

Customer Service Complaints Report

2024-25 Quarter 1

Meeting Date	8 th of August 2024
Meeting name	LT Governance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement
Dashboard link	240701 Customer Service Complaints Dashboard Q1 2024-25 details - Objective ECM (scotland.gov.uk)
Linked reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAPER 060824 ICSCR Random File Review (A49426812) Review of Customer Service Complaints 2023 (infographic summary) (A49521286)
Outcomes sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Noting quarterly statistics: Statistics – 2024-25 Q1 Note findings, learning and improvement actions taken: Findings, learning and actions Noting the future development and actions taken: Future development and actions

- This Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) performance report provides a summary of CSCs received and responded to by the SPSO in the previous quarter, including a summary of outcomes, trends, actions and key learning for SPSO, to promote continuous improvement of our service.

Statistics – 2024-25 Q1

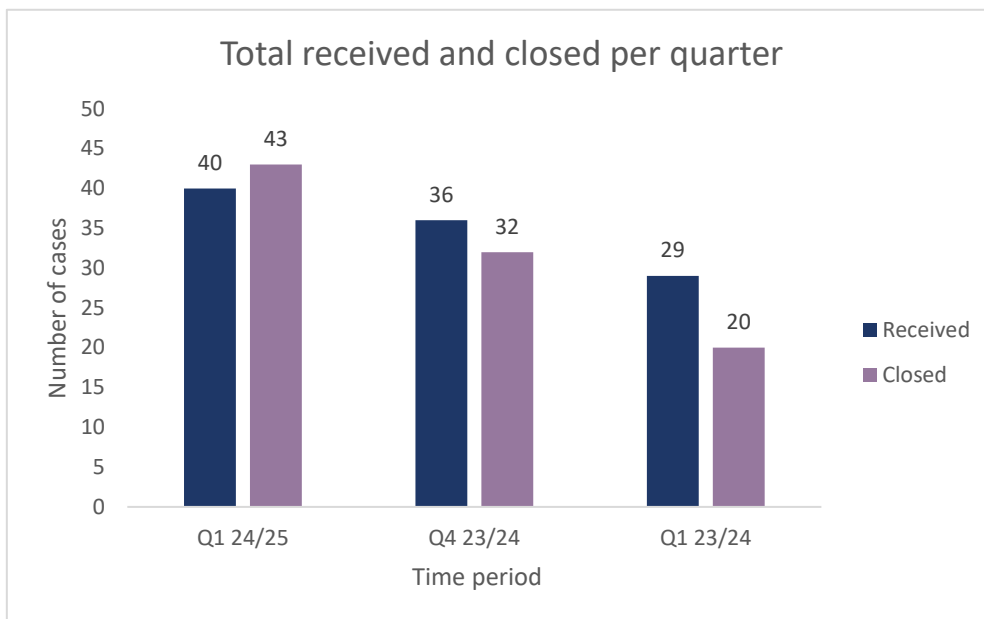
- The table below shows the total received and closed cases in Q1 of 2024-2025. These are split by stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 cases are further separated into cases that were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and cases that surpassed stage 1 and escalated directly to stage 2.

Q1 headlines:

- At stage 1; we received 24 cases and closed 24 cases
- At stage 2; including both stage 2 escalated and direct cases, we received 12 cases and closed 13 cases
- At stage 3; at stage 3 we received 4 cases and we closed 6 cases

Customer Service Complaints	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	24	24
Stage 2 - Direct to stage 2	6	5
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	6	8
Stage 3 - Independent Review	4	6
SPSO Total	40	43

3. A comparison of the current quarter, the previous quarter and the same quarter last year:



- Q1 2024/2025: closed 108% of cases received
- Q4 2023/2024: closed 89% of cases received
- Q1 2023/2024: closed 69% of cases received

Timescales

4. The timescales by which we measure our performance against the requirements of the complaints procedure are:

- 5 working days at stage 1
- 20 working days at stage 2
- 40 working days for independent review

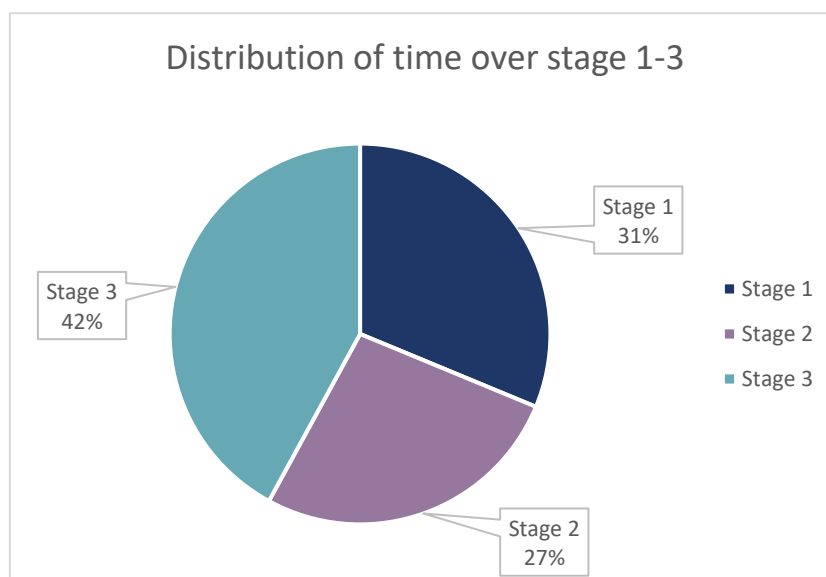
5. The table below summarises the average timescales in working days to close service complaints at each stage, how many were closed on time and how many missed the target during Q1. Additionally, the oldest case at each stage is noted to address any cause for delay that is within our gift. Stage 3 cases take the longest time on average (30 working days) to close. The oldest case stage 2 case was 7 days over target due to the complaints reviewer being on annual leave.

Average timescales	Average	On Time	Missed	Oldest Case
Stage 1	3	17	1	11
Stage 2	17	9	4	27
Stage 3 - Independent Review	30	6	0	40

6. The table below shows the time that all SPSO staff spent on the customer service complaints closed during Q1 for stages 1 and 2. The stage 3 time relates only to time spent by the Independent Customer Service Complaints Reviewer (ICSCR) on complaints at stage 3 up to June 2024.

Stage	Total Time	Average Time	Range of Time
Stage 1	2,475	103	30-300
Stage 2	2,115	163	0-320
Stage 3 - Independent Review	3,330	555	285-1380
Total	7,920		

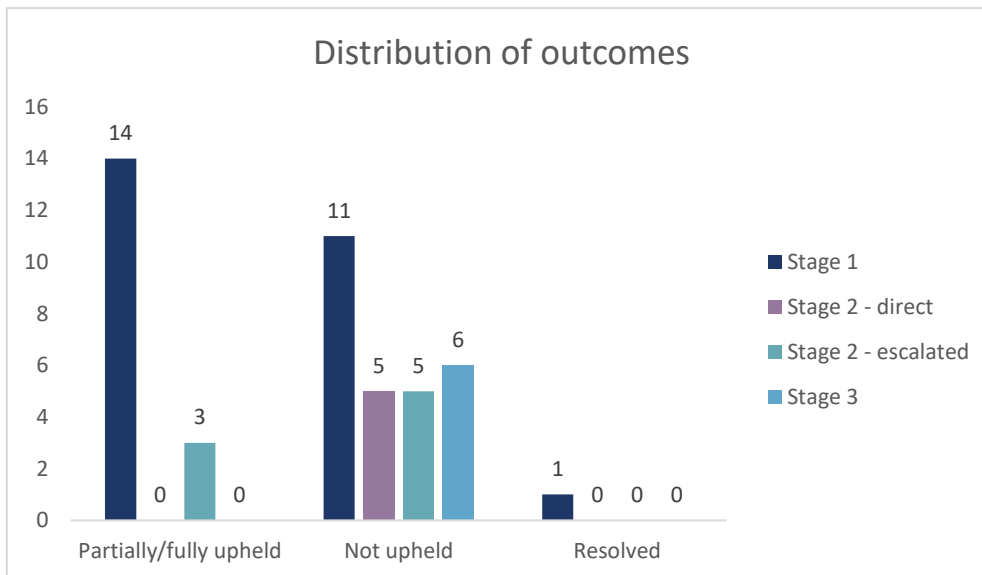
- 1,380 minutes alone were spent on closing one stage 3 case
- It takes 3.4 times the time spent to close a stage 2 case on average to close a stage 3 on average
- Time spent on stage 3 admin is not included in this table but accounts for 75 minutes



- Stage 3 cases are received at a much lower rate, yet they take up majority of the total time spent on cases

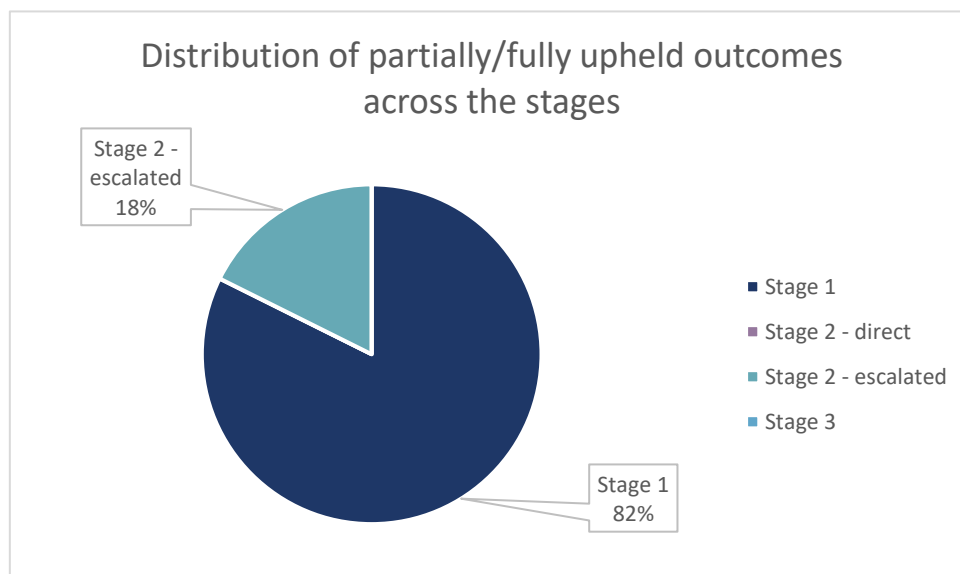
Outcomes and subject analysis

7. The number of service complaints remains very low in relation to the overall volumes of customer transactions delivered by SPSO each year. Nevertheless, upheld service complaints (and in some cases, not upheld service complaints) demonstrate that we take these complaints seriously and acknowledge when something goes wrong. The outcomes of these complaints help us to learn when things go wrong, so that we may improve our service provision in the future.
8. The table below covers complaints where a decision has been reached, or a resolution agreed. This does not include cases which were withdrawn. Note: resolved complaints are not included in the upheld calculation rate.



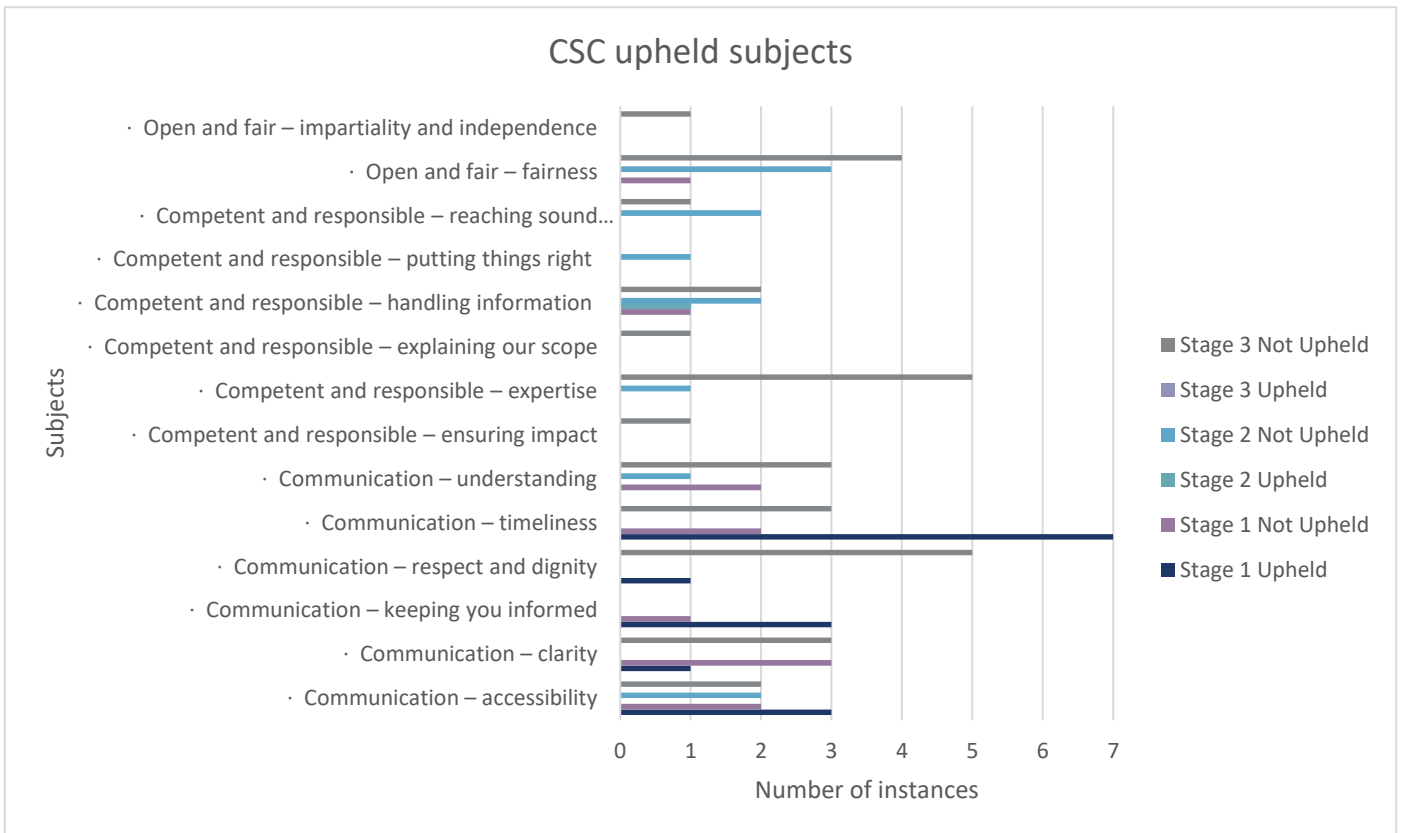
- 31% of stage 1 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- None of the direct stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 7% of escalated stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- None of the stage 3 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 1 case was resolved as the complainant was satisfied with the outcome

9. Highlights Q1 24/25:



- 61% of the outcomes across all stages were not upheld
- 38% of the outcomes across all three stages were partially or fully upheld
- Out of the 38% of complaints that were partially or fully upheld, 82% of the upheld complaints were at stage 1

10. The table below has been produced to illustrate the subjects which appear most frequently in Customer Service Complaints, and at which stage and their outcome.
11. There is some merit in considering the areas which appear most frequently in the subjects of complaints:



a. Communication – timeliness

7 out of 12 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

b. Communication – accessibility

3 out of 9 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld, this case was at stage 1.

12. The subject upheld most often was communication – timeliness with 7 instances, followed by two subjects that were upheld three times: communication – accessibility, communication – keeping you informed

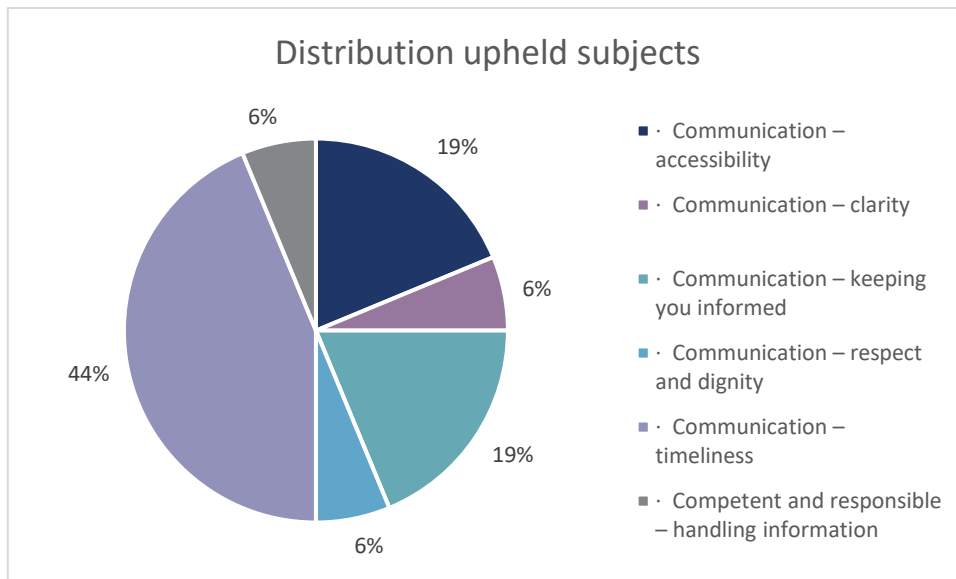


TABLE OF SUBJECTS, arranged by total frequency, and then by most upheld complaints	Stage 1 Upheld	Stage 1 Not Upheld	Stage 2 Upheld	Stage 2 Not Upheld	Stage 3 Upheld	Stage 3 Not Upheld	Total Upheld	Total Not Upheld	Total*
Communication – accessibility	3	2	0	2	0	2	3	6	9
Communication – clarity	1	3	0	0	0	3	1	6	7
Communication – keeping you informed	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
Communication – respect and dignity	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	5	6
Communication – timeliness	7	2	0	0	0	3	7	5	12
Communication – understanding	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	6	6
Competent and responsible – ensuring impact	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Competent and responsible – expertise	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	6	6
Competent and responsible – explaining our scope	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Competent and responsible – handling information	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	5	6
Competent and responsible – putting things right	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Competent and responsible – reaching sound outcomes	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	3
Open and fair – fairness	0	1	0	3	0	4	0	8	8
Open and fair – impartiality and independence	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Open and fair – transparency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Most cases have multiple subjects recorded; **this will therefore not add up to the total of CSC cases for this reporting period**

Findings, learning and actions

13. Actions taken as a result of CSCs determined in this quarter, where action other than an apology has been recorded:

Case Ref:	Workflow Stage	Subject	Substance of complaint	Head of Complaint Outcome	Decision	Learning and improvement recommendations
202400754	Stage 1	Communication - keeping you informed	Complaint signature linked to information on the SPSO website that needs to be updated	Fully Upheld	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	Message from communications team to update signature
202310618	Stage 1	Communication – accessibility	Complaint was about a call between the complainant & the complaints reviewer. Upheld one aspect where the complaints reviewer was not aware that they could take the CSC over the phone	Partially Upheld	Some Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	All CR's reminded by email that we can accept verbal CSCs as per the CSC process

14. The following recommendations were issued this quarter:

- Keep the website up to date
- Ensure complaints reviewers are aware of the different ways in which we can take complaints

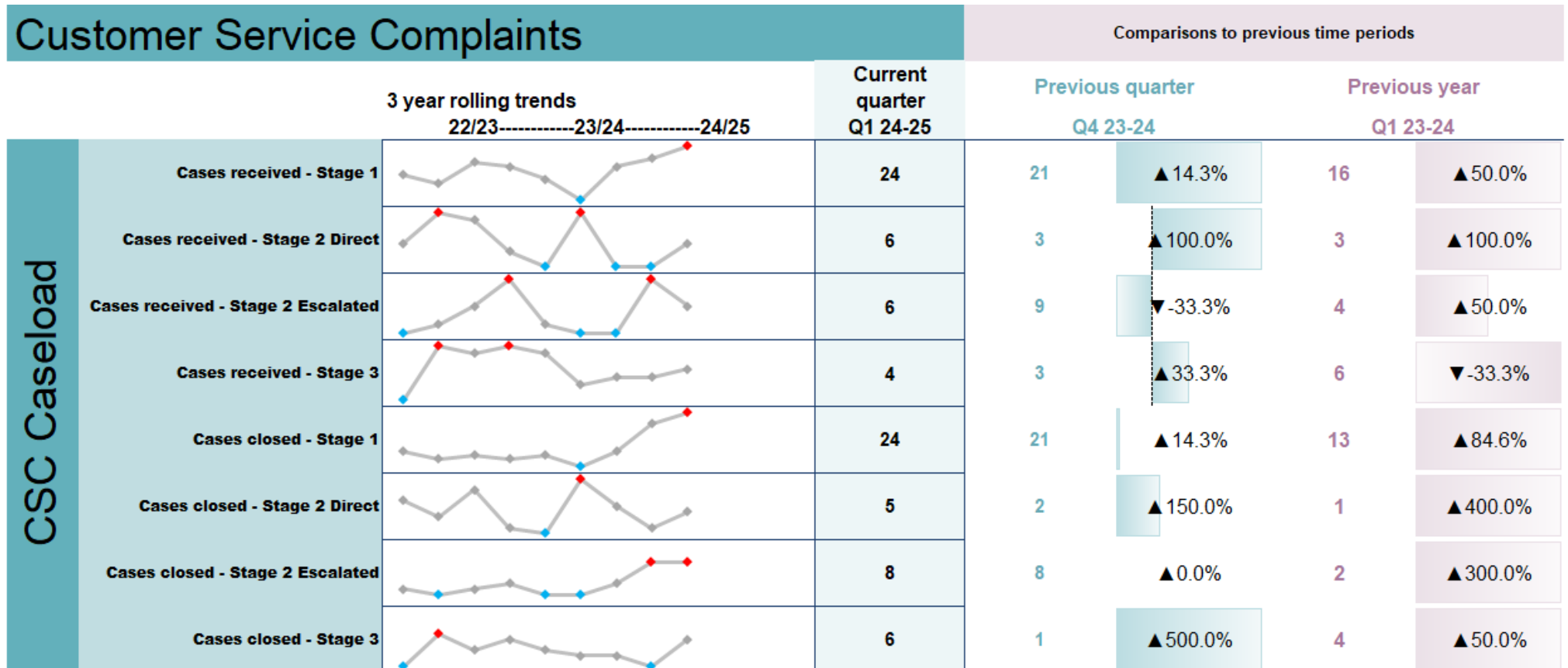
15. The ICSCR conducted a random file review of cases that did not go to stage 3. The feedback was positive with very few recommendations. The main learning point from the review was to consider monitoring response times from external advisers to ensure timely responses Customer.

Future development and actions

16. We have been again seeing an increase in disproportionate time spent on individual complainants. We put in place controls to limit this for SPSO to not respond within a 6 month timeframe however we need to have a mechanism for collation, storing and then allowing the complainant to make new CSCs if appropriate.
17. We have updated our CSC templates to clarify the role of the ICSCR, the process and any potential conflict of interests.
18. LT have utilised the engagement policy to support the reduction of disproportionate time being spent on individual complainants with multiple cases.

19. We will be making updates to reporting fields on Workpro for CSCs to allow more accurate reporting on learning following on from analysis and development of CSC quarterly reports.

Appendix 1: CSC Caseload Dashboard



Highest points highlighted in red
Lowest points highlighted in blue

Appendix 2: Standards and guidance

20. We publish this report to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can, and do influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. Published reports can be read here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)
21. Customer Service Complaints are made when a complainant feels we have not met our customer service standards. The standards that are covered by this process can be read here: [Our customer service standards | SPSO](#)
22. CSCs are recorded and tracked on SPSO's case management system and we publish the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. We monitor and analyse CSCs for trend information to ensure that we identify areas where our service could be improved and take appropriate action.
23. CSCs may be closed at different stages of the procedure:
 - **Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution** refers to complaints closed at stage 1 of the procedure, with no escalation to the next stage
 - **Stage 2 - Investigation** refers to complaints handled and closed directly at stage 2 of the procedure (Frontline Resolution was not attempted)
 - **Stage 2 - Escalated Complaints** refers to complaints handled at Stage 1 and subsequently escalated to, and closed at stage 2.
 - **Stage 3 - Independent Review** is when the SPSO procedure has been completed and our final decision has been issued, but the service user remains unhappy with our response or the way we have handled the complaint. At that point, the service user can ask our Independent Customer Service Complaints Reviewer (ICSCR) to consider it. The ICSCR provides an annual report on these complaints and it is published on our website here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)