

For local authority LGO link officers
and other authorities within LGO jurisdiction



LGO Link

[The new LGO Advice Team](#)

[Handling premature complaints](#)

[New LGO contact details](#)

[New LGO leaflet](#)

[FAQs](#)

February 2008

The new LGO Advice Team

Welcome to the first issue of this newsletter from the Local Government Ombudsman about improvements to our service, and how they will affect you. You may already know that, **from 1 April 2008**, we are introducing a first contact service provided by a new **LGO Advice Team** (previously referred to as the Access and Advice Service), based at our Coventry office. The Team will be the first point of contact for all enquirers and new complainants from any part of England. We wrote to all local authority chief executives about this in December 2007.

A new team of advisers is now being trained to provide comprehensive information and advice to our callers.

The main reasons for the changes are to:

- increase our accessibility;
- support post, text, email and telephone contact to consistently high standards;
- manage complainants' expectations at the outset; and
- provide a more consistent approach to premature complaints.

Handling premature complaints

From April, all those complaints that we consider 'premature', ie where the council has not yet had a proper chance to deal with the complaint, will be handled by the Advice Team, and they will make the referral to councils. This will be done by email, including any scanned documents.

We hope that this will mean that such complaints reach you even more speedily than at present and that it will benefit both complainants and councils.

The advisers will continue our practice of contacting the complainant after 12 weeks to check whether the complaint has been resolved.

New LGO contact details from 1 April 2008

The new contact details for the LGO Advice Team from 1 April are:

Telephone: Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5pm, 0845 602 1983

(this is the same number as our current telephone advice line)

Address: Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

Email: xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx

Text: 0762 480 4323

These are the only details we will be publicising for all new enquiries and complaints. We will no longer be publishing the three separate office contacts. Your own complaints documents and website may include the old contact details. **Please alter your website as soon as you can after 1 April.**

If you are reviewing your own complaints literature, **please incorporate these new contact details from 1 April.**

New LGO leaflet and website

We will issue a new leaflet in April and will send you copies. There is no need to place advance orders. We ask that you **recycle stock of our old leaflets** when you have received the new ones.

FAQs

- Q: Will the LGO Advice Team forward enquiries or complaints that are outside the LGOs' jurisdiction to the local authority?**
- A: Yes, the advisers will ask callers if they want us to do this.**
- Q: Who will be the contact point for local authorities for complaints received by the LGO Advice Team?**
- A: For premature complaints it will be the LGO Advice Team. Once enquiries are made, it will be the same investigation office as now.**
- Q: Will the allocation of cases to individual offices change in any way?**

A: Not as a result of the new service, although we do make occasional changes to balance work levels between the three offices and we would expect this to continue.

Q: When will a review of the operation take place?

A: Autumn 2008.

Q: Will local authorities be able to contribute to the review?

A: Yes, we will write to councils and will welcome invitations to attend meetings of complaint officer groups and similar.

Q: Will there be changes to the LGO annual letter?

A: Yes, but not this year. Next year (that is, the annual letter for 2008/09), there will be additional information on enquiries handled by the LGO Advice Team.

Q: What changes to the rest of the LGO operation will arise?

A: There may be other changes in the way we work, but these will not necessarily be as a result of the new service. We will keep you informed through this newsletter of any changes that affect you.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions?

A: Please contact the Assistant Ombudsman you usually deal with or:
[name removed], Customer Services Manager

Tel: 024 7682 0120

Email: [email address removed]

Next issue

In the next issue of the newsletter we will include a briefing on changes arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 that takes effect from April.