

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 29 complaints about the Council, compared to 19 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 and recreation & leisure. Your Council was below the average for complaints about social work. We received more complaints for your Council about planning and education 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 16 on the graph, right on the average. You'll see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 15 out of a total of 25 complaints determined (60% of the total for your Council). This was an increase on the previous year's figure of 11 out of 20 (55% 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 this complaint, and the Ombudsman's recommendation. As you are no doubt aware, SPSO Complaints Investigators follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

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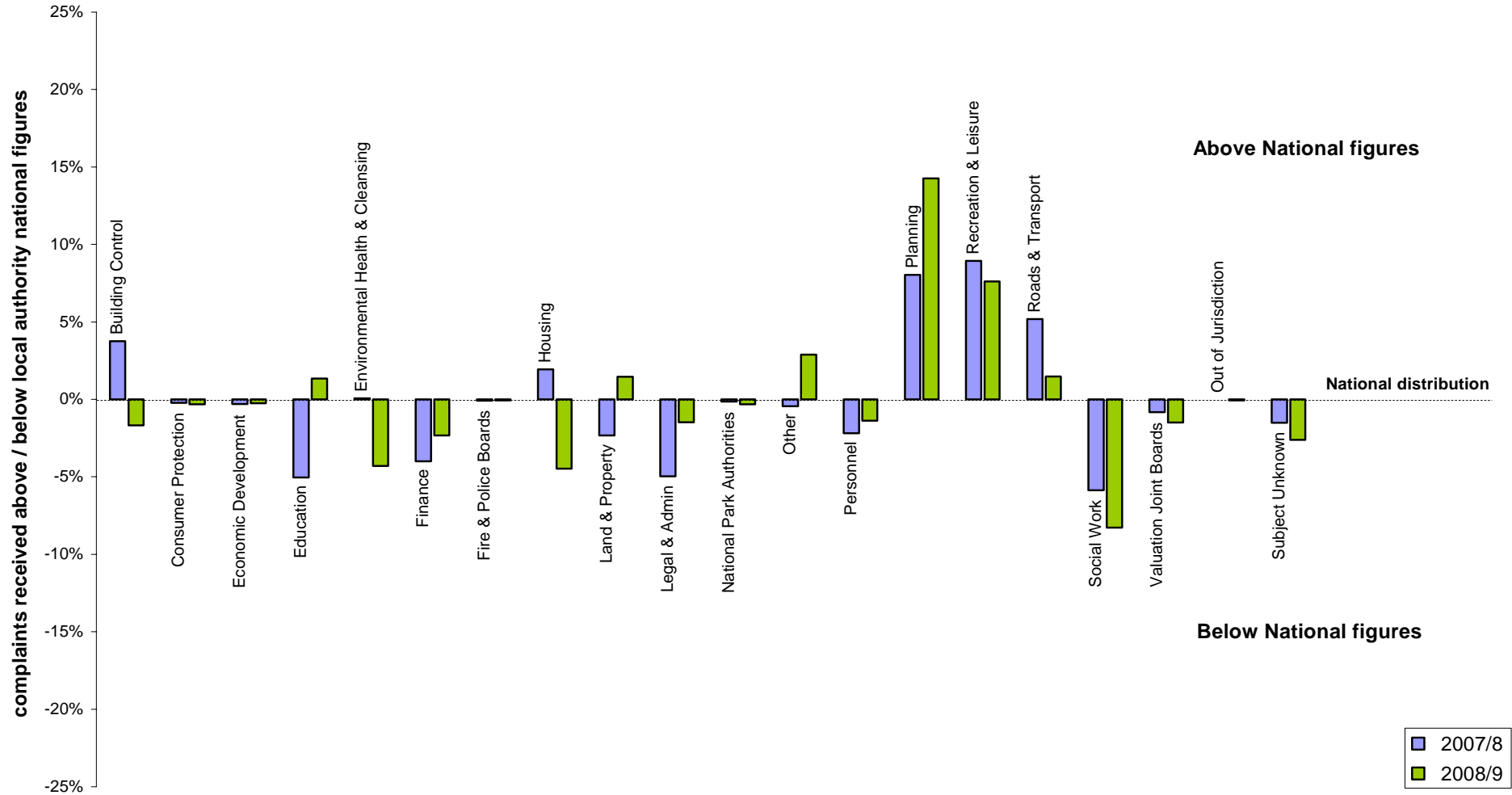
We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or email awhite@spsso.org.uk. Fuller statistical reports are available on our website at: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

Midlothian 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	5%	20	2%		1	0	0%	27	2%	
Consumer Protection	0	0	0%	3	0%		0	0	0%	5	0%	
Economic Development	0	0	0%	4	0%		0	0	0%	4	0%	
Education	0	0	0%	67	5%		2	2	7%	89	6%	
Environmental Health & Cleansing	2	1	5%	69	5%		0	0	0%	69	4%	
Finance	1	1	5%	123	9%		2	2	7%	148	9%	
Fire & Police Boards	0	0	0%	1	0%		0	0	0%	1	0%	
Housing	10	6	32%	394	30%		8	7	24%	459	29%	
Land & Property	0	0	0%	31	2%		1	1	3%	32	2%	
Legal & Admin	1	0	0%	66	5%		1	1	3%	79	5%	
National Park Authorities	0	0	0%	2	0%		0	0	0%	5	0%	
Other	1	0	0%	6	0%		1	1	3%	9	1%	
Personnel	0	0	0%	29	2%		0	0	0%	22	1%	
Planning	6	5	26%	243	18%		9	9	31%	269	17%	
Recreation & Leisure	3	2	11%	21	2%		3	3	10%	44	3%	
Roads & Transport	2	2	11%	71	5%		4	2	7%	87	5%	
Social Work	1	1	5%	148	11%		1	1	3%	188	12%	
Valuation Joint Boards	0	0	0%	11	1%		0	0	0%	24	1%	
Out of Jurisdiction	0	0	0%	0	0%		1	0	0%	1	0%	
Subject Unknown	0	0	0%	20	2%		0	0	0%	42	3%	
Total	28	19		1,329			34	29		1,604		

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



Midlothian Council

Table 2

Complaints Determined by Outcome		2007/8		2008/9	
			<i>All Local Authority</i>		<i>All Local Authority</i>
Assessment	Premature	11	760	15	923
	Out of Jurisdiction	0	154	2	102
	Withdrawn or failed to provide information before investigation	2	178	4	158
	Discontinued or suspended before investigation	1	42	1	12
Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	3	240	2	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	0	4	0	1
	Discontinued or suspended during investigation	0	13	0	9
Total		20	1,558	25	1,546

Midlothian Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Decision	Recommendation(s)
21/05/08	200600586	the Council did not consult adequately, and as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for the Exchange of Information, with the Community Council in relation to proposals to close two leisure centres (upheld to the extent that the Council were unable to justify their position).	upheld	properly consider whether it is necessary to consult with community councils when taking decisions which could reasonably be viewed as matters of importance to a particular area.