

Customer Service Complaints Report

2021-22 Quarter 1

Meeting Date	
Meeting name	Leadership Team Governance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement
Document link(s)	
Outcomes sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Noting quarterly outcomes2. Noting the recommendations made3. 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. 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. Published reports can be read here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)
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 and tracked on SPSO's case management system and we publish the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. We monitor and analyse

CSCs for trend information to ensure that we identify areas where our service could be improved and take appropriate action.

4. 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 – 2021-22 Q1

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

5. Two areas of development for 2021-22 were identified to 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 2021, 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 Q2/3.
6. 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 one statistics

7. We received 27 Stage 1 and 2 service complaints in Q1 2021-22. In comparison, this was an increase of 80% on Q1 2020-21 (15). We closed 21, compared to 14 in the first quarter of 2020/21. Given the overall downturn in numbers of cases across the SPSO in the early stages of 2020/21, it is not surprising that case numbers have been increasing again. However, this should be kept under review, as the total received figure of 22 new cases (18 Stage 1, and 4 which were accepted direct as stage 2 cases) in Q1 is the highest since the new CSC process was put in place.

Customer Service Complaints 2021-22 Q1	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	18	13
Stage 2 - Direct to Stage 2	4	3
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	5	4
SPSO Total	27	21
Stage 3 - Independent Review	1	3

Timescales

8. 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
9. 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	3.8	15	1	11
Stage 2	16.4	5	2	22
Stage 3 - independent review		2	1	30

Upheld complaints

10. 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.

2021-22 Q1	Partially or Fully Upheld	Not Upheld	Total	% Partially or Fully upheld
Stage 1	7	9	16	44%
Stage 2 - direct	0	3	3	0%
Stage 2 - escalated	2	2	4	50%
Stage 3 - independent review	0	3	3	0%

11. Subjects and outcomes for those cases partially or fully upheld are listed below:
- Two cases were fully or partially upheld at Stage 1 and Stage 2, therefore, were counted twice in the closed cases tables:

<i>Case Ref:</i>	<i>Workflow Stage</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>
REDACTED	Stage1	Communication - timeliness	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action
REDACTED	Stage1	Communication	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
REDACTED	Stage1	Communication - accessibility	Fully Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
REDACTED	Stage1	Communication - timeliness	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action
REDACTED	Stage1	Communication - understanding	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
REDACTED	Stage1	Competent and responsible - handling information	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken
REDACTED	Stage1	Process	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action
REDACTED	Stage2	Competent and responsible - handling information ,Communication - respect and dignity	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback
REDACTED	Stage2	Process	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action

Findings, learning and actions

12. 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.
13. Actions taken as a result of CSCs determined in this quarter:

<i>Case Ref:</i>	<i>Workflow Stage</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Other action taken:</i>
REDACTED	Stage1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	<i>Prioritise the case (complainant's case had been reallocated from another caseload) Complete and send advice referral asap Contact complainant in relation to a matter they raised during CSC phonecall with the team manager</i>
REDACTED	Stage1	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	<i>Reminder to team: voicemail messages must be up to date</i>
REDACTED	Stage1	Fully Upheld - Apology given no other action taken	
REDACTED	Stage1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	<i>Complainant assured that steps are being taken to manage office-wide backlog</i>
REDACTED	Stage1	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken	
REDACTED	Stage1	Some Upheld - Apology given no other action taken	
REDACTED	Stage1	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	<i>Further request for a response was sent to the organisation.</i>
REDACTED	Stage2	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	<i>CR had already acknowledged error and apologised</i>
REDACTED	Stage2	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	<i>Checked that the action promised by CR at Stage 1 had been completed, and updated complainant that this had happened.</i>