

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 73 complaints about the Council, compared to 42 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 and housing. Your Council was below the average for complaints about finance and planning. We received more complaints for your Council about education, housing, 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 9 on the graph, just above the average. You'll see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 41 out of a total of 64 complaints determined (64% of the total for your Council). The previous year's figure was 34 out of 49 (69% of the total for your Council). This represents an increase in numbers, but a decrease 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 did not uphold. Attached is a summary sheet with details of this complaint.

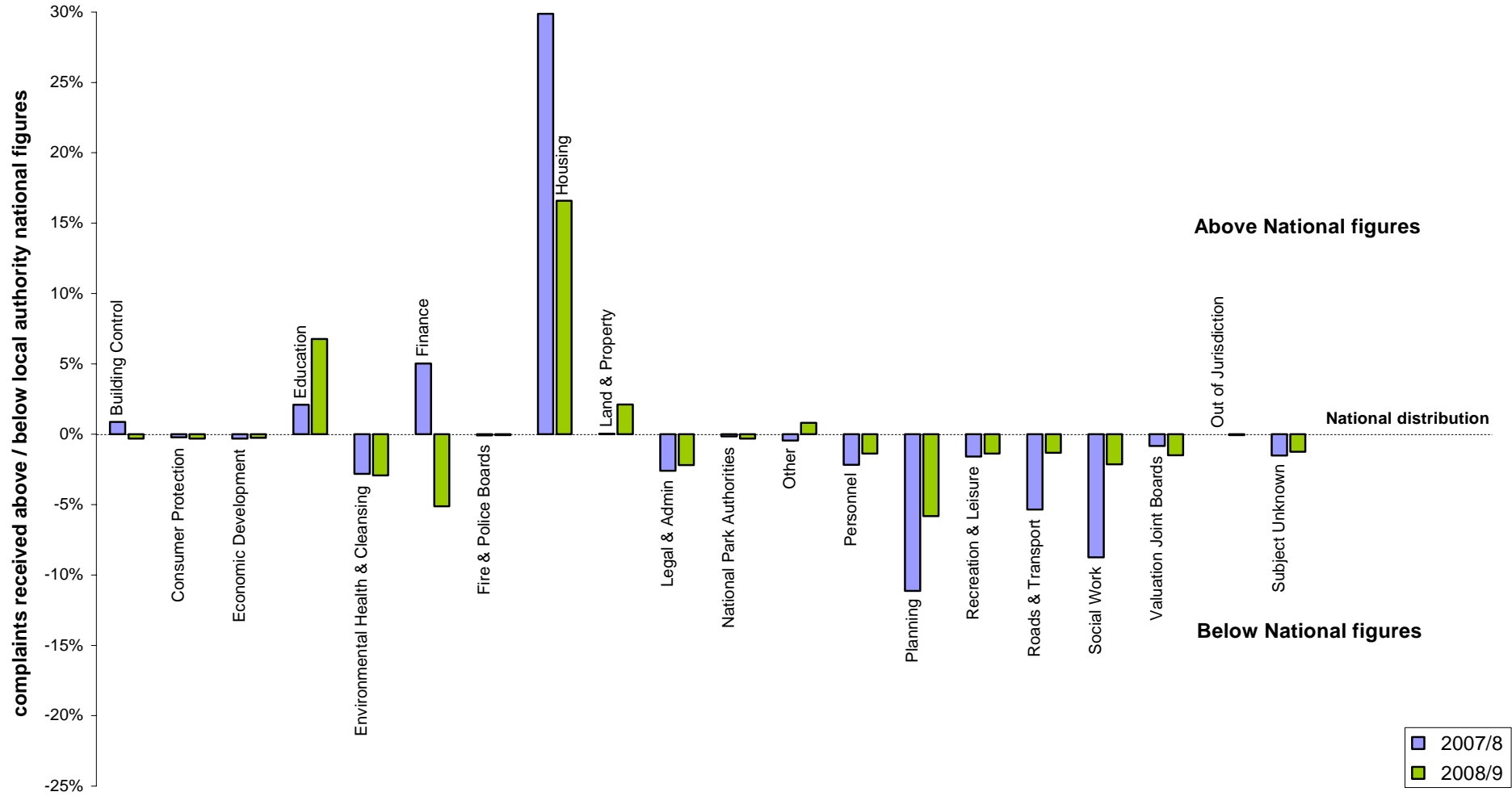
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We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk . Fuller statistical reports are available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

West Lothian 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	1	1	2%	20	20	2%	1	1	1%	27	27	2%
Consumer Protection	0	0	0%	3	3	0%	0	0	0%	5	5	0%
Economic Development	0	0	0%	4	4	0%	0	0	0%	4	4	0%
Education	4	3	7%	67	67	5%	10	9	12%	89	89	6%
Environmental Health & Cleansing	2	1	2%	69	69	5%	2	1	1%	69	69	4%
Finance	7	6	14%	123	123	9%	4	3	4%	148	148	9%
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	1	0%	0	0	0%	1	1	0%
Housing	40	25	60%	394	394	30%	35	33	45%	459	459	29%
Land & Property	1	1	2%	31	31	2%	4	3	4%	32	32	2%
Legal & Admin	1	1	2%	66	66	5%	2	2	3%	79	79	5%
National Park Authorities	0	0	0%	2	2	0%	0	0	0%	5	5	0%
Other	0	0	0%	6	6	0%	1	1	1%	9	9	1%
Personnel	0	0	0%	29	29	2%	0	0	0%	22	22	1%
Planning	5	3	7%	243	243	18%	10	8	11%	269	269	17%
Recreation & Leisure	0	0	0%	21	21	2%	1	1	1%	44	44	3%
Roads & Transport	1	0	0%	71	71	5%	3	3	4%	87	87	5%
Social Work	1	1	2%	148	148	11%	8	7	10%	188	188	12%
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	0%	11	11	1%	0	0	0%	24	24	1%
Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	1	1	0%
Subject Unknown	0	0	0%	20	20	2%	1	1	1%	42	42	3%
Total	63	42		1,329	1,329		82	73		1,604	1,604	

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



West Lothian Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		2007/8		2008/9	
			<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>
Assessment	Premature	34	760	41	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	1	154	4	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	7	178	8	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	0	42	0	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	6	240	10	279
Investigation	Report issued: not upheld	0	82	1	25
	Report issued: partially upheld	0	62	0	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	1	13	0	9
Total		49	1,558	64	1,546

West Lothian Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
23/04/08	200503539	the installation of traffic calming measures took place after inadequate consultation with local residents and without warning of the possible consequences (not upheld).	not upheld	The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.