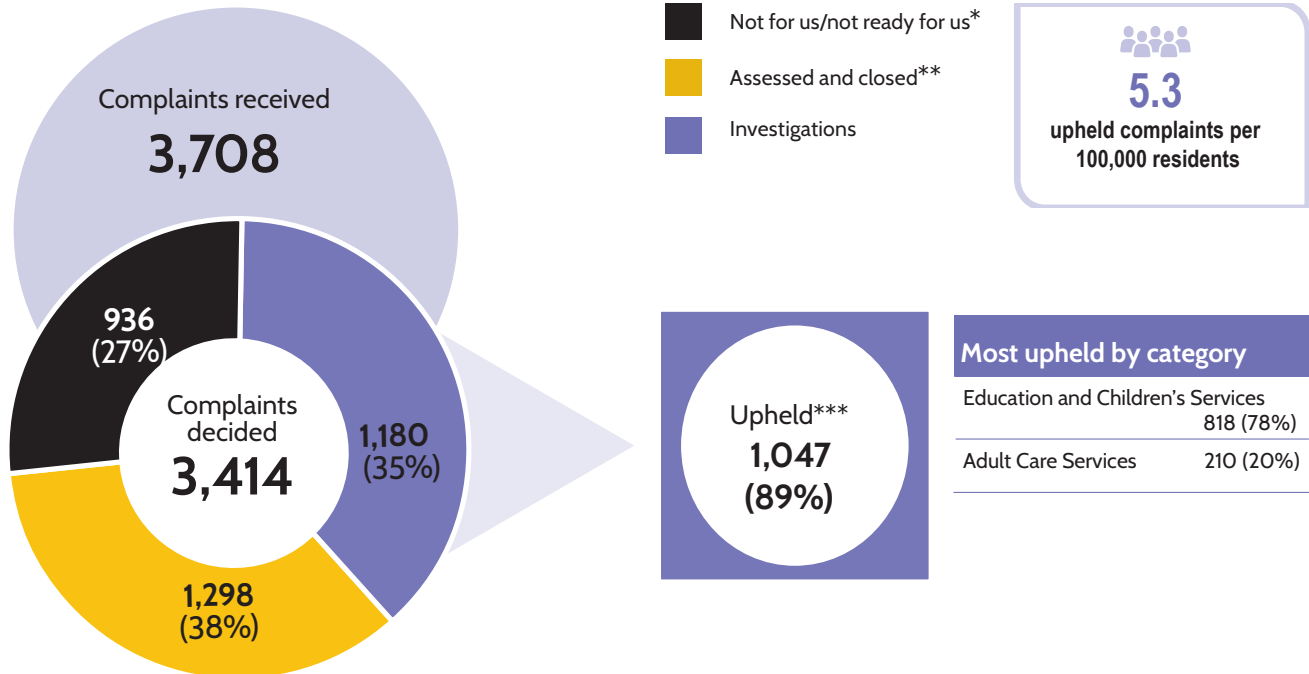


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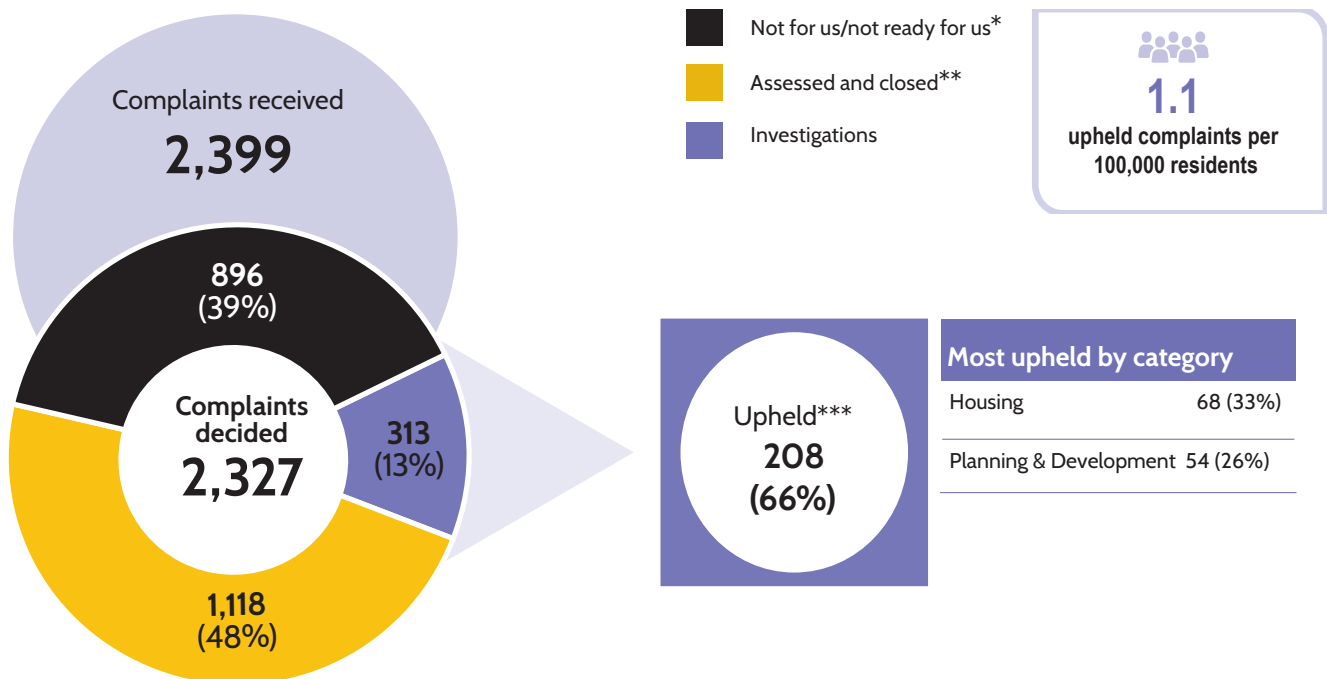
2024-25

Statistics by authority type

County Councils



District and Borough Councils

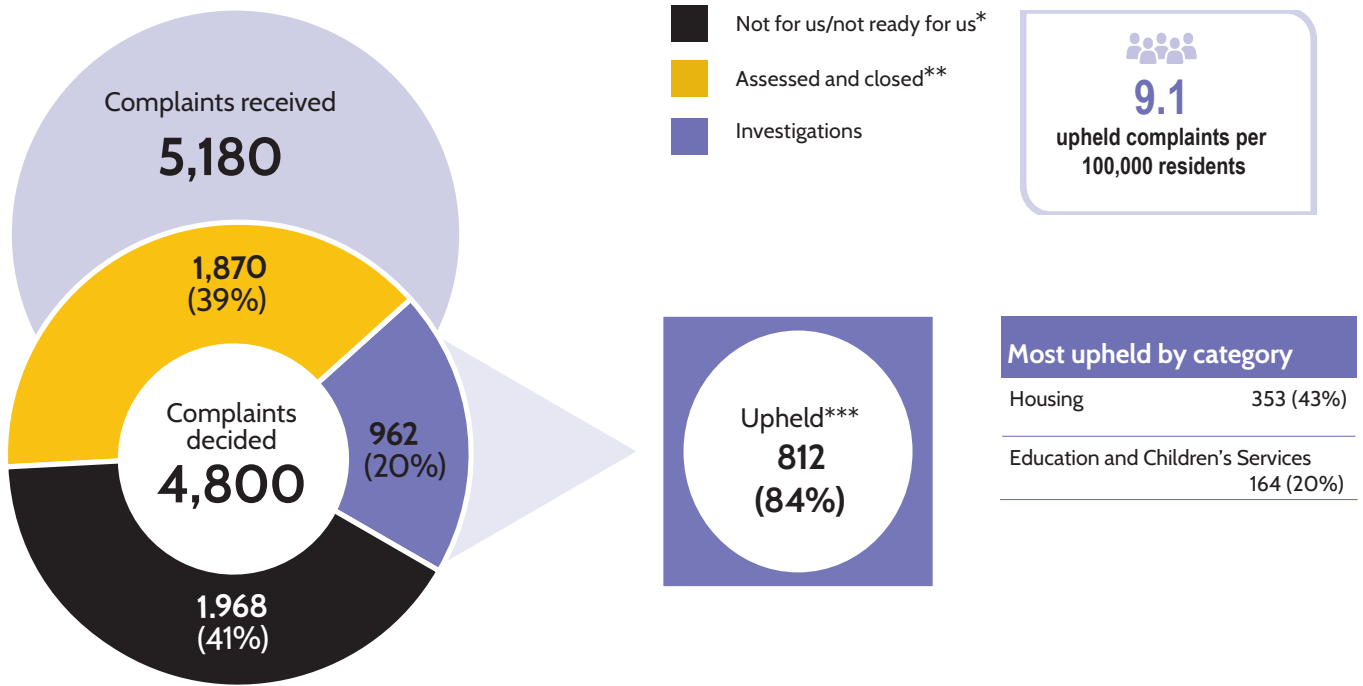


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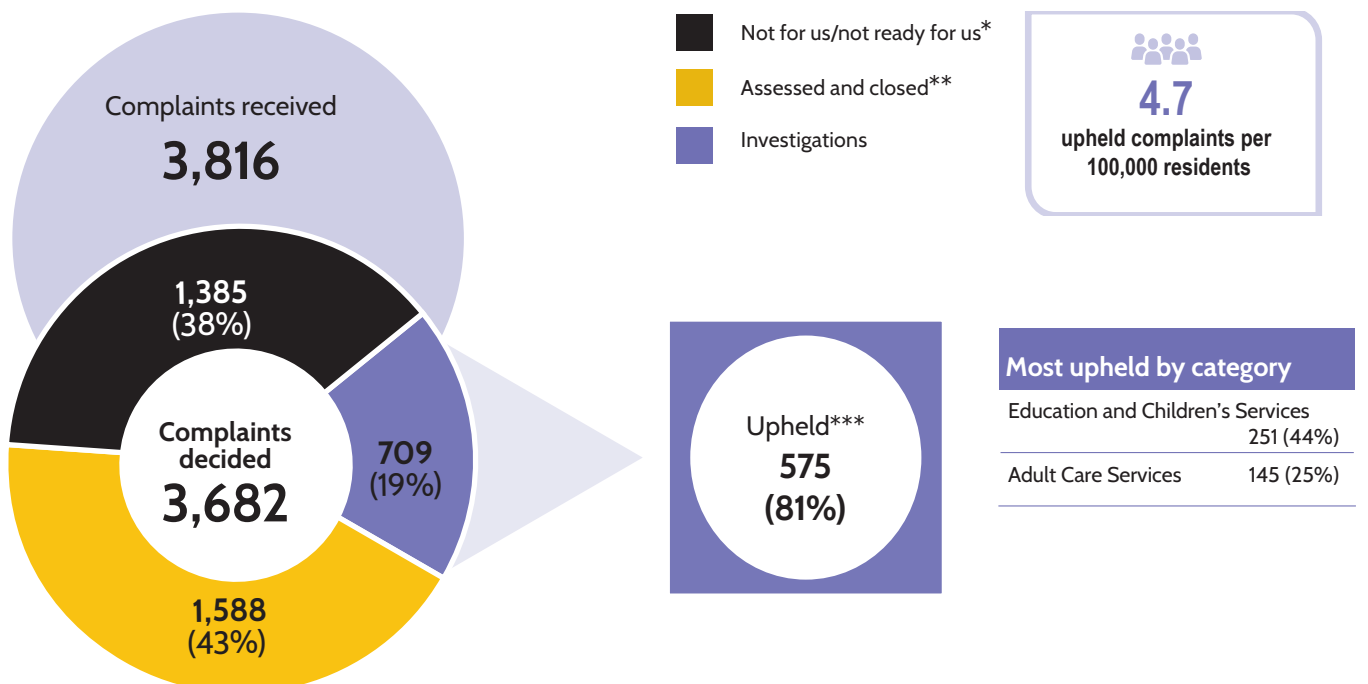
2024-25

Statistics by authority type

London Boroughs



Metropolitan Councils



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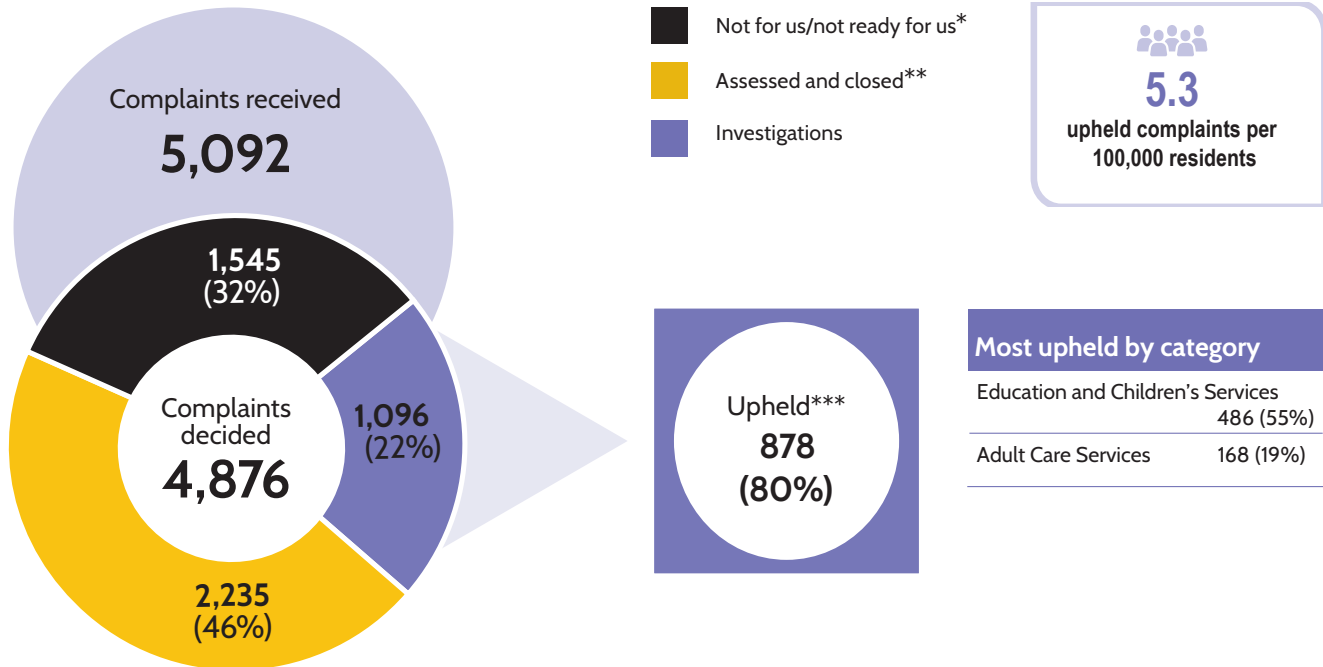
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2024-25



Statistics by authority type



Unitary Authorities





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Investigation reports



 Children's Services		
Devon County Council	Transition from children's to adult services	23001435
Worcestershire County Council (with Bromsgrove District Council 23004976)	Disabled child	23004979
Worcestershire County Council	Education of Looked After Child	23014839



 Education		
Essex County Council	SEN assessments & reviews	23003950
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	SEN assessments & reviews	24010066
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	School transport	23013127
Somerset Council	SEN personal budgets & direct payments	23017883
Somerset Council	SEN assessments & reviews	24003239
Suffolk County Council	SEN assessments & reviews	23005778
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	SEN assessments & reviews	24000621
Trafford Council	Alternative provision	23019685

 Adult Care Services		
Essex County Council	Assessment	24001445
London Borough of Croydon	Direct payments	23000973
London Borough of Islington	Assessment	24000360

Investigation reports

 Housing		
Brentwood Borough Council	Homelessness	23018930
Bromsgrove District Council (with Worcestershire County Council – 23004979)	Disabled facilities grants	23004976
Leicester City Council	Domestic abuse	23015268
London Borough of Ealing	Domestic abuse	23014586
London Borough of Lewisham	Homelessness	22016576
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Domestic abuse	22012133
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Homelessness	23012189
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Homelessness	23002608
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Allocations	22013057
Manchester City Council	Homelessness	23017649

 Environmental Services & Protection		
North Hertfordshire District Council	Noise	23014065
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	Pollution	23011888

 Benefits & Tax		
Luton Borough Council	Housing benefit	23016145

**Local Government & Social
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Local Government &
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