

Report to:	QSMTM Q4
Report by:	Helen Gardner-Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS) Liz Brown, Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)
Meeting Date:	29 April 2021
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Report on Service Standards 2020-21 VC149412
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	2020-21 Record of compliments 2020-21 Record of complaints

Purpose of report

- The purpose of this Committee Report (CR) is to inform the Senior Management Team (SMT) about our service standards performance for:
 - compliments recorded in the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
 - complaints received and how they have been dealt with in the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.

Recommendation and actions

- It is recommended that:
 - the Senior Management Team (SMT) notes the report
 - the publications arrangements set out in paragraph 30 are agreed.

Executive summary

Record of compliments 2020-21

- Each financial year we record the compliments that we have received about our services. In 2020-21 we recorded 100 compliments (2019-20 – 75), a 33% increase on the number received in 2019-20 despite the challenges we have faced over 2020-21. There are no service standards or targets relating to compliments.
- The majority of compliments were related to case handling, came from applicants, enquirers and public authorities and thanked us for helpful, prompt, professional responses.
- There were also compliments received relating to events and training that we took part in and the resources we provided in 2020-21.
- The attached spreadsheet “Record of Compliments” provides full details.

Record of complaints 2020 -2021

- As set out in our Key Document C1 Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP), the definition of a complaint is:

“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Scottish Information Commissioner.”

8. A complaint may relate to: failure to provide a service, inadequate standard of service, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff, disagreement with a decision where the complainant cannot use another procedure (for example an appeal) to resolve the matter, the Commissioner’s failure to follow the appropriate administrative process. These are just examples and this list set out does not cover everything.
9. We value all complaints, treat them seriously and take the appropriate action in accordance with the CHP.
10. This CR analyses the number of complaints received in 2020-21 and responded to within the timescales set out in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Key Document C7 Performance and Quality Framework 2020-21.
11. The CHP is currently under review to take account of the updated Model Complaint Handling Procedures published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) on 31 January 2020. The HOCS is the Responsible Manager and anticipates that the review will be completed by the end of Q1 2020-21.

Complaints received

12. In 2020-21, 15 complaints were received, the majority of which related to an aspect of our working practices (2019-20 - 12). 1 complaint case was open as at 31 March 2021 and, therefore, is not included in the analysis of closed complaint cases set out below. There was also a complaint which was subsequently withdrawn and, therefore, this is also not included in the analysis set out below.
13. Even though the number of complaints is small, we are committed to improving our service as a result of learning from these and addressing any systematic issues that may be identified.

Complaint handling

14. All complaints were either closed at the Frontline or Investigated:
 - 3 complaints were closed at Frontline Resolution
 - 11 were closed following an Investigation
15. In 2020-21, all of the KPI time targets relating to the handling of complaints were met:

	Number	Target %	Actual %
Complaints closed	14		
Resolved at frontline	3	90% resolved in 5 days 95% resolved in 10 days	100% resolved in 5 days
Closed following investigation	11	80% resolved in 30 days 85% resolved in 40 days	100 % resolved in 30 days

16. Of the eleven complaints closed following an Investigation, 10 were not upheld and 1 was partially upheld. Therefore, the KPI that fewer than 20% of complaints be upheld in part or full was also met.
17. Although our complaint numbers are low, it should be noted that 1 case resolved at the Frontline and 8 cases closed following Investigation were from the same person.

COVID-19 pandemic

18. Our priority as an organisation has been to continue to provide key services and guidance within available resource while safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of our members of staff.
19. Since temporarily closing our office premises on 23 March 2020 and putting in place business continuity arrangements, we have worked to maintain operational output within the constraints imposed by limitations on access to the office premises and office systems. This has included ensuring complaints are managed as far as possible in line with our CHP.

Risk impact

20. The CHP seek to resolve dissatisfaction about any aspect of our service as close as possible to the point at which the complaint arises and, where appropriate, to conduct a thorough, impartial and fair investigation of the complaint so an evidence-based decision on the facts of the case can be made. A failure to respond to and manage complaints in accordance with our CHP is likely to have an adverse impact on the Commissioner's reputation and could result in referrals to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the CHP helps to mitigate this risk.
21. This CR also contributes towards the control measures aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of risk in dealing with complaints about our service in accordance with the CHP.
22. A review of the CHP is currently underway to take account of the updated Model Complaint Handling Procedures published by the SPSO on 31 January 2020.

Equalities impact

23. There is no direct impact identified.

Privacy impact

24. There is no direct impact identified.

Resources impact

25. None identified.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

26. None identified.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

27. None identified.

Consultation and Communication

28. QSMTM minute and publication of this report.
29. A service standard report is included in the Annual Report.

Publication

30. This CR and attached papers should be published as follows:
 - the CR should be published in full
 - the attached papers, as set out below, should be withheld on the basis that the exemption in Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 would apply if a request were, at this stage, to be made for the information
 - 2020-21 Record of Compliments
 - 2020-21 Record of Complaints