

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 35 complaints about the Council, compared to 26 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 housing and social work. We received more complaints for your Council about housing 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 17 on the graph, right on 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 30 complaints determined (60% of the total for your Council). This was an increase on the previous year's figure of 12 out of 33 (36% of the total for your Council). This doesn't represent a large increase in numbers, but does represent a significant 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 one complaint about your Council in 2008-09, which we partially upheld. Attached is a summary sheet showing this complaint, and summarising the recommendations made. As you are no doubt aware, SPSO Complaints Investigators follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

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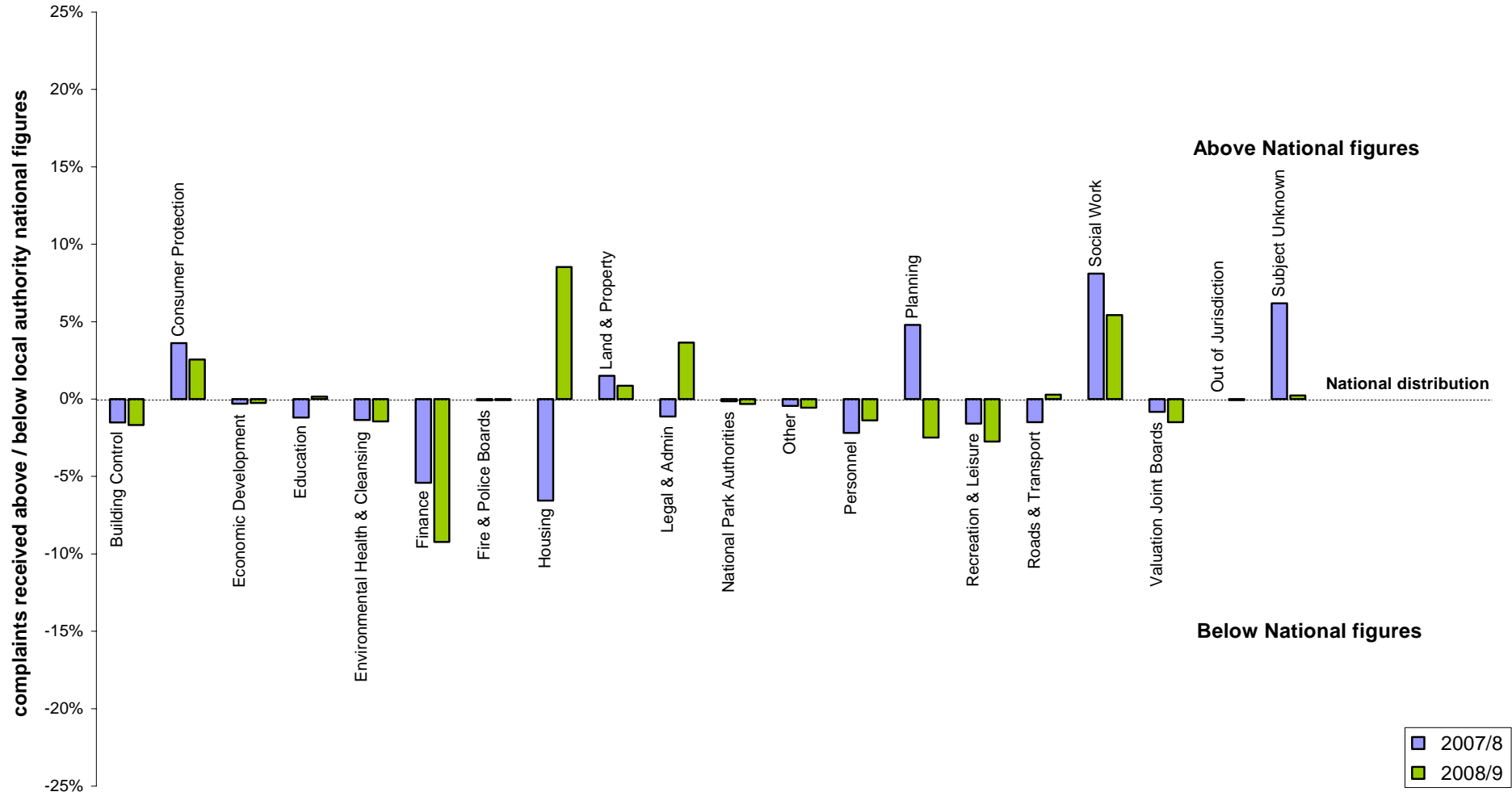
We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk. Fuller statistical reports are available on our website at: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

North Ayrshire 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	2	0	0%	20	2%		0	0	0%	27	2%	
Consumer Protection	1	1	4%	3	0%		1	1	3%	5	0%	
Economic Development	0	0	0%	4	0%		0	0	0%	4	0%	
Education	3	1	4%	67	5%		2	2	6%	89	6%	
Environmental Health & Cleansing	2	1	4%	69	5%		1	1	3%	69	4%	
Finance	3	1	4%	123	9%		2	0	0%	148	9%	
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Housing	11	6	23%	394	30%		15	13	37%	459	29%	
Land & Property	1	1	4%	31	2%		1	1	3%	32	2%	
Legal & Admin	1	1	4%	66	5%		3	3	9%	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	9	6	23%	243	18%		8	5	14%	269	17%	
Recreation & Leisure	0	0	0%	21	2%		0	0	0%	44	3%	
Roads & Transport	4	1	4%	71	5%		2	2	6%	87	5%	
Social Work	5	5	19%	148	11%		7	6	17%	188	12%	
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	0%	11	1%		0	0	0%	24	1%	
Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	0%	0	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Subject Unknown	2	2	8%	20	2%		1	1	3%	42	3%	
Total	44	26		1,329			43	35		1,604		

Complaints received by subject: North Ayrshire Council proportions compared to the distribution of all local authority complaints received



North Ayrshire Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		2007/8		2008/9	
		<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>	
Assessment	Premature	12	760	18	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	2	154	1	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	6	178	5	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	1	42	0	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	8	240	5	279
Investigation	Report issued: not upheld	3	82	0	25
	Report issued: partially upheld	1	62	1	22
	Report issued: fully upheld	0	23	0	15
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information during investigation	0	4	0	1
	Discontinued or suspended during investigation	0	13	0	9
Total		33	1,558	30	1,546

North Ayrshire Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
17/12/08	200703152	(a) the Council did not consult with tenants prior to the decision (upheld, to the extent that the decision not to consult was made without legal advice which would have been required to make it soundly based); (b) information provided to Councillors, prior to the decision, was inadequate (not upheld); (c) there was insufficient planning for the process of implementation and transition provisions (upheld); and (d) communication throughout was inadequate (upheld).	partially upheld	(i) review their procedures for ensuring appropriate legal advice is obtained and recorded prior to significant decisions; (ii) use the implementation of this decision as a case study, to ensure appropriate planning is in place for future service changes; (iii) ensure that, for future service changes, adequate and appropriate communication planning is undertaken and monitored; and (iv) review the information currently provided to tenants about the new system and ensure that systems are in place to allow tenants to communicate with the Council simply and effectively. The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.