

May 2019

In this month's e-newsletter:

- Consultation on the Draft National Whistleblowing Standards
- Annual Statistics
- Our findings this month: Complaints and Scottish Welfare Fund reviews

Consultation on the Draft National Whistleblowing Standards

The Scottish Government plans to introduce the new role of the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer for the NHS in Scotland (INWO) in 2020. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman will carry out the INWO role and function. The INWO will develop and publish National Whistleblowing Standards setting out the Principles and Procedure for investigating concerns. All NHS organisations in Scotland will be required to meet and follow these. Our consultation on the draft National Whistleblowing Standards is now live!

The draft Standards and information on how to respond to our survey is available [here](#). This consultation will run from **1 May to 28 June 2019**.

Annual Statistics

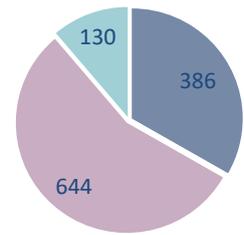
Our annual statistics are now available on [our website](#). These figures show the number of enquiries and complaints we received and determined in the year 2018-19.

In 2018-19, we:

- received **4,188** complaints – a **2%** increase on the **4,125** in the previous year.
- received and determined **1,707** enquiries – an **89%** increase on the **904** in the previous year.
- determined **3,955** complaints:
 - **3,285** were decided following detailed consideration pre-investigation
 - **670** were investigated - **68%** were about the health sector.

- made **1,160** recommendation for redress and improvement to public service:
 - **386** for personal redress
 - **644** for learning and improvement
 - **130** about complaint handling

Full information about the statistics for each sector, along with the subjects of complaints, is available on our website.



Recommendations made by type

Our findings

Complaints

This month we:

- are publishing 49 decision reports available [here](#)
- upheld 21 complaints in full or part
- made 58 recommendations for learning and improvement.

Learning points

- In case [201800410](#) we found that the council failed to take a proactive approach in planning support for an informal carer. We asked the council to reflect on our findings, identify appropriate further learning, and feedback to staff in a supportive manner.
- In case [201801339](#) we found that the health board failed to discover and report on objects left in the complainant's nasal tissue following surgery. We asked the board to review their practice and feedback learning to staff in a supportive way.

In both cases we emphasise supporting staff in learning from these complaints. Our thematic report [Making Complaints Work for Everyone](#) focuses on the impact of complaints on staff who have been complained about. We highlight the importance of supporting staff through the complaints process and engaging staff in positive activities to manage and learn from complaints.



Making Complaints Work for Everyone
Learning from Complaints
December 2017

SPSO Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

- We are also publishing a linked complaint against two water providers. We found failings by Clear Business Water ([201608499](#)), who provide water services to businesses. During that investigation we also identified failings by Scottish Water ([201810639](#)). The complainant made a complaint about Clear Business Water, but because they are not Scottish Water customers, they could not complain about them directly. In the Scottish Water case, the Ombudsman used her powers under Section 12 of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, to review Scottish Water's actions as a listed

authority mentioned in the complaint.

We made recommendations in both cases to improve the way they do things. This included reviewing previous cases to ensure similar errors had not occurred to other customers and reviewing their procedures in relation to disputes about customer liability.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) Reviews

During April we:

- responded to 64 enquiries
- made 47 decisions (20 community care grants and 27 crisis grants)
- signposted an additional 69 applicants to alternative sources of assistance, which in most cases, was their local council.

In recent weeks we have handled a number of applications from those who have faced crisis situations as a result of difficulties transitioning between work and claiming Universal Credit. [For related case studies, please see our SWF website.](#)

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