

# Local Government OMBUDSMAN

23 October 2014

Jane Kendal  
Head of Service, Customer Relationship  
Kent County Council  
Invicta House, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
County Hall  
Maidstone  
ME14 1XQ

Dear Jane

Thank you for your letter of 19 September in reference to the Annual Review Letter 2014 for Kent County Council. Dr Jane Martin has asked that I respond to your letter on her behalf.

Annual Review letters are a valuable tool for sharing the information the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) holds about the complaints we see about local authorities in England. We review the content of the letters annually to accurately reflect new business processes and to ensure that, as far as we are able, we provide information that is most useful to councils. However, we know that our data will not be the same as that recorded by councils. This is not an error by either the LGO or the council. We are confident that our data is an accurate representation of the data we hold for the last 12 months and councils may not have recorded their data in the same way. We are also aware that a portion of our registered complaints will have been premature complaints that we referred back for a local resolution, but which the complainant may not have pursued.

In addition, not every decision made will relate to a complaint made in that year. There may be complaints registered in 13/14 that have not yet been decided on, and decisions may have been made in the year for complaints registered in a previous year.

We also categorise our complaints slightly different to how councils may record their own. For example we include disabled facilities grant complaints within either Adult Care Services or Education and Children's Services depending on the age of the person affected. We also include blue badge complaints as part of Adult Care Services.

Due to limited resources we are unable to provide bespoke analysis of data for individual authorities. However, I recognise the need to understand our data and how it is derived. I have therefore provided the raw data for your authority in an attached spreadsheet. This data is an accurate record of the data we hold about Kent County Council and hope it assists you in reconciling your information.

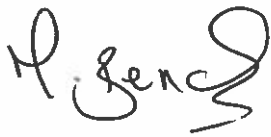
This year, we shared our Annual Letters with Chief Executives and Council Leaders. We understand that they will ask officers challenging questions of the data. It is important that Chief Executives and Leaders understand that data is not expected to match that that is held by the council and that this position is acceptable. We will ensure that we explain more clearly the expected differences in future.

PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

T: 024 7682 0000  
F: 024 7682 0001  
W: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

Helpline: 0300 061 0614

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Bench', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marie Bench  
Policy and Research Manager  
Local Government Ombudsman