



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Housing and Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
By email

27th August 2025

Dear Amerdeep,

Thank you for passing on the Triennial Review by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Commission for Local Administration in England, and for taking the time to discuss the Review's conclusions and recommendations with myself and with the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution.

I'd like to thank you and your staff for the constructive and collaborative manner in which your organisation consulted with my department during the drafting of the Review and in the time since the Review's publication.

I share your concerns about the challenges facing local government. In such circumstances, effectively holding local authorities to account for the vital public services they deliver is arguably more important than ever. And I am grateful for your ongoing work to deliver fair, effective and efficient investigations into the many valid complaints brought to you by members of the public.

I was pleased to see that the vast majority of local authorities and social care providers continue to accept the findings of your investigations, taking steps to put things right for the members of the public impacted by failings in public services and to prevent these failings from repeating.

Attached is the Government's response to the Review's recommendations. This response document does not mark the conclusion of this important work, but instead sets out a roadmap for a process of joint working to further consider and refine many of the proposals set out in the Review.

Two of the recommendations set out in the Review are addressed to my colleagues across Government. I'd like to thank the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Education for their careful consideration of your proposals and their assistance in drafting this response.

The Department for Education are working on proposals to address broader systemic issues in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ("SEND") system, and recommendation four relates closely to this work. The school system does not work for some families, particularly, families of children and young people with SEND, who sometimes find it very difficult to get the

support they need in good time. The Department for Education recognise the importance of families' rights to redress and they would like to work with the you to develop comprehensive, clear, independent escalation routes, where disputes or complaints cannot be resolved locally. The government will publish a Schools White Paper in the autumn, setting out our vision for SEND and broader schools reform.

Thank you once again for the work you and your organisation have put into this Review, and I look forward to discussing these important matters with you further in due course.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BARONESS TAYLOR OF STEVENAGE

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government

Government response to the Triennial Review by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Commission for Local Administration in England

Recommendation one:

Simplified legislation giving clear, straightforward powers of investigation for all local government services

The Government recognises that changes in the structure of local government over recent years, most notably at the strategic level, have led to a lack of consistency in the public's ability to seek redress over failures in public service delivery. The Government therefore agrees with this recommendation in principle - that members of the public should have an equal right to escalate complaints about public services delivered by local government, regardless of structural changes made to deliver greater devolution.

The Government will consider how best to ensure that changes to local government structures to deliver devolution do not cause inconsistency in people's right to have their concerns about public services investigated by the LGSCO.

Recommendation two:

Statutory duty to monitor compliance with LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code

The Government values the new Complaint Handling Code ("the Code") and the work the LGSCO is doing to drive standards and consistency in complaints handling across the sector. Fair and effective complaints processes can ensure that residents receive the public services they are entitled to and that issues are promptly resolved, and can inform improvements in service delivery.

The Government would therefore expect councils to consider implementing the Code in their own complaints policies and procedures, for services where there are no statutory requirements for complaints handling.

The Government has committed to resetting the relationship between central and local government and to ending the top-down micromanagement of individual decisions. It should ultimately be for local leaders to determine their own policies and procedures. While councils should consider the Code when developing these policies and considering complaints, the Government does not agree that the Code should be made mandatory for councils.

Recommendation three:

Mandatory signposting by adult social care providers

The Government values the role that the LGSCO plays in being able to support and resolve adult social care complaints. Much like for local authority funded care, where councils are required to signpost to the LGSCO, it is important that those paying for their own care are also made aware of the services of the LGSCO, and therefore we support this recommendation in principle.

The Government will consider how best to implement wider signposting for self-funders, and whether signposting should be mandatory, working alongside the LGSCO, the Care Quality Commission, adult social care providers and people who use care services.

Recommendation four:**Ability to investigate implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans, support for children with additional needs, admissions and exclusions in schools**

The Government thanks the LGSCO for its important work handling education-related complaints, particularly those in relation to SEND, which make up a significant proportion of its caseload.

The Government wants to create a more inclusive education system where more children and young people with SEND get the support they need, when they need it. The Schools White Paper, which will be published in the autumn, will set out our vision for SEND and broader schools reform.