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**REPORT TO:** Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 18 June 2021

**SUBJECT:** Complaints handling performance

**BY:** The Assessor & ERO

**1. Reason for Report**

1.1 To report on complaints handling performance.

**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Board consider and note 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 2020/21 is the fifth 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 2020/21 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 2018/19 to 2020/21

Indicator	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Total number of complaints		10		16		5
Total number of complaints/1000 population		0.02		0.03		0.01
Complaints closed at Stage 1	80%	8	100%	16	80%	4
Complaints closed at Stage 2	20%	2		0	20%	1
<b>Resolution outcome</b>						
Complaints upheld at Stage 1	20%	2	44%	7		0
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	30%	3	12%	2		0
Complaints not upheld at Stage 1	30%	3	44%	7	80%	4
Complaints upheld at Stage 2	20%	2		0		0
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0		0		0
Complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0		0	20%	1
<b>Resolution time</b>						
Average time for a full response at Stage 1		3 days		2 days		6 days
Complaints resolved at Stage 1 against SPSO target 5 days	88%	7	100%	16	50%	2
Complaints extended at Stage 1 beyond SPSO target 5 days	12%	1		0	50%	2
Average time for a full response at Stage 2		22 days		-		10 days
Complaints resolved at Stage 2 against SPSO target 20 days	50%	1		0	100%	1
Complaints extended at Stage 2 beyond SPSO target 20 days	50%	1		0		0

- 4.3 The organisation has a high level of contact with stakeholders in the Grampian area and beyond with a canvass to over 300,000 dwellings for over 445,000 electors, over 2,000 new dwellings being added to the valuation list and 1,400 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 remained extremely low in 2020/21.
- 4.4 An analysis of the 5 complaints recorded for 2020/21 show that 4 of the complaints related to electoral registration matters and 1 related to a council tax issue. The analysis has not identified any maladministration or any significant failure in service delivery.
- 4.5 The low number of complaints makes any statistically significant analysis difficult. However, the feedback from all complaints over time, including those that have not been upheld, is utilised by the Management Team to improve communications, particularly in relation to electoral registration matters.

**5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The fifth 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 low number of complaints in 2020/21 does not allow a good comparison of resolution times with previous years. In addition, no firm conclusion can be taken from the low number of complaints as the pandemic and the lack of any significant electoral event in 2020/21 may have had some effect.**

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