

Title of report: **Temporary change to DTAP decision letters**

Purpose of report: **To amend the decision letter to reflect the fact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has temporarily suspended all casework activity**

RECOMMENDATION

1) Agree to the proposed wording set out in paragraph 1.6 of this document

1 Background

1.1 On 25 March, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) contacted local authorities to advise they would temporarily suspend all casework activity where that work places an administrative burden on councils or social care providers.

1.2 This measure was taken so that councils could concentrate on delivering front-line services during the Coronavirus outbreak.

1.3 In practice, this means the LGSCO we will not make any contact with councils or care providers that requires a response or the need to take action. They will not make any enquiries about new complaints, chase outstanding ongoing issues, or ask for comments on draft decisions. They will not issue final decisions, apart from where it is decided not to investigate a complaint. Cases still in progress will be frozen until they can return to normal operations.

1.4 They do expect councils and care providers to respond to the most urgent and high-risk complaints and concerns from the public during this period.

1.5 In the meantime, councils should not signpost people to the LGSCO in the traditional way which necessitates a change to the normal wording in decision letters.

1.6 Below is the current wording and proposed wording:

Current wording

You have the right to refer your case to the Local Government Ombudsman, their phone number is 0300 061 0614 or online at www.lgo.org.uk Please be aware that this action is not a further right of appeal. The Ombudsman cannot overturn the Panel's decision, and will only investigate your case if there has been a failure to comply with procedural rules or if there were irregularities in the way your appeal was handled.

Proposed wording

You have the right to refer your case to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) who can investigate your case if there has been a failure to comply with procedural rules or if there were irregularities in the way your appeal was handled.

However, in line with the latest government guidance, the LGSCO is not currently accepting new complaints. They will accept complaints again when the situation improves and government guidance changes. You can find the most up-to-date information at www.lgo.org.uk or by listening to the recorded message on 0300 061 0614.

2. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

2.1 It is recommended to adopt the proposed wording until the LGSCO resumes normal operations.

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