



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

Lee Rowley MP
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Local Government and Building
Safety)**
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

12 September 2023

Dear Lee,

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman funding

I write regarding the Government's funding of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The LGSCO's budget was reduced by over 40% between 2010 and 2019 and is due to be cut by a further 4% by 2024-25.¹ Michael King CBE, former Ombudsman until March 2023, has said that these cuts "could leave the organisation in an untenable position if its funding is not put on a sustainable footing in the next Comprehensive Spending Review".²

In July 2023, Paul Najsarek, the interim Ombudsman, further highlighted that resourcing issues have led the LGSCO to prioritise public interest cases and make it "less likely to carry out investigations into 'borderline' issues".³ It would therefore appear that funding cuts are currently impacting the service which the LGSCO is able to deliver.

The LGSCO's most recent annual report and accounts state that "[w]e have raised our concerns with our sponsor department about the threat to the long-term sustainability of the LGSCO that the current situation already presents, let alone if the prospect of further budget reductions arise".⁴

Please could you outline the Government's assessment of the LGSCO's funding, and what discussions you have had with the LGSCO regarding its long-term sustainability? What is the Government's response to the former Ombudsman's remarks regarding the need to ensure sustainable funding at the next Comprehensive Spending Review?

I would appreciate your response by 25 September 2023.

¹ Correspondence from Michael King CBE, [21 March 2023](#)

² Correspondence from Michael King CBE, [21 March 2023](#)

³ Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, [Review of Local Government Complaints 2022-23](#) (July 2023), p. 1

⁴ Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, [Annual Report & Accounts 2021-22](#) (December 2022), HC 924, p. 29.



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Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts'.

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee