

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

2008-9 Statistics Tables – Explanatory Notes and Commentary

Tables: Attached are summary details of the contacts and complaints about your Council that the SPSO received and determined in 2008-09. Table 1 details total contacts (by our subject categories) received for your Council for 2007-08 and 2008-09, alongside the total of local authority complaints for these years. We recorded 40 complaints about the Council, compared to 30 in the previous year. Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints determined by the SPSO in 2008-09.

Graphs: The first graph provides a visual representation of the information from the right side of Table 1. You'll see that in 2008-09 your Council was above the national average in terms of complaints about education, planning and social work. Your Council was below the average for complaints about finance. We received more complaints for your Council about planning and social work, and fewer complaints about finance, than in the previous year.

The second graph shows for each Council the percentage of complaints that we received and determined as premature, against the national average in 2008-9 (60%). We consider a complaint to be premature when it reaches us before the complainant has been through the full complaints process of the organisation. The graph does not reflect the number of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionately, compares against the average for Scottish local authorities. Your Council is number 27 on the graph, below the average. You'll see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 18 out of a total of 37 complaints determined (49% of the total for your Council). This was an increase on the previous year's figure of 12 out of 34 (35% of the total for your Council). This doesn't represent a large increase in numbers, but shows an increase in the *proportion* of complaints we determined to be premature.

NB We don't adjust any of our figures to mitigate the impact of housing stock transfer. It's evident, however, that there's a tendency for authorities that retain housing stock to receive more complaints and to fall higher within the prematurity graph than those that have undertaken stock transfer. This is to be expected given that housing complaints are usually the largest category of complaint and that there's a disproportionately high incidence of prematurity with housing complaints.

Complaints and Recommendations Reported to Parliament

We reported on two complaints about your Council in 2008-09, of which we upheld one and did not uphold the other. Attached is a summary sheet showing these complaints, and summarising the recommendations made. You will be aware that SPSO Complaints Investigators follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

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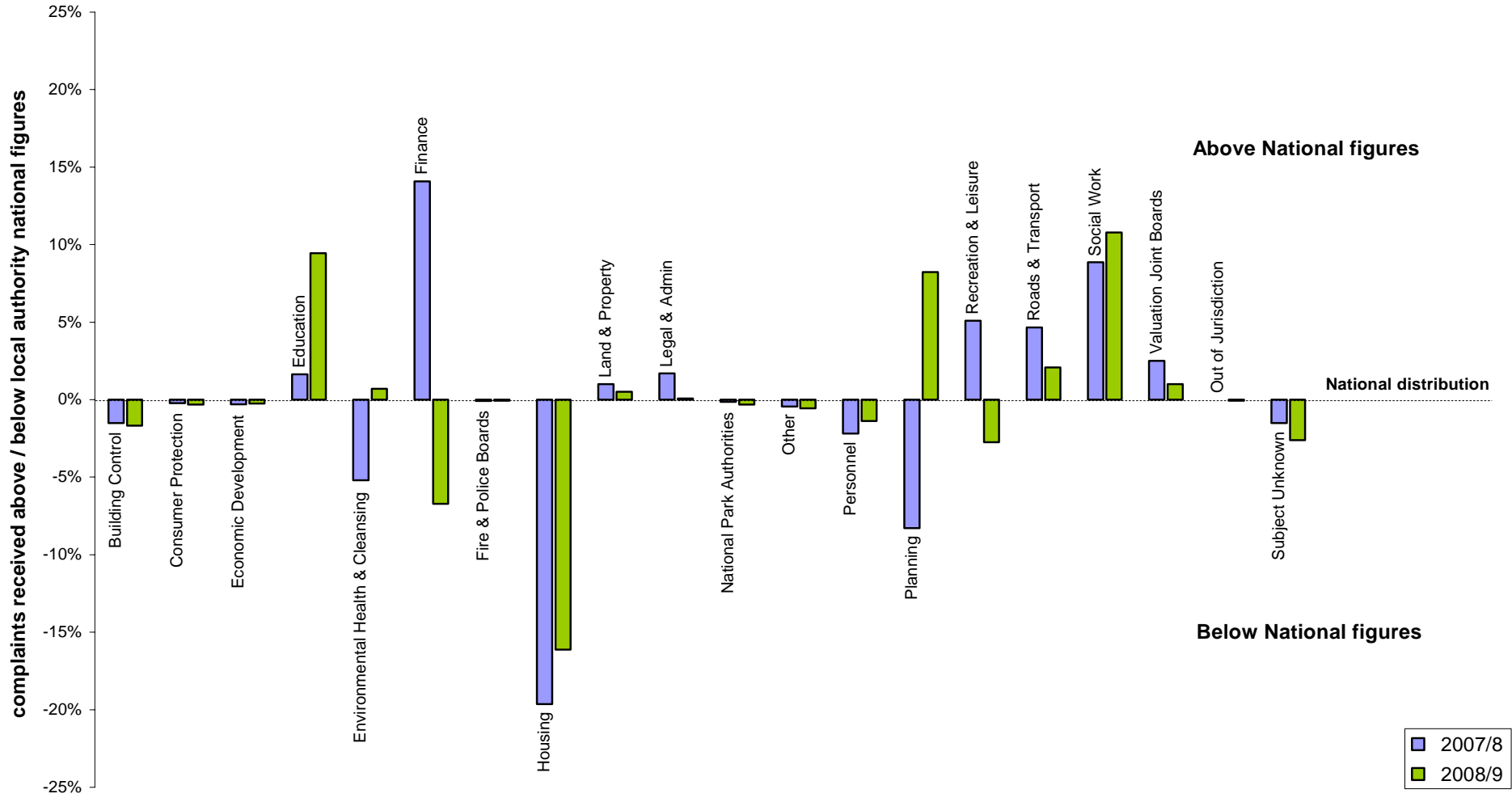
We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk. Fuller statistical reports are available on our website at: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Table 1

Received by Subject	2007/8			All Local Authority Complaints			2008/9			All Local Authority Complaints		
	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total	Total Contacts	Complaints Only	complaints as % of total
Building Control	0	0	0%	20	2%		0	0	0%	27	2%	
Consumer Protection	0	0	0%	3	0%		0	0	0%	5	0%	
Economic Development	0	0	0%	4	0%		0	0	0%	4	0%	
Education	4	2	7%	67	5%		6	6	15%	89	6%	
Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	0	0%	69	5%		3	2	5%	69	4%	
Finance	9	7	23%	123	9%		3	1	3%	148	9%	
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Housing	5	3	10%	394	30%		6	5	13%	459	29%	
Land & Property	1	1	3%	31	2%		1	1	3%	32	2%	
Legal & Admin	3	2	7%	66	5%		2	2	5%	79	5%	
National Park Authorities	0	0	0%	2	0%		0	0	0%	5	0%	
Other	0	0	0%	6	0%		0	0	0%	9	1%	
Personnel	0	0	0%	29	2%		0	0	0%	22	1%	
Planning	6	3	10%	243	18%		10	10	25%	269	17%	
Recreation & Leisure	2	2	7%	21	2%		0	0	0%	44	3%	
Roads & Transport	3	3	10%	71	5%		3	3	8%	87	5%	
Social Work	6	6	20%	148	11%		11	9	23%	188	12%	
Valuation Joint Boards	1	1	3%	11	1%		1	1	3%	24	1%	
Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	0%	0	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Subject Unknown	0	0	0%	20	2%		1	0	0%	42	3%	
Total	40	30		1,329			47	40		1,604		

Complaints received by subject: Dumfries and Galloway Council proportions compared to the distribution of all local authority complaints received



Dumfries and Galloway Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		<i>2007/8</i>		<i>2008/9</i>	
			<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>
Assessment	Premature	12	760	18	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	2	154	4	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	2	178	3	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	4	42	0	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	9	240	10	279
Investigation	Report issued: not upheld	4	82	1	25
	Report issued: partially upheld	1	62	0	22
	Report issued: fully upheld	0	23	1	15
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information during investigation	0	4	0	1
	Discontinued or suspended during investigation	0	13	0	9
Total		34	1,558	37	1,546

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
21/05/08	200402038	the Council did not adequately investigate complaints brought by 30 parents about the School (not upheld).	not upheld	The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.
25/03/09	200602104	the Council failed to undertake the appropriate assessments, identify the family's needs and provide for the necessary housing adaptations in a timely manner (upheld).	upheld	<p>(i) introduce a detailed assessment framework for identifying the needs of each individual entitled to be so assessed and what adaptations might be required to meet those needs. This assessment should include input from all professionals involved including (but not limited to) Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Health Professionals;</p> <p>(ii) review the current policy with respect to Private Sector Housing Improvement Grants and ensure that the policy is clear as to its limitations (both of funding and which needs will be met) and what adaptations might constitute an exception to the usual limit. Action should also be taken to ensure that relevant staff are fully aware of this policy, these limits and exceptions;</p> <p>(iii) introduce a procedure for dealing with adaptation cases where no agreement can be reached;</p> <p>(iv) as a matter of urgency produce a statement of needs for Mr C and his family, the adaptations needed to meet these needs and a plan for how these adaptations might be achieved; and</p> <p>(v) in recognition of the avoidable delays which have occurred in meeting Mr C's long term needs and the distress caused by this, make a payment to Mr C of £5,000.</p> <p>The Council have already accepted the recommendations and have already enacted recommendation (iv) and is the process of taking action that will achieve (iii).</p>