



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 30 June 2023

SUBJECT: Complaints Handling Performance

BY: The Assessor and ERO

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To report on complaints handling performance.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that 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 may feel let down by poor service.

3.2 2022/23 is the seventh 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 format for reporting these indicators has been amended from 2022/23 onwards by the CSA and this year's report is the first to reflect the revised style and amended indicators.

4.2 Complaints performance

4.2.1 Previously reported complaints performance 2019/20 to 2021/22 for comparison

Indicator	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Total number of complaints		16		5		11
Total number of complaints/1000 population		0.03		0.01		0.02
Complaints closed at Stage 1	100%	16	80%	4	73%	8
Complaints closed at Stage 2		0	20%	1	27%	3
Resolution outcome						
Complaints upheld at Stage 1	44%	7		0	18%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	12%	2		0		0
Complaints not upheld at Stage 1	44%	7	80%	4	55%	6
Complaints upheld at Stage 2		0		0	9%	1
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0		0	18%	2
Complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	20%	1		0
Resolution time						
Average time for a full response at Stage 1		2 days		6 days		6 days
Complaints resolved at Stage 1 against SPSO target 5 days	100%	16	50%	2	50%	4
Complaints extended at Stage 1 beyond SPSO target 5 days		0	50%	2	50%	4
Average time for a full response at Stage 2		-		10 days		14 days
Complaints resolved at Stage 2 against SPSO target 20 days		0	100%	1	100%	3
Complaints extended at Stage 2 beyond SPSO target 20 days		0		0		0

4.2.2 Revised complaints performance statistics format 2022/23

Indicator	2022/23
Total Number of Complaints	4
Indicator 1: Complaints Received per 1000 of population	0.007%
Indicator 2: Closed complaints	
The number of complaints closed at stage one as a percentage of all complaints	75.00%
The number of complaints closed at stage two as a percentage of all complaints	25.00%
The number of complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation as a percentage of all complaints	0.00%
Indicator 3: Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld	
The number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one	0.00%
The number of complaints not upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one	66.67%
The number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one	33.33%
The number of complaints upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two	0.00%
The number of complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two	100.00%
The number of complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two	0.00%
The number of escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two	N/A
The number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two	N/A
The number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two	N/A
Indicator 4: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage	
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one	3
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two	20
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	N/A
Indicator 5: Percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days	
The number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints	66.67%
The number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of total number of stage two complaints	100.00%
The number of escalated complaints within 20 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints	N/A
Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension was authorised	
The number of complaints closed at stage one where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage one	33.33%
The number of complaints closed at stage two where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage two	N/A

Indicator 7: Customer satisfaction

The organisation has a high level of contact with stakeholders in the Grampian area and beyond with a canvass of more than 300,000 dwellings for around 450,000 electors, more than 2,500 new dwellings being added to the valuation list and 1,700 updates to the valuation roll being made relative to non-domestic properties. In addition, on 30 November 2022 we issued Draft Values for the 2023 General Revaluation to around 30,000 Non-Domestic properties throughout Grampian and in late March 2023 this was followed up with the issue of final Valuation Notices for the 2023 Revaluation and publication of the new Valuation Roll reflecting the revaluation. The statutory functions undertaken by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer are covered by a number of different appeal mechanisms, such as Non-Domestic Valuation and Council Tax and some aspects of Electoral Registration. Representations under these mechanisms cannot and should not be recorded as complaints. Despite such a widespread reach of the organisation's service provision across the Grampian area, the volume of complaints fell from those received in 2021/22 with only 4 formal complaints having been received. Anecdotally, this suggests a high and improving level of customer satisfaction from stakeholders of our services.

Indicator 8: Learning from complaints

A review of the four complaints recorded for 2022/23 show an even spread over our various services. This review has not identified any maladministration, or any significant failure in service delivery. Three of the four complaints were not upheld and the fourth complaint was only partially upheld. With the overall number of complaints being so low, having fallen from 11 in 2021/22, no meaningful analysis of these figures is possible. However, the feedback from all complaints over time, including those that have not been upheld, is utilised by the Management Team to improve communications.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The seventh year of operation of the updated complaints handling procedure has remained effective, with ready access for stakeholders and frontline personnel seeking to resolve issues within extremely short timeframes.
- 5.2 The extremely low number of complaints in 2022/23 does not really allow a comparison of resolution times with previous years. As in previous years, no firm conclusion can be taken from the volume of complaints.

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