

# Customer Service Complaints Report

## 2024-25 Quarter 2

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Meeting Date</b>          | 14 <sup>th</sup> of November 2024   |
| <b>Meeting name</b>          | LT Governance Meeting   |
| <b>LT Responsible person</b> | Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement   |
| <b>Dashboard link</b>        | <a href="#">DRAFT 241001 Customer Service Complaints Dashboard Q2 2024-25 details - Objective ECM (scotland.gov.uk)</a>   |
| <b>Linked reports</b>        |   |
| <b>Outcomes sought</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Noting quarterly statistics: <u>Statistics – 2024-25 Q2</u></li><li>2. Note findings, learning and improvement actions taken: <u>Findings, learning and actions</u></li><li>3. Noting the future development and actions taken: <u>Future development and actions</u></li></ol>  |
| <b>Executive summary</b>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In total, we received 36 cases and closed 31. This gives us a slightly lower closing rate of 86% compared to previous quarters (108% and 100%).</li><li>2. Our oldest case was a stage 2 open 12 days over target (32 days).</li><li>3. Majority of the time was spent on stage 2 cases (2,760 out of 5,075 minutes). As only one stage 3 case was closed, the time spent on stage 3 was a lot lower than previous quarters.</li><li>4. Roughly a third of stage 1 and direct stage 2 cases were partially or fully upheld.</li><li>5. The subjects upheld most often were communication – clarity, communication – keeping you informed and communication – timeliness. These were all upheld on only two occasions each.</li><li>6. Three learning and improvement recommendations were recorded. These related to communication and reasonable adjustments.</li></ol> |

1. 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 Q2

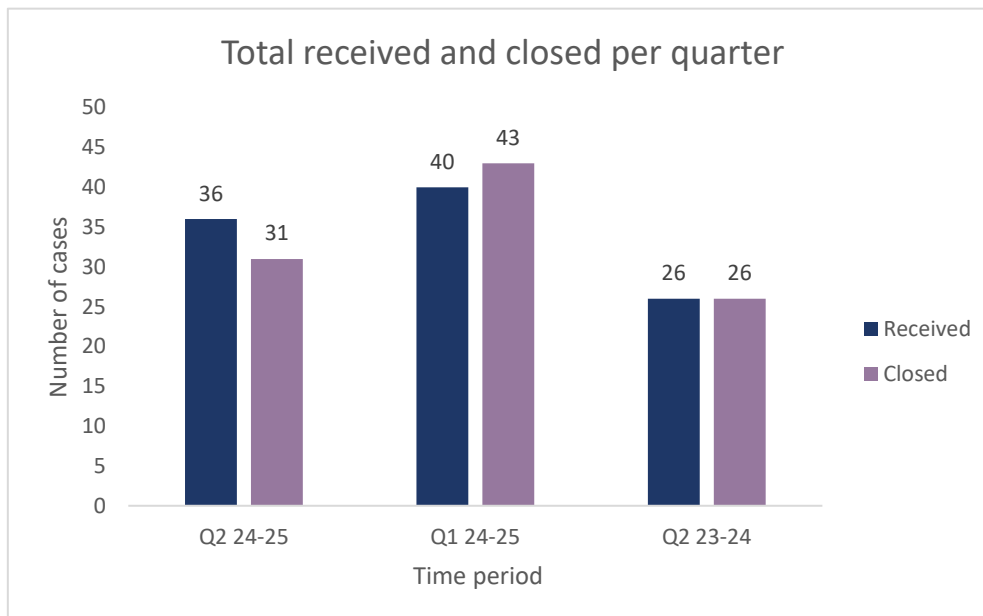
2. The table below shows the total received and closed cases in Q2 of 2024-2025. These are split by stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 cases are further separated into cases that were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and cases that surpassed stage 1 and escalated directly to stage 2.

Q2 headlines:

- At stage 1; we received 18 cases and closed 17 cases
- At stage 2; including both stage 2 escalated and direct cases, we received 14 cases and closed 14 cases
- At stage 3; at stage 3 we received 5 cases and we closed 1 cases

| Customer Service Complaints       | Received  | Closed    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Stage 1 - Frontline resolution    | 18        | 17        |
| Stage 2 - Direct to stage 2       | 7         | 6         |
| Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2 | 6         | 7         |
| Stage 3 - Independent Review      | 5         | 1         |
| <b>SPSO Total</b>                 | <b>36</b> | <b>31</b> |

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



- Q2 2024/2025: closed 86% of cases received
- Q1 2024/2025: closed 108% of cases received
- Q2 2023/2024: closed 100% of cases received

## Timescales

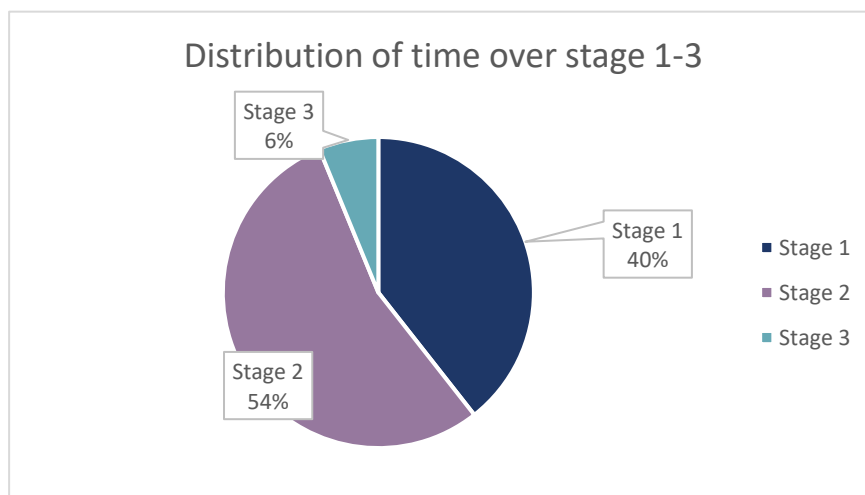
4. The timescales by which we measure our performance against the requirements of the complaints procedure are:
- 5 working days at stage 1
  - 20 working days at stage 2
  - 40 working days for independent review
5. The table below summarises the average timescales in working days to close service complaints at each stage, how many were closed on time and how many missed the target during Q2. Additionally, the oldest case at each stage is noted to address any cause for delay that is within our gift. Stage 2 cases took the longest time on average (18 working days) to close. The oldest case stage 2 case was 12 days over target.

| Average timescales           | Average | On Time | Missed | Oldest Case |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|-------------|
| Stage 1                      | 3       | 12      | 0      | 5           |
| Stage 2                      | 18      | 10      | 3      | 32          |
| Stage 3 - Independent Review | 13      | 1       | 0      | 13          |

6. The table below shows the time that all SPSO staff spent on the customer service complaints closed during Q2 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 October 2024.

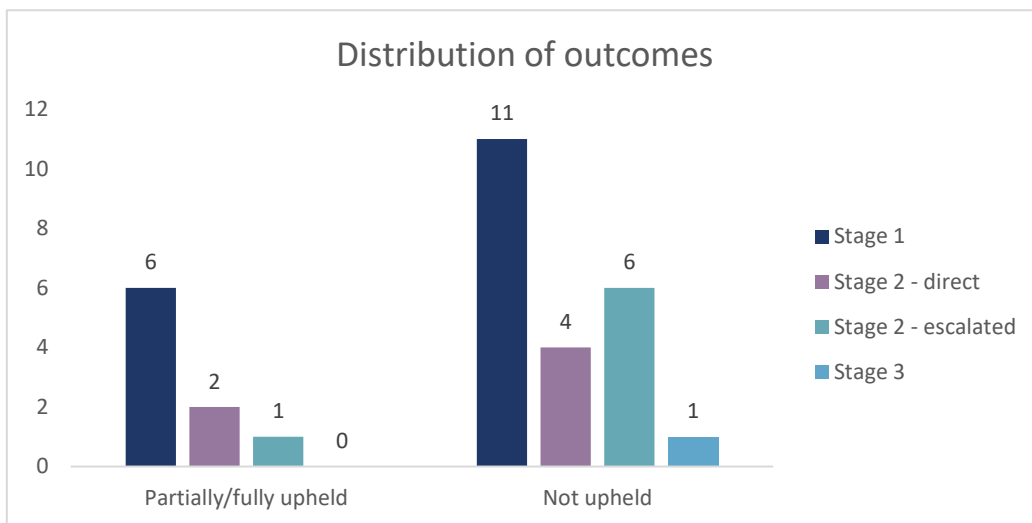
| Stage                        | Total Time   | Average Time | Range of Time |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Stage 1                      | 2,000        | 118          | 0-240         |
| Stage 2                      | 2,760        | 212          | 45-425        |
| Stage 3 - Independent Review | 315          | 315          | 315           |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>5,075</b> |              |               |

- Compared to the previous quarter, we observed an increase of 31% on total time spent on stage 2 cases
- Only one stage 3 case was closed this quarter, this explains the lower amount of total time spent on stage 3 compared to the previous quarter
- Time spent on stage 3 admin is not included in this table but accounts for 10 minutes



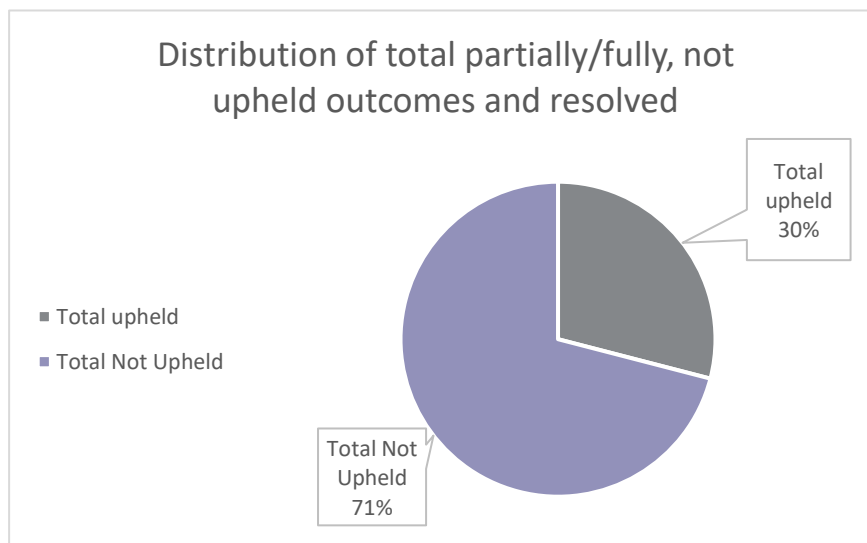
## Outcomes and subject analysis

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.



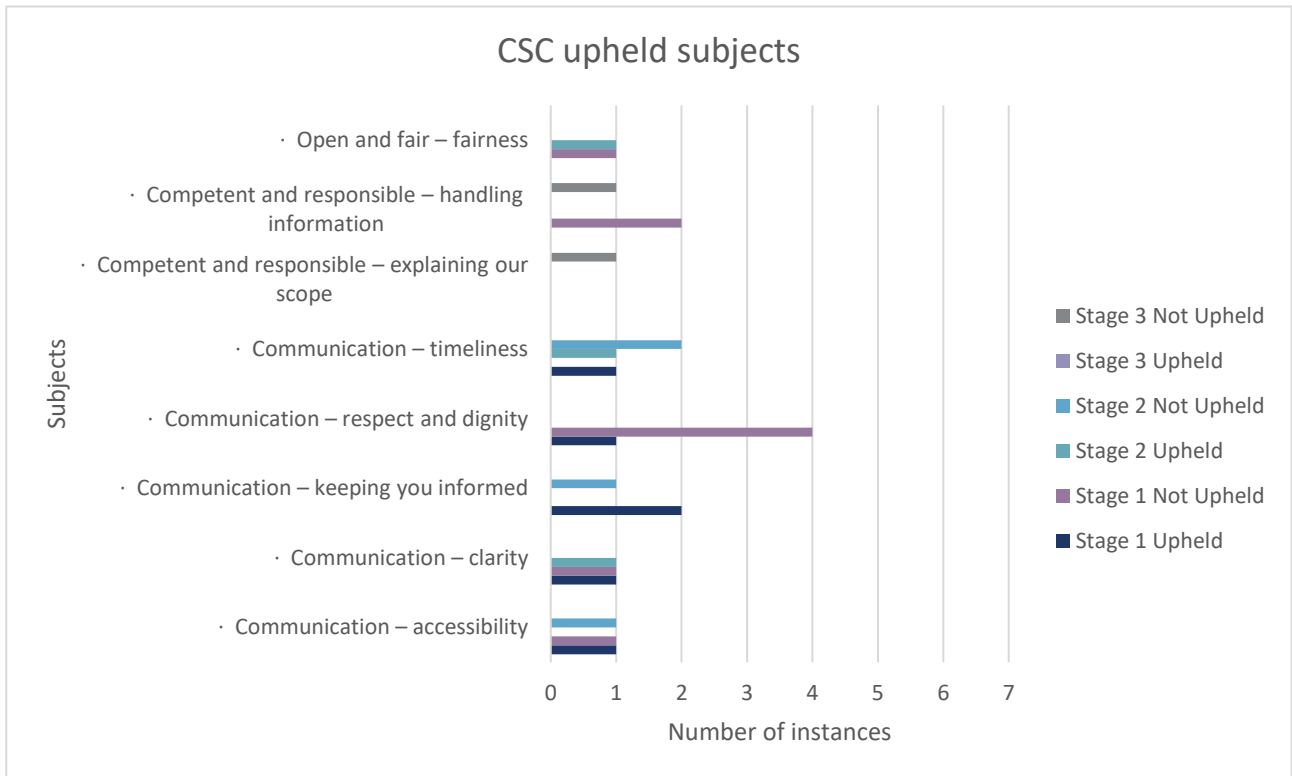
- 35% of stage 1 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 33% of the direct stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 14% of escalated stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- None of the stage 3 complaints were partially or fully upheld

9. Highlights Q2 24/25:



- 71% of the outcomes across all stages were not upheld
- 29% of the outcomes across all three stages were partially or fully upheld
- Out of the 29% of complaints that were partially or fully upheld, 67% of the upheld complaints were at stage 1

- 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.
- There is some merit in considering the areas which appear most frequently in the subjects of complaints:



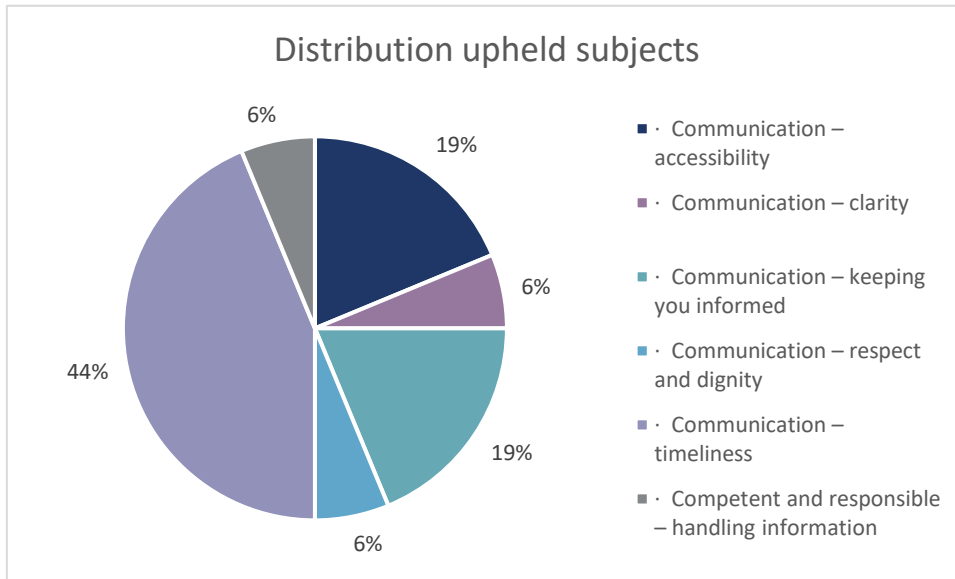
**a. Communication – respect and dignity**

1 out of 5 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

**b. Communication – timeliness**

2 out of 4 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

12. The subjects upheld most often were communication – clarity, communication – keeping you informed and communication – timeliness. These were all upheld on two occasions each.



| 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  | 1              | 1                  | 0              | 1                  | 0              | 0                  | 1            | 2                | 3      |
| Communication – clarity  | 1              | 1                  | 1              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 2            | 1                | 3      |
| Communication – keeping you informed   | 2              | 0                  | 0              | 1                  | 0              | 0                  | 2            | 1                | 3      |
| Communication – respect and dignity  | 1              | 4                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 1            | 4                | 5      |
| Communication – timeliness   | 1              | 0                  | 1              | 2                  | 0              | 0                  | 2            | 2                | 4      |
| Communication – understanding  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| Competent and responsible – ensuring impact  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| Competent and responsible – expertise  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| Competent and responsible – explaining our scope                                   | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 1                  | 0            | 1                | 1      |
| Competent and responsible – handling information                                   | 0              | 2                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 1                  | 0            | 3                | 3      |
| Competent and responsible – putting things right                                   | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| Competent and responsible – reaching sound outcomes                                | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| Open and fair – fairness   | 0              | 1                  | 1              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 1            | 1                | 2      |
| Open and fair – impartiality and independence                                      | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0              | 0                  | 0            | 0                | 0      |
| 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:

| <b>Case Ref:</b> | <b>Workflow Stage</b> | <b>Subject</b>                      | <b>Substance of complaint</b>   | <b>Head of Complaint Outcome</b> | <b>Decision</b>                                 | <b>Learning and improvement recommendations</b>  |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>202405276</b> | Stage 1               | Communication - timeliness          | We did not issue a review request response by the date we said we would.  | Fully Upheld                     | Fully Upheld - Apology given and process change | Implement measures to ensure that complainers are informed sooner in cases where we are unable to provide a decision on the review request by the date we previously indicated and that they are given a revised timescale in which a response will be provided.   |
| <b>202405015</b> | Stage 1               | Communication – respect and dignity | We did not explain the criteria correctly, we asked too many questions, and we failed to consider the emotional impact of our email on a vulnerable person  | Fully Upheld                     | Fully Upheld - Apology given and process change | Need to review our investigation emails to be mindful of quantity of information requesting, tone and background information provided. Also consider whether we can add something into our phone script/ online form to explain in advance that we may ask for information about vulnerabilities etc and to ask for adjustments if this is likely to be upsetting. |
| <b>202403538</b> | Stage 1               | Communication – accessibility       | (1) We did not reasonably meet C's communication needs.<br>(2) We discriminated against C by leading with procedures that require written submissions to progress.<br>(3) We waited for C to highlight communication needs instead of proactively adjusting procedures. | Partially Upheld                 | Some Upheld - Apology given and other action    | Face-to-face meetings whilst not typical, should be considered when all other methods of communication are not suitable in light of a disability.  |



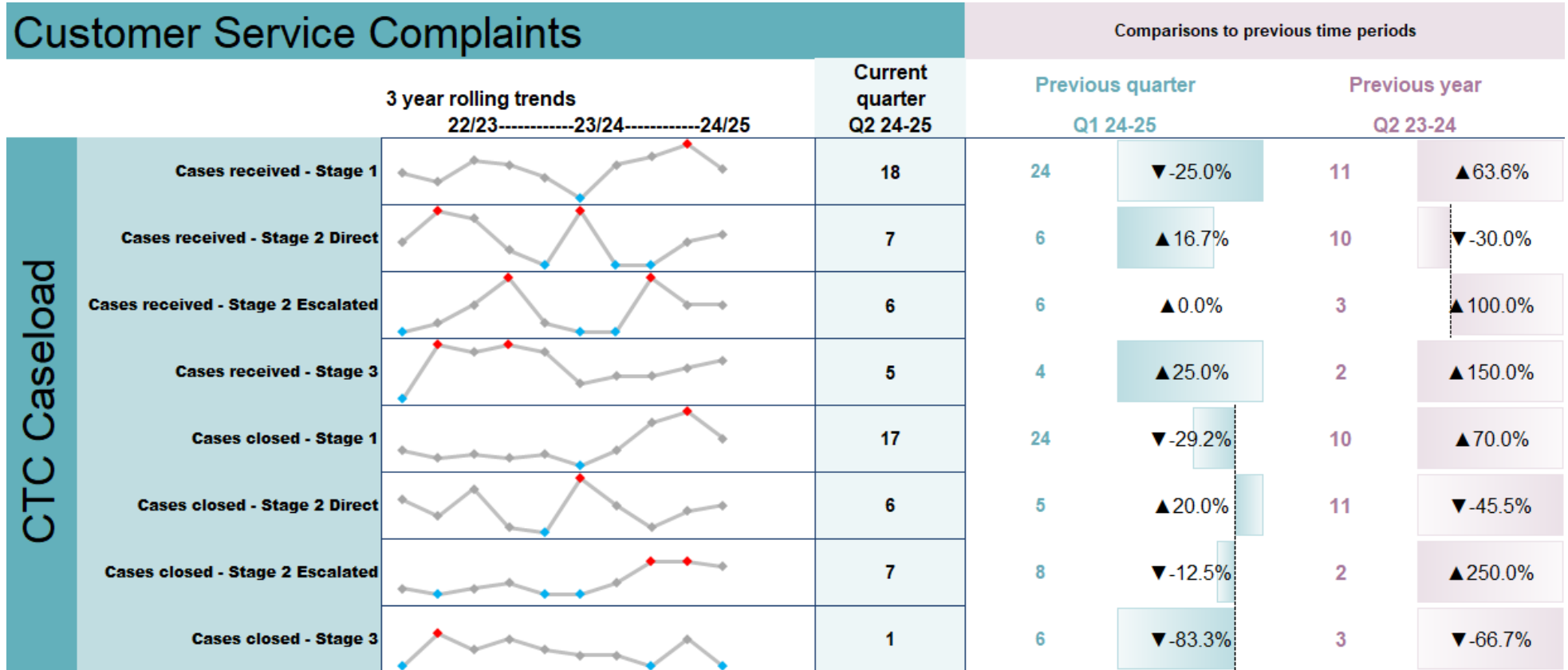
14. The following recommendations were issued this quarter:
- Communicate any potential delays before the initial target date
  - Ensure we do not overload complainants with information
  - Consider adding text to existing forms to explain we may have to ask for further information about vulnerabilities and make adjustments if this may cause upset
  - Face to face meetings must be offered if all other forms communication are not suitable due to a disability

## **Future development and actions**

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15. We have set up a short-term working group to create guidance on the Engagement Policy to improve this process for staff as well as complainants.
16. 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

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17. 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](#)
18. 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](#)
19. 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.
20. 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](#)