

ITEM FOR INFORMATION

Committee Name: Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee, University Council

Date: November 20, 2025

Presented by: Eric Lamb, Chair, Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

Subject: Responsible Conduct of Research Annual Report

SUMMARY

At the November RSAW meeting, the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) team provided members with the annual report as mandated by the Tri-Agency Framework outlining the total number of allegations received involving Agency funding, the number of confirmed breaches and the nature of those breaches.

Dr. Marciniuk presented data showing a decrease in the number of cases but an increase in complexity and respondents. Over the past year, ten new cases were reported involving 25 individuals, with allegations ranging from falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, redundant publication, and policy violations to inappropriate authorship and fund mismanagement.

Complaints came from various sources including external reviewers, ethics boards, faculty, staff, and students. Respondents included faculty, students, postdocs, administrators, and individuals previously affiliated with the University. Outcomes for confirmed breaches included dismissals, informal resolutions, reprimands, grade penalties, and reflection papers.

It was noted that there is an increasing role of external scrutiny, including platforms like PubPeer and publishers, and noted a rise in image manipulation and plagiarism cases. To address this, the university launched a pilot text-matching tool using iThenticate, initially for faculty, with plans to expand to students by fall 2026. The tool is intended to support researchers in improving their work.

The university is enhancing RCR education through online modules, incentives, and local champions to support awareness and best practices. Early intervention, proactive education, and collaboration with legal and administrative teams to manage risks and uphold research integrity.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Responsible Conduct of Research Presentation**



Responsible Conduct of Research 2024-25 Update

Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

November 6, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Responsible Conduct of Research Team

Darcy D. Marciniuk, MD, FRCPC, FCAHS, Master FCCP

Responsible Conduct of Research Institutional Lead; Associate Vice-President Research

Trever Crowe, PhD

Research Integrity Officer; Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies), College of Agriculture and Bioresources

Diane Martz, PhD

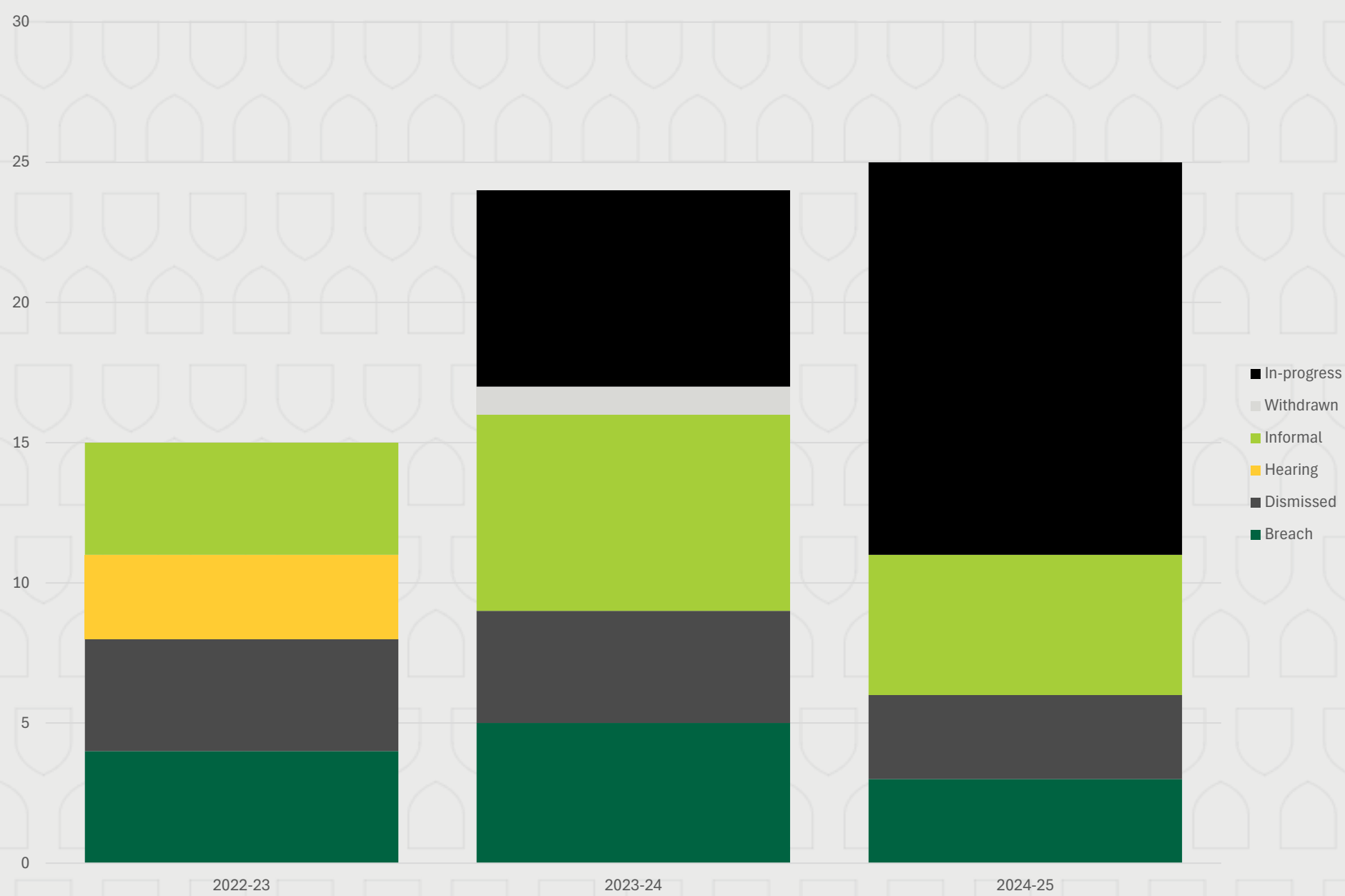
Senior Advisor, Responsible Conduct of Research

Trevor Batters

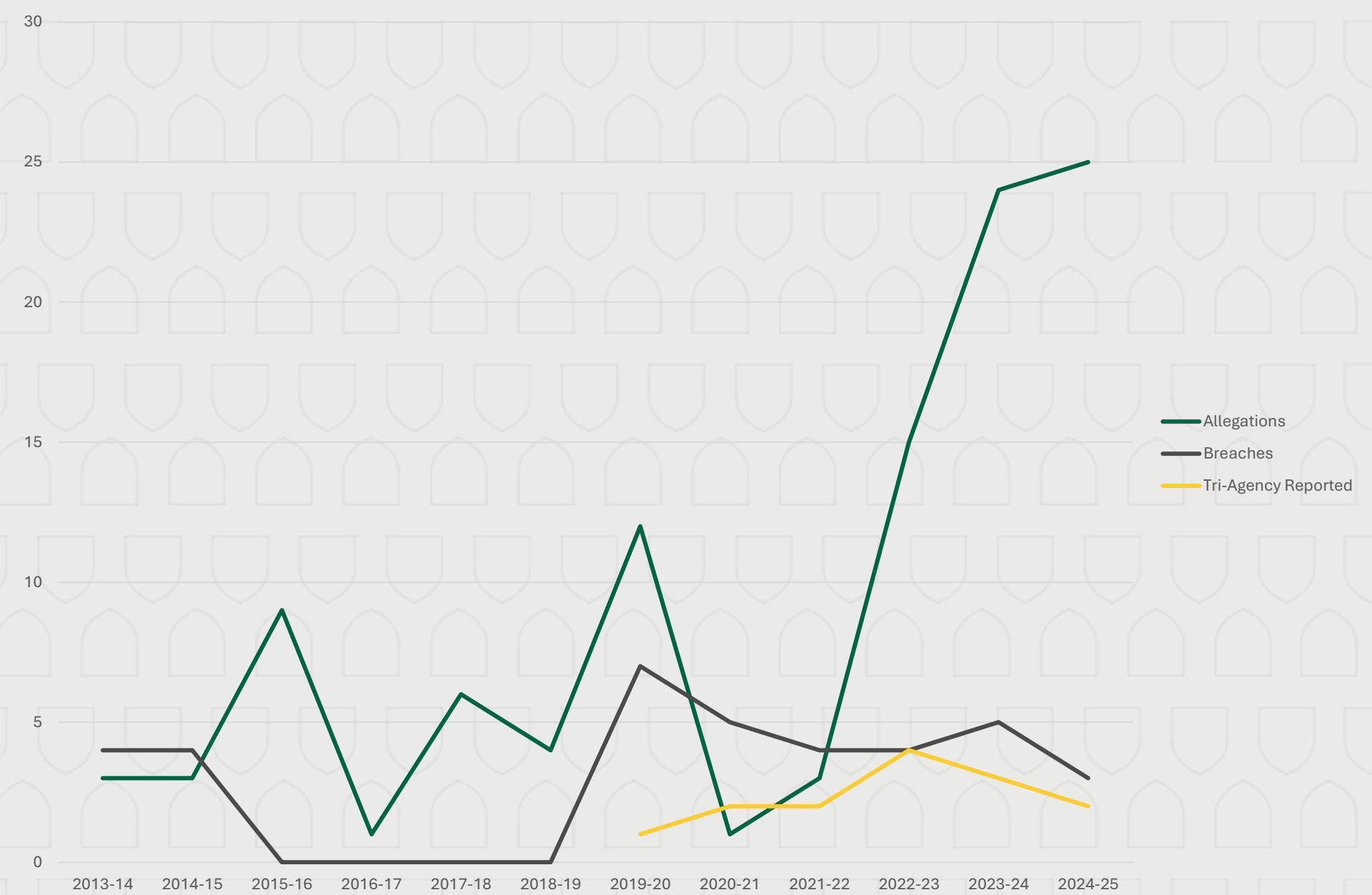
Director, Responsible Conduct of Research

New RCR Inquiries/Investigations (July 2024 to June 2025)

Inquiry Status (by Respondent)



Activity (by Respondents)



New RCR Inquiries/Investigations (July 2024 to June 2025)

- **Ten new cases (some involving multiple allegations) involving 25 respondents**
 - Falsification/Fabrication (3 complaints involving 14 respondents)
 - Redundant Publications (1 complaint involving 5 respondents)
 - Plagiarism (3 complaints involving 9 respondents)
 - Failure to comply with relevant policies, laws or regulations for the conduct of certain types of research
 - TCPS2 (3 complaints involving 4 respondents)
 - Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines and policies (1)
 - Inappropriate Authorship (2)
 - Mismanagement of Grant and Awards funds (1)
 - Inappropriate acknowledgement (1)

New RCR Inquiries/Investigations (July 2024 to June 2025)

- **Outcomes for the 25 respondents**
 - Confirmed breach – acknowledged (3)
 - Dismissed at inquiry (3)
 - Informal Resolution (5)
 - Ongoing (14)
- **Two hearings for student consequences** (involving 3 respondents)
- **Confirmed breaches include fabrication and falsification** (2 cases involving three respondents)
- **Recourse included:**
 - Letter of Reprimand (2 from prior year)
 - Case study and Hearing Board member on advisory committee(1)
 - Grade of 0 and reflection paper (2)

New RCR Inquiries/Investigations (July 2024 to June 2025)

- **Sources of 10 new cases**
 - External complainants (3)
 - Research Ethics Board (2)
 - Faculty or staff (4)
 - Students and former students (1)
- **Types of respondents**
 - In-scope Faculty (7)
 - Graduate Student (2)
 - Undergraduate Student (2)
 - Post-Doctoral Fellow (1)
 - Senior Administrator (1)
 - No current affiliation with USask (11)

RCR Reporting

- **Yearly report to RSAW and University Council**
- **Yearly report to the Tri-Agencies:**
 - Number of allegations proceeding to a Hearing
 - Breaches of the RCR Policy involving Tri-Agency funding
- **Yearly report to the U.S. Office of Research Integrity on any cases involving US government funding**
- **All reports were submitted for the prior year**

RCR Team Observations

- **Number of cases are lower this year, but the complexity and number of respondents has resulted in more on-going cases.**
- **Nature of the cases have raised awareness of:**
 - Concerns related to graduate student supervision
 - Concerns related to the assignment and approval of expenses in research funds
 - External complaints that raise questions about USask research
 - Increased issues with images, including falsification, manipulation, appropriate re-use and citation
 - Concerns related to lack of understanding of plagiarism of ideas

RCR Personnel

- **Trevor Batters was hired as the new Director, Responsible Conduct of Research**
- **Diane Martz has taken on the role of Senior Advisor, Responsible Conduct of Research to advise on RCR processes and to build out training, resources, and tools for researchers.**
- **Trever Crowe has been renewed as the Research Integrity Officer**

RCR Policy

- **The Panel on Responsible Conduct of Research (PCRC) will begin consultation on updates to the Tri-Agency Framework on Responsible Conduct of Research in early 2026, next edition expected in Dec 2026**
- **The USask RCR policy must be updated by Dec 2027 to align with the revised Framework**
 - Consultation with USask stakeholders has begun
- **Early indications from the PCRC of potential changes:**
 - Reporting on all inquiries involving Tri-Agency Funding as opposed to only those involving a breach or of which the Secretariat is aware
 - Representation of distinct communities (such as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis Peoples; or trainees) in inquiries or investigations
 - Clarification that an honest error is a breach under the Tri-Agency Framework

RCR Proactive Work: iThenticate

- **To support publication and grant submissions, the OVPR has acquired a license for iThenticate**
 - Support researchers in reviewing documents for text matched from other sources.
 - Mitigate concerns of plagiarism or text-matches being raised by editors
 - No cost to researchers
- **Intended as a tool for individual researchers**
- **Pilot with Agriculture & Bioresources in November**
- **Roll-out to campus scheduled for January**
- **Work with CGPS on the use for graduate student theses and dissertations**

RCR Proactive Work: Supports for Good Research Practice

- **RCR education for all members of the University engaged in research**
 - **Consultation and Environmental Scan – Fall 2025**
 - Priority areas/topics
 - Effective modes of delivery
 - Incentives
 - Identification of tools for researchers
 - **Development – Spring 2026**
 - Program of RCR education
 - Exploration re: implementing incentives
 - Integration with existing policies, procedures and offerings
 - RCR Champions across Campus
 - RCR website update

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?

Appendix 1: Responsible Conduct of Research - Allegations, Appeals, Investigations & Breaches 2013 to June 30, 2023

Time Period	New Allegations Received	Appeals	# of Inquiries	Breaches Acknowledged*	# Hearings	No Breach	Confirmed Breaches (# of Respondents)	# of cases involving breaches	# Respondents Reported to the Tri-Agencies	In Progress/ Ongoing
07/2013 - 06/2014	3		N/R	N/A	3	1	3 plagiarism 1 redundant publication	2	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2014 - 06/2015	3		N/R	N/A	3	Not reported	3 plagiarism 1 redundant publication	Not reported	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2015 - 06/2016	9		N/R	N/A	2	7 plus 1 from 2015	Not reported	0	N/R	2 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2016 - 06/2017	1		N/R	N/A	1	0	Not reported	0	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2017 - 06/2018	6		N/R	N/A	2	2	Not reported	0	N/R	1 ongoing
07/2018 - 06/2019	4	1	N/R	N/A	3	3	Not reported	0	N/R	1 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2019 - 06/2020	12		11	5	1	1 from previous year	failure to comply with relevant policies (ethics) for the conduct of research (2), misrepresentation in a funding application (2), plagiarism (1), falsification of data (1), Fabrication of data (1).	6	1	3 in progress, 1 ongoing
07/2020 - 06/2021	1	1	3 (1 inquiry closed)	0	4	2	inadequate acknowledgement (1), invalid authorship, (2), plagiarism (2)	2	2	1 ongoing
07/2021 - 06/2022	3 (1 involving 3 respondents)	0	5 respondents	2 respondents	0	0	falsification (2), failure to comply with applicable policies, laws or regulations for the conduct of Research including, but not limited to Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines and policies (2)	2	2	1 ongoing
07/2022 - 06/2023	11 (involving 15 respondents)	1 (denied) in judicial review	15 4 acknowledged 4 dismissed 3 hearings 4 informal resolution	4	1 complete (but in judicial review)	0	Misrepresentation in a funding application (2); mismanagement of grants or awards funds (1); Invalid authorship (1);	3	4	1 hearing complete but in judicial review, 2 upcoming hearings

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07/2023 - 06/2024	18 (involving 24 respondents)	1	24 5 breaches; 4 dismissed; 7 informal resolution 1 withdrawn; 7 in progress	5	2 (cases ongoing from previous year)	2 (1 in appeal)	failure to comply with relevant policies for the conduct of research (TCPS2) (4); mismanagement of grant and awards funds (1)	3	3	6 ongoing, 1 in judicial review; 1 being appealed
07/2024 - 06/2025	10 (involving 25 respondents)	0	25 3 breaches 3 dismissed 5 informal resolution 14 in progress	3	2 (student recourse)	0	Fabrication/Falsification (3)	2	2 (from previous year)	8 cases (15 respondents) ongoing, 1 in judicial review

Data extracted from RSAW Committee Annual Reports to Council; June 2013 to June 2019.

*Acknowledgement of a Breach not offered as an outcome prior to 2019.