



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 29 June 2018

SUBJECT: Complaints handling performance

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To report on complaints handling performance.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **The Board consider the complaints handling performance.**

3. Background

3.1 Complaints are valuable. When handled well, they can provide a low cost and important source of feedback and learning for the organisation to drive improvement and restore a positive relationship with service users who feel let down by poor service.

3.2 2017/18 is the second year of operation of the revised Complaints Handling Procedure. The procedure follows the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) model complaints handling procedure and comprises three stages

- Stage 1 frontline resolution;
- Stage 2 investigation where stage 1 is not capable of resolving the issue;
- Stage 3 referral to the SPSO where service failure or maladministration has not been identified at Stage 2 and the issue remains unresolved.

3.3 Local authorities are required to assess complaints handling performance to provide assurance in relation to their performance, to facilitate continuous improvement and to assist in benchmarking between local authorities.

4. Current position

4.1 The SPSO's Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) developed a series of performance indicators. The 2017/18 performance of the organisation is provided in the table at 4.2 below, along with that for 2016/17 for comparative purposes.

4.2 Complaints performance 2017/18

The organisation has a high level of contact with stakeholders in the Grampian area and beyond. During 2017/18 the electoral registration service was subject to an extremely heavy workload and intense period of activity comprising the local government elections, the unscheduled snap UK Parliamentary General Election and the annual canvass. The unscheduled nature of the UKPGE presented unique and previously reported challenges that in turn had the potential to give rise to complaints. The valuation service has also been extremely busy with the first revaluation of non-domestic properties for 7 years coming into force on 1 April 2017 and subject to a deadline for lodging an appeal on 30 September 2017. As previously reported there are currently some 14,000 live appeals (revaluation and running roll) against assessments. Poor media coverage has also served to create an atmosphere of complaint and challenge against our decisions. The return of shootings to valuation rolls was also challenging and unpopular with land managers. Against this background, the organisation received only 7 complaints. Despite an increase in the complexity of those received, and the extraordinary workloads previously reported, all but one of the complaints were resolved within the SPSO recommended timelines.

Indicator	2016/17		2017/18	
	%	Number	%	Number
Total number of complaints		6		7
Total number of complaints per 1000 population	-	0.01	-	0.01
Complaints closed at Stage 1	100%	6	43%	3
Complaints closed at Stage 2		0	57%	4
Resolution outcome				
Complaints upheld at Stage 1	17%	1	29%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	50%	3	14%	1
Complaints not upheld at Stage 1	33%	2	-	0
Complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	29%	2
Complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1
Resolution time				
Average time for a full response at Stage 1	3 days		2 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 1 against SPSO target 5 days	83%	5	100%	3
Complaints extended at Stage 1 beyond SPSO target 5 days	17%	1	-	-
Average time for a full response at Stage 2	-		11 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 2 against SPSO target 20 days	-	-	75%	3
Complaints extended at Stage 2 beyond SPSO target 20 days	-	-	25%	1

- 4.3 The implementation of the revised complaints procedure in 2016/17 has improved the accessibility for stakeholders to comment critically on the services provided and provided a framework that ensures that complaints are recorded and analysed in order to establish where and when failures occur. The Management Team has benefitted from the improved feedback from frontline staff and external stakeholders, picking up on areas of service delivery, and indeed staff awareness, that require further attention.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The second year of operation of the updated complaints handling procedure has proved effective, with ready access for stakeholders and frontline personnel seeking to resolve issues within extremely short timeframes.
- 5.2 During a year when the service has been subject to extremes in terms of service demands, it is a sure testament to the professionalism and dedication of our personnel that such a small number of stakeholders have considered it necessary to complain.

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