

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 43 complaints about the Council, compared to 40 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 planning. Your Council was below the average for complaints about housing. We did, however, receive more complaints for your Council about housing (and social work) 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 11 on the graph, slightly above the average. You'll see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 29 out of a total of 46 complaints determined (63% of the total for your Council). This was an increase on the previous year's figure of 20 out of 35 (57% of the total for your Council).

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 upheld. Attached is a summary sheet showing details of the outcome of this complaint, and summarising the recommendations made.

We discontinued two complaints about your Council at the investigation stage. We did not report on these complaints.

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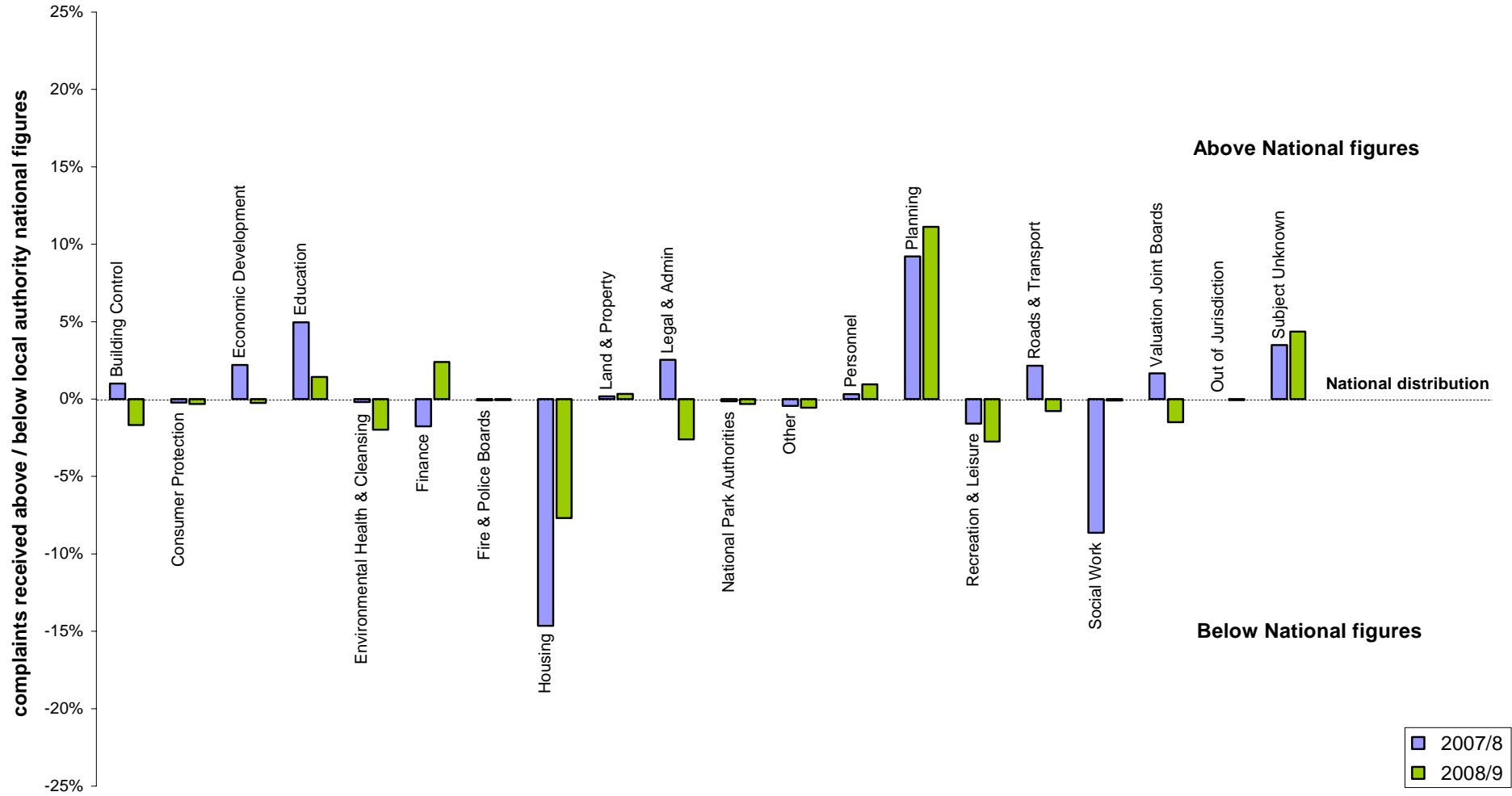
We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk. Fuller statistical reports are available on our website at: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

Aberdeenshire 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	3%	20	2%		0	0	0%	27	2%	
Consumer Protection	0	0	0%	3	0%		0	0	0%	5	0%	
Economic Development	1	1	3%	4	0%		0	0	0%	4	0%	
Education	6	4	10%	67	5%		3	3	7%	89	6%	
Environmental Health & Cleansing	2	2	5%	69	5%		1	1	2%	69	4%	
Finance	4	3	8%	123	9%		6	5	12%	148	9%	
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Housing	8	6	15%	394	30%		10	9	21%	459	29%	
Land & Property	1	1	3%	31	2%		1	1	2%	32	2%	
Legal & Admin	3	3	8%	66	5%		1	1	2%	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	1	1	3%	29	2%		1	1	2%	22	1%	
Planning	15	11	28%	243	18%		13	12	28%	269	17%	
Recreation & Leisure	0	0	0%	21	2%		0	0	0%	44	3%	
Roads & Transport	3	3	8%	71	5%		2	2	5%	87	5%	
Social Work	4	1	3%	148	11%		7	5	12%	188	12%	
Valuation Joint Boards	1	1	3%	11	1%		0	0	0%	24	1%	
Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	0%	0	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Subject Unknown	2	2	5%	20	2%		4	3	7%	42	3%	
Total	52	40		1,329			49	43		1,604		

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



Aberdeenshire Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		<i>2007/8</i>		<i>2008/9</i>	
			<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>
Assessment	Premature	20	760	29	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	2	154	4	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	5	178	4	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	1	42	0	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	3	240	6	279
Investigation	Report issued: not upheld	0	82	0	25
	Report issued: partially upheld	2	62	0	22
	Report issued: fully upheld	1	23	1	15
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information during investigation	1	4	0	1
	Discontinued or suspended during investigation	0	13	2	9
Total		35	1,558	46	1,546

Aberdeenshire Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
22/10/08	200700989	(the Council) failed to take adequate steps to ensure that Mr and Mrs C were aware of which primary school their daughter was zoned to attend nor did they explain the transport implications of this (upheld).	upheld	provide free school transport to Child A and her sister, both of whom already attend School 1, until the end of their primary schooling from the pick up/drop off point which would have been agreed had Child A been within the catchment area of School 1. In addition, the Ombudsman recommends that the Council look favourably on future applications for transport to School 1 for any other siblings of Child A. The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.