

Customer Service Complaints Report

2020-21 Quarter 4

Meeting Date	10 June 2021
Meeting name	Leadership Team Governance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Director
Document link(s)	Customer Service Complaints Dashboard https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/8443/documents/A33445878/details
Outcomes sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. New style report - LT to provide comments on format and content, providing guidance for any changes required before finalising for publication.2. Noting quarterly outcomes3. Noting the recommendations made4. Identifying organisation learnings

Reporting customer service complaints

1. This CSC performance report provides a summary of Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) received and responded to by the SPSO in the previous quarter, including a summary of outcomes, trends, actions and key learning for SPSO, to promote continuous improvement of our service.
2. Customer Service Complaints are made when a complainant feels we have not met our customer service standards. The standards that are covered by this process are:
 - Communication – accessibility
 - Communication - clarity
 - Communication – keeping you informed
 - Communication – respect and dignity
 - Communication – timeliness
 - Communication - understanding
 - Competent and responsible – handling information
 - Competent and responsible – putting things right
 - Open and fair – impartiality and independence
 - Open and fair – transparency

3. CSCs are recorded on SPSO's case management system (Workpro) and we publish the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. The CSCs we received are analysed for trend information to ensure that, where possible, we identify areas where our service could be improved and take appropriate action.
4. We publish this report to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can, and do influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. This includes statistics showing the volumes and types of complaints and key performance details, including the time taken and the stage at which complaints were resolved.
5. CSCs may be closed at different stages of the procedure:
 - **Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution** refers to complaints closed at Stage 1 of the procedure, with no escalation to the next stage
 - **Stage 2 - Investigation** refers to complaints handled and closed directly at Stage 2 of the procedure (Frontline Resolution was not attempted)
 - **Stage 2 - Escalated Complaints** refers to complaints handled at Stage 1 and subsequently escalated to, and closed at Stage 2.
 - **Stage 3 - Independent Review** is when the SPSO procedure has been completed and our final decision has been issued, but the service user remains unhappy with our response or the way we have handled the complaint. At that point, the service user can ask our Independent Customer Complaints Reviewer (ICCR) to consider it. The ICCR provides an annual report on these complaints and it is published on our website here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)

Statistics – 2020-21 Q4

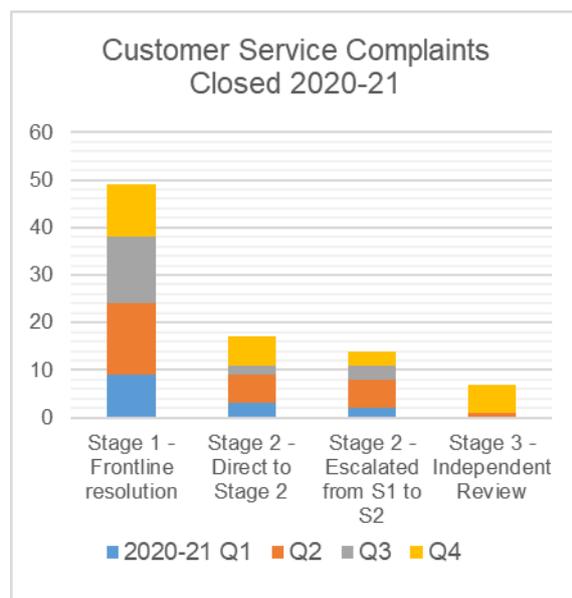
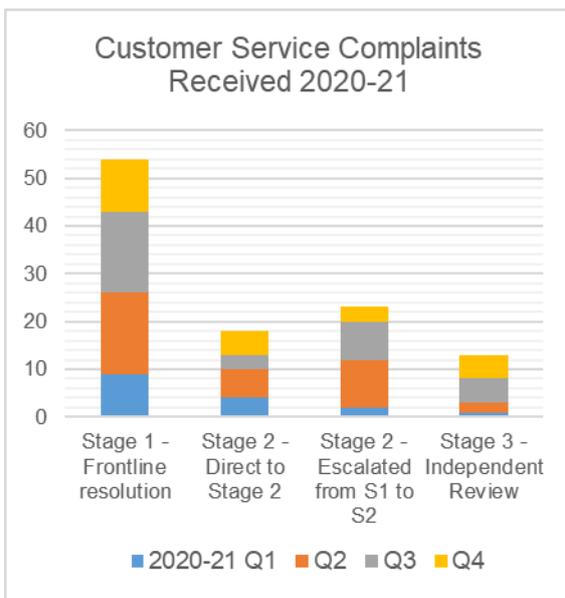
CSC case type development in the casework management system (CMS)

6. Two areas of development were identified during the production of this paper which will greatly improve the ability for SPSO to report on findings from complaints about our service.
 - a. The first improvement was to more clearly align the CSC subject list with our published service standards. This was completed in April, and there is an ongoing action to ensure that the new subject headings are applied to all CSCs that were open or received from 1 April 2021.
 - b. The second area of development will be to redesigned the workflow area of the case type so that each separate subject heading of a complaint can be recorded and aligned to an outcome, in the same way that our public sector complaints are recorded. This work will be undertaken with our service provider in Q2.
7. These developments will allow us to record more detailed information about the customer service complaints we receive, specific outcomes for each head of complaint, and capture more accurately the findings and recommendations that will help to improve the provision of our service.

Quarter four statistics

8. We received 19 service complaints in Q4, against a quarterly average of 24. We closed 20, in line with the quarterly average. For the full year, we received a total of 95 Stage 1 and 2 complaints in 2021-22, up 46% on 2019-20 (65). The full year-end report can be read here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)

Customer Service Complaints 2020-21 Q4	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	11	11
Stage 2 - Direct to Stage 2	5	6
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	3	3
SPSO Total	19	20
Stage 3 - Independent Review	5	6



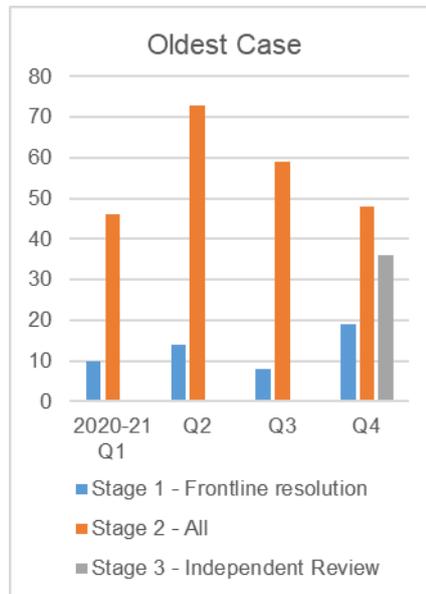
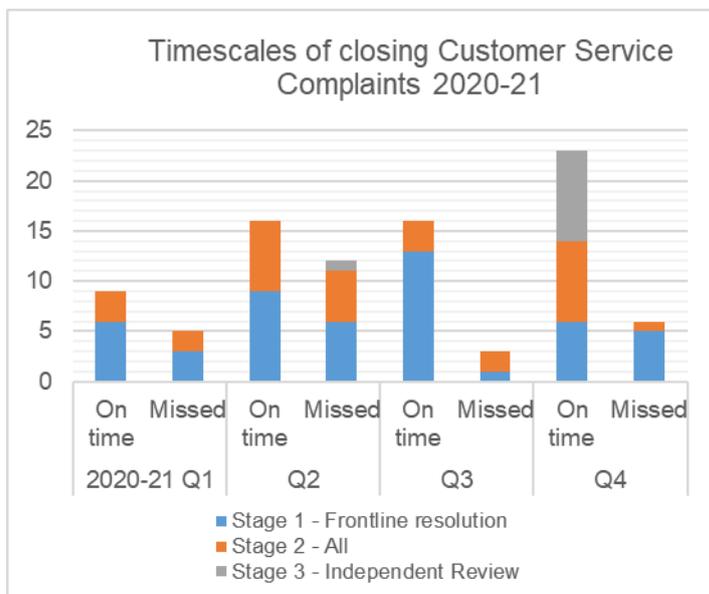
Timescales

9. The timescales by which we measure our performance against the requirements of the complaints procedure are:

- 5 working days at Stage 1
- 20 working days at Stage 2
- 40 working days for independent review

10. The table below summaries the average timescales to close service complaints at each stage and how many missed the target. Additionally, the oldest case at each stage is noted to address any cause for delay that is within our gift.

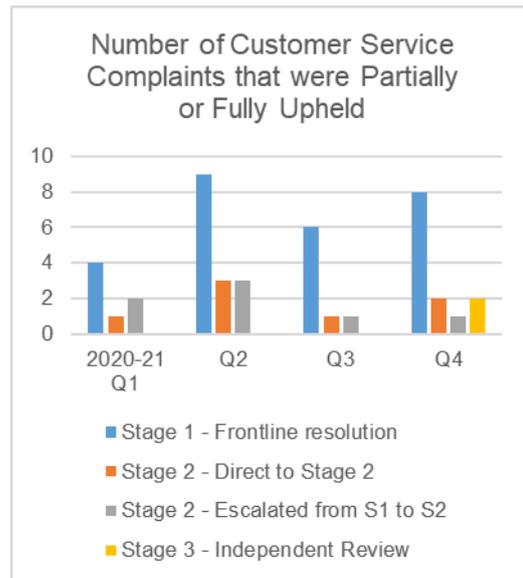
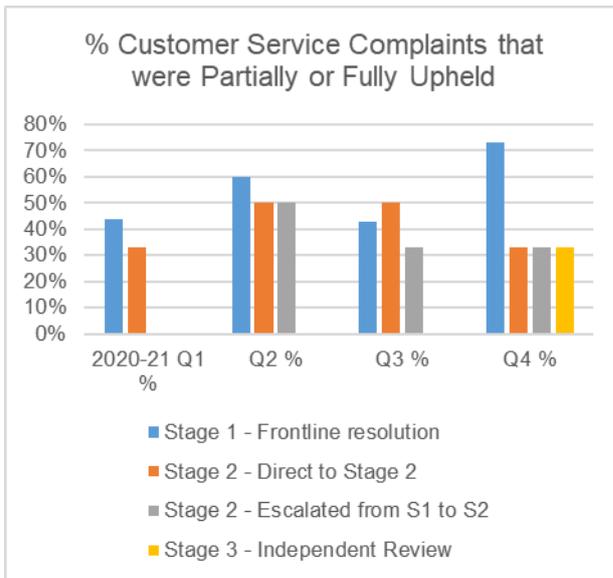
Average timescales	Average	On time	Missed	Oldest case
Stage 1	5.3	6	5	19
Stage 2	16.3	8	1	48
Stage 3 - independent review	9	9	0	36



Upheld complaints

11. The number of service complaints remains generally low in relation to the overall volumes of customer transactions delivered by SPSO each year. Nevertheless, upheld service complaints (and in some cases, not upheld service complaints) demonstrate that we take these complaints seriously and acknowledge when something goes wrong. The outcomes of these complaints help us to learn when things go wrong, so that we may improve our service provision in the future.

2020-21 Q4	Partially or Fully Upheld	Not Upheld	Total	% Partially or Fully upheld
Stage 1	8	3	11	73%
Stage 2 - direct	2	4	6	33%
Stage 2 - escalated	1	2	3	33%
Stage 3 - independent review	2	4	6	33%



12. Subjects and outcomes for those cases partially or fully upheld are listed below:

Stage	Service Standard	Decision
S1	Communication – keeping you informed	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
S1	Communication – keeping you informed	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
S1	Communication – keeping you informed	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
S1	Communication – timeliness	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
S1	Communication – timeliness	Fully Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
S1	Communication – timeliness	Fully Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
S1	Competent and responsible – putting things right	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action
S1	Communication – timeliness	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action
S2	Competent and responsible – handling information	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
S2	Communication - clarity; Open and fair – transparency; Competent and responsible – putting things right	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
S2	Communication - clarity	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
S3	Attitude, Communication	Some Upheld - Apology given and no other action taken
S3	Communication, treatment	Some Upheld - Apology given and other action

Findings

13. The broad themes where we have not met the standards that we expect of ourselves relate to failings in communicating effectively and with delays in progressing casework through our process.
14. Any recommendations made from the findings of these complaints are tracked below.

Recommendations tracker

SPSO Action Type	Case Outcome	CSC Findings	CSC Action Required	CSC Recommendation Date	CSC Learning Shared
Stage 1	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken	The complainant stated that inappropriate postage was put on an envelope (large envelope but only the cost of a small envelope in postage was added). As such, he had to go to the post office and pay £1.50 to retrieve his items. When the letter was resent, a leaflet was also missing.	To reimburse the applicant for his costs plus a little bit more for inconvenience - arranged for a cheque for £4.50 to be sent. Also spoken to member of staff who forgot to include leaflet to flag error.	07 Aug 2020	Emailed staff who handle mail during lockdown to advise. Also spoke with member of staff about forgetting to include leaflet.
Stage 1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	Decision not to include details of schedule 4(10) in decision did not affect the decision or scope of investigation. However, I accepted that including this info may have better informed C and allowed him to tailor his approach to the complaint in a different way.	discussed with staff member	12 Feb 2021	
Stage 1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	Complaint was upheld, as we failed to inform complainant in line with our guidance that the review request from the BUJ had been completed and the decision was unchanged. We therefore failed to meet our service standard that, '[W]e will keep you informed of progress and tell you what needs to happen at each stage.'	Apology for failure to meet service standard.	08 Mar 2021	Will be discussed with relevant staff.
Stage 1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	Appears to have been a problem receiving emails from C to ask@ email box. This has delayed progress of case.	Apology given and email to be sent to IT support to try and determine if/why emails not received.	30 Mar 2021	