

Local Government Ombudsman

One of you should play the part of the **complainant**. You moved to the area a year ago and found that your rubbish bins were not being emptied regularly, leading to piles of rubbish bags blocking the pavement on your street. Though you called the council refuse department on several occasions you were only able to speak to an assistant. She told you that the rubbish collection times were different to those set out in a leaflet you got from the local library. The collection service remained irregular for several weeks and you wrote to the council asking for financial compensation. Though services have now improved, you still have not been offered compensation.

A second person can take the role of the **council representative**. You replied to the complainant's letter explaining that the council had recently changed the firm which cleared away rubbish, and that there had been some problems sorting out the route and times for which you apologised. These were now sorted out, however, and you do not see that the complainant has suffered to the extent that you should pay compensation.

The person playing the role of the **local government ombudsman** should talk to both sides and decide whether to uphold the complaint. What information do you need from the complainant before you decide? If you do investigate, what papers will you want to see and who will you interview? What sort of redress might you recommend if you find in favour of the complainant? How will you justify your position?