



## Complaints Handling Report 7. (July-September 2022 Q2 2022/23)

In accordance with the powers and duties given to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service has adopted the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP), which standardises and streamlines complaints handling procedures for the public sector in Scotland.

Some of the key elements of the procedure include:

- A two-stage process where complaints are resolved as close to the frontline as possible
- Frontline resolution of complaints within five working days
- An investigation stage of 20 working days, which provides a final decision
- Recording of all complaints
- Active learning from complaints through reporting and publicising complaints information

Following revision of the MCHP in 2019/20 - and a subsequent refresh of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by the SPSO - organisations are required to record all complaints and report quarterly to their Executive Team on 4 mandatory KPIs and to publish an annual report. SCTS has decided to make its quarterly reports available to the public in addition to the annual report.

This quarterly report covers the period 1 July to 30 September 2022 (Q2 of 2022/23) and reports only on complaints in relation to matters falling within the responsibilities of the SCTS that were received and/or concluded within this period.

Complaints received within one quarter do not equate with those fully dealt with during the same quarter (e.g. complaints received in June may not conclude until July).

<b>Complaints received (SPSO KPI 1)</b>	67 over 22 business areas
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This is a 19% increase on the previous quarter.

## Number and percentage closed in full within set timescales of 5 or 20 working days (SPSO KPI 2)

The MCHP sets out the time periods for responses to complaints:

Frontline response: 5 working days  
Investigation stage: 20 working days

Where complainants are dissatisfied with frontline responses they can request that the complaint be escalated to the investigation stage. Complaints escalated are recorded only once in numbers received, but responses issued at each stage are recorded individually.

One outlier at investigation stage - involving the carrying out of external grounds-work to resolve matters - has been excluded from time calculations.

	Number on time	Number late	% on time
Frontline response	33	3	92%
Investigation stage	15	1	94%
Escalated to investigation stage	8	0	100%

This shows an improvement from the previous quarter at all stages.

The types of complaints and the amount of investigation required, impacts on the time to respond to complaints at investigation and escalated stages. Delays at frontline stage are attributed to staff absence and misdirection of correspondence.

## Average times for responses (SPSO KPI 3)

On average, prescribed timescales were met at all stages with frontline and investigation stages remaining stable and escalated responses showing an improvement on the previous quarter.

	Average number of working days to respond
Frontline response	3 <i>(target = 5 working days)</i>
Investigation stage	10 <i>(target = 20 working days)</i>
Escalated to investigation stage	13 <i>(target = 20 working days)</i>

### Outcome of complaints at each stage (SPSO KPI 4)

	Not upheld	% of complaints dealt with at that stage	Upheld	% of complaints dealt with at that stage	Partially upheld	% of complaints dealt with at that stage	Resolved	% of complaints dealt with at that stage
Frontline response	16	45%	5	14%	3	8%	12	33%
Investigation stage	8	49%	3	19%	3	19%	2	13%
Escalated Complaints	5	62%	0	0%	2	25%	1	13%

### Analysis

Complaints that were upheld, partially upheld or resolved were of varied content and included:

Administrative - incorrect/delay in recording due to human error. These were addressed by raising awareness with staff, opportunity for additional training and new process of checking DVLA details.

Communication - providing updates to witness; handling of request for jury excusal; limited information on jury excusals; delay in responding to emails. These were addressed by reminders to staff, the addition of a message on jury telephone lines, highlighting of core SCTS values to staff.

Delay - registration of POAs, response to email. These were addressed by notification of timescales and procedure to expedite and tightening up of handover procedure during staff leave.

Technical issue with Office of Public Guardian case management system System issue was resolved. Plans to introduce a new system forms part of the SCTS business plan in order to allow faster processing of cases.

### Information Governance & Correspondence Team