

2017-18 Q3 Organisation Learning from Customer Service Complaints

From: **John Stevenson, Head of Complaints Standards Authority**

When: **February 2018**

Purpose

To provide a summary of Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) received and responded to by the SPSO and where appropriate to provide a summary of outcomes, trends and actions taken as a result of these complaints including key learning points for SPSO service improvement.

Reporting customer service complaints

Details of all CSCs are recorded (on WorkPro) and we publish on a quarterly basis the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. These are then analysed for trend information to ensure we identify areas where our service could improve and take appropriate action.

We publish this report on a quarterly basis to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. This includes statistics showing the volumes and types of complaints and key performance details, including the time taken and the stage at which complaints were resolved.

Q2 statistics for customer service complaints

Received & closed

Table 1 provides a breakdown of complaints received and closed

Summary	<i>Received</i>	<i>Closed</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	6	6
Stage 2 - Investigation	3	2
Escalated Complaints (escalated from stage 1 to stage 2)	1	2
Total	10	10

Where a difference exists in the number of cases received in the quarter and the number of cases closed in the quarter, this is due to cases received in an earlier quarter being closed in Q3. Specifically, of the 2 escalated complaints closed in Q3, one received in Q2 and 1 was received in Q3.

Upheld/Not upheld

Table 2 provides a breakdown of complaints upheld and not upheld

Summary	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% upheld</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	1	5	6	17%
Stage 2 - Investigation	0	2	2	0%
Escalated Complaints	2	0	2	100%
Total	3	7	10	

Timescales

The timescales to close complaints are:

- 5 working days at stage 1
- 20 working days at stage 2
- 20 working days for 'escalated complaints'.

Table 3 provides further information in relation to our performance in relation to timescales.

Timescales	<i>Met timescale (cases)</i>	<i>Did not meet timescale (cases)</i>	<i>Total number of working days</i>	<i>Average time in working days to close</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	4	2	28	4.6
Stage 2 - Investigation	1	1	73	36.5
Escalated Complaints	1	1	41	20.5
Total	6	4	N/A	N/A

Case volumes are low. In the two cases that did not meet the timescale requirement at Stage 1, one case was closed in 6 working days. The second was not closed until 12 working days. This should have escalated to Stage 2. A reminder to staff to escalate to the second stage after 10 working days will be issued through our service improvement group. Performance against timescales at Stage 2 was impacted by one case that took 57 working days to close. This case had several 'heads of complaint'. There were also difficulties early in the process caused by leave of staff and the availability of the complainant to discuss the detail of the complaint.

Summary of complaints outcomes and service failures

Stage 1 upheld complaints

One complaint was upheld at stage 1. This related to our failure to allocate the complaint to a Complaints Reviewer within a reasonable time. We also failed to meet our commitment to contact the complainant on an agreed date. The cause of this failure was linked to a back log of work in place at the time. This situation has now been resolved. We apologised to the complainant for failing to meet our service standards.

Stage 2 upheld complaints

No complaints were upheld at stage 2

Escalated complaints

Two complaints which escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 were upheld. The first cases related to a failure in the way in which we communicated with the complainant. We accepted that the complainant did not have the opportunity to fully explain the detail of the complaint. We also omitted to provide copies of decision review leaflets as we should have done. We apologised for this failure to meet our service standards.

In the second escalated complaint we accepted that, while the subject matter of the complaints we were asked to consider was particularly complex, and covered a significant breadth of issues, there was a delay in the handling of the case. We explained the reasons for the delay, and we apologised for not meeting the standards of service that we expect of ourselves.

Independent Customer Complaints Reviewer (ICCR)

During Q3 the ICCR closed one case. This was not upheld.

Next steps

This report has been prepared to update the Service Improvement Group (SIG) and Audit and Advisory Committee of the SPSO performance in relation to Customer Service Complaints. Its findings are shared with staff and made available online.
