



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

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 2018/19 is the third 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 2018/19 performance of the organisation is provided in the table at 4.2, along with that for the previous two years for comparative purposes.

4.2 Complaints performance 2016/17 – 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Total number of complaints		6		7		10
Total number of complaints/1000 population	-	0.01	-	0.01		0.02
Complaints closed at Stage 1	100%	6	43%	3	80%	8
Complaints closed at Stage 2		0	57%	4	20%	2
Resolution outcome						
Complaints upheld at Stage 1	17%	1	29%	2	20%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	50%	3	14%	1	30%	3
Complaints not upheld at Stage 1	33%	2	-	0	30%	3
Complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1	20%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	29%	2		0
Complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1		0
Resolution time						
Average time for a full response at Stage 1	3 days		2 days		3 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 1 against SPSO target 5 days	83%	5	100%	3	88%	7
Complaints extended at Stage 1 beyond SPSO target 5 days	17%	1	-	-	12%	1
Average time for a full response at Stage 2	-		11 days		22 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 2 against SPSO target 20 days	-	-	75%	3	50%	1
Complaints extended at Stage 2 beyond SPSO target 20 days	-	-	25%	1	50%	1

- 4.3 The organisation has a high level of contact with stakeholders in the Grampian area and beyond with a canvass to over 276,000 dwellings for over 400,000 electors, over 3,000 new dwellings being added to the valuation list and more than 2,500 updates to the valuation rolls made relative to non-domestic properties. Despite such a widespread reach of the organisation's service provision across the Grampian area, the volume of complaints remains extremely low.
- 4.4 An analysis of the 10 complaints recorded for 2018/19 show that they are evenly divided between valuation and electoral registration aspects of the organisation and have not identified any major concentration around one aspect of service delivery or failure in process, but have identified areas where the Management Team can bring about improvement in terms of training and contact management.
- 4.5 It is difficult to determine any emerging trend over the three year period that the new complaints handling procedure has been in operation due to the relatively low volume of complaints. Whilst the overall number of complaints has increased from 6 in 2016/17 to 10 in 2018/19, the low volume prevents statistically significant analysis.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The third 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 The quantitative and qualitative output from this procedure provide the Management Team with reliable and effective information that in turn supports the constant drive to improve service delivery across all three areas of activity.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton