

2009-10 Statistics Tables – Explanatory Notes and Commentary

Tables:

Attached are summary details of the complaints that the SPSO received and determined about your Council in 2009-10. Table 1 details the number of complaints (by our subject categories) received for your Council for 2008-09 and 2009-10, alongside the total of local authority complaints for these years. In previous years we have used this table to show the total of all contacts (enquiry calls and complaints) that we received about your council. This year we have not included enquiry calls, as feedback has shown that it is more meaningful for you if we concentrate on the actual complaints received. We recorded 46 complaints about the Council, compared to 62 in the previous year.

Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints determined about your Council by the SPSO in 2009-10. Received and determined numbers do not normally tally exactly, as figures tend to include cases carried forward from the previous year.

Graph of prematurity rates: The anonymised graph shows, for each Council, the percentage of complaints that we received and determined as premature, against the national average in 2009-10 (55%). This represents a decrease on the 2008-9 average of 60%, which is to be welcomed. Figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage.

We consider a complaint to be premature when it reaches us before the complainant has been through the full complaints process of your organisation. The graph does not reflect the number of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionately, compares against the average for Scottish local authorities. Your Council is number 32 on the graph, well below the average. You will see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 16 out of a total of 51 complaints determined (31% of the total for your Council). The previous year's figure was 27 out of 54 (50% of the total for your Council). The proportion of premature complaints has therefore reduced significantly, against a slightly reduced number of complaints determined.

NB We do not adjust our figures to mitigate the impact of housing stock transfer. It is evident, however, that there is a tendency for authorities that retain housing stock to receive more complaints and to fall higher within the prematurity graph than those that have undertaken stock transfer. This is to be expected, given that housing complaints are usually the largest category of complaint and that there is a disproportionately high incidence of prematurity in housing complaints.

Reported Complaints and Recommendations

We investigated and reported on three complaints about your Council in 2009-10, of which we partially upheld one and did not uphold two. Attached is a summary sheet showing these complaints, and summarising recommendations made. As you are no doubt aware, in appropriate cases the Ombudsman may make recommendations where a complaint is not upheld, if he believes that there are lessons that may be learned. You will also be aware that SPSO complaints reviewers follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations. We discontinued one complaint about your Council at the investigation stage; this complaint was not reported on.

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We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics provided, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or by emailing awhite@sps.org.uk. Statistical reports are available on the SPSO website at: <http://www.sps.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

Table 1

Complaints Received by Subject		Perth and Kinross Council	Complaints as % of total	Sector Total	Complaints as % of total
2008-09	Building Control	1	2%	27	2%
	Consumer protection	0	0%	5	0%
	Economic development	0	0%	4	0%
	Education	5	8%	89	6%
	Environmental Health & Cleansing	3	5%	69	4%
	Finance	3	5%	148	9%
	Fire & Police Boards	0	0%	1	0%
	Housing	14	23%	459	29%
	Land & Property	1	2%	32	2%
	Legal & admin	1	2%	79	5%
	National Park Authorities	0	0%	5	0%
	Other	1	2%	9	1%
	Personnel	2	3%	22	1%
	Planning	24	39%	269	17%
	Recreation & Leisure	0	0%	44	3%
	Roads & Transport	4	6%	87	5%
	Social Work	3	5%	188	12%
	Valuation Joint Boards	0	0%	24	1%
	Out of Jurisdiction or Subject Unknown	0	0%	43	3%
	Total	62		1,604	
2009-10	Building Control	0	0%	36	2%
	Consumer protection	0	0%	10	1%
	Economic development	0	0%	2	0%
	Education	2	4%	94	5%
	Environmental Health & Cleansing	3	7%	71	4%
	Finance	1	2%	143	8%
	Fire & Police Boards	0	0%	3	0%
	Housing	11	24%	432	25%
	Land & Property	0	0%	33	2%
	Legal & admin	7	15%	90	5%
	National Park Authorities	0	0%	8	0%
	Other	0	0%	11	1%
	Personnel	1	2%	24	1%
	Planning	12	26%	264	15%
	Recreation & Leisure	1	2%	73	4%
	Roads & Transport	1	2%	94	5%
	Social Work	3	7%	199	11%
	Valuation Joint Boards	0	0%	19	1%
	Subject Unknown or Out Of Jurisdiction	4	9%	128	7%
	Total	46		1,734	

Table 2

Complaints Determined By Outcome			Perth and Kinross Council	
			Sector Total	
2008/09	Assessment	Premature	27	923
		Out of Jurisdiction	4	102
		Discontinued before Investigation	6	170
	Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	15	279
	Investigation	Report issued: complaint not upheld	0	25
		Report issued: complaint partially upheld	2	22
		Report issued: complaint fully upheld	0	15
		Discontinued during Investigation	0	10
		Total	54	1,549
	2009/10	Assessment	Premature	16
Out of Jurisdiction			6	118
Discontinued before Investigation			10	194
Other			0	17
Examination		Determined after detailed consideration	15	409
Investigation		Report issued: complaint not upheld	2	13
		Report issued: complaint partially upheld	1	25
		Report issued: complaint fully upheld	0	12
		Discontinued during Investigation	1	6
		Total	51	1,837

Perth and Kinross Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Overall Report Decision	Recommendation(s)
22/07/2009	200801931	(a) Ms C was not properly informed directly by the Council about the travel costs for two of her children (not upheld); (b) when Ms C asked a NHS Health Visitor working with homeless families, she claims she was assured that travel passes would be issued for her children but that she would have to meet her own costs of accompanying those children (no finding); and (c) the Council's decision to fund Ms C's children's travel costs from the time of her complaint failed to address the substantial costs she had already incurred (not upheld).	not upheld	inform him of the outcome of their reassessment of policy. The Council have accepted the recommendation and will act on it accordingly.
18/11/2009	200800352	the Council: (a) failed to ensure that grant-aided works were undertaken properly (not upheld); (b) failed to carry out appropriate checks before issuing a Certificate of Completion (not upheld); (c) failed to provide appropriate advice when a Certificate of Completion was issued (not upheld); and (d) failed to take enforcement or other action (not upheld).	not upheld	The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.
18/11/2009	200800711	(a) the Council's arrangements to take Mrs C's personal belongings into storage when she was made homeless were inadequate (upheld); and (b) there were failings in the Council's administration of Mrs C's mainstream housing application and the assessment of rent arrears (not upheld).	partially upheld	(i) advise him of the measures introduced as a result of their review of all homeless processes to ensure that a similar occurrence does not happen in future; (ii) share this investigation report with their insurers, so that they may reconsider if any liability attaches to the Council for the loss of Mrs C's property; and (iii) apologise to Mrs C for the poor service experienced, which led to the loss of her belongings.