

Report to:	QSMTM Q2 2023-24
Report by:	Helen Gardner-Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS) Liz Brown, Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)
Meeting Date:	09 November 2023
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Report on Service Standards 2023-24 Q1 and Q2 VC196951
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	2023-24 Record of compliments – Q1 and Q2 2023-24 Record of complaints – Q1 and Q2

Purpose of report

- The purpose of this Committee Report (CR) is to inform the Senior Management Team (SMT) of our service standards performance for:
 - compliments recorded in 2023-24 Q1 and Q2
 - complaints received and how they have been dealt with in 2023-24 Q1 and Q2.

Recommendation and actions

- It is recommended that:
 - the SMT notes the CR
 - the SMT agree the publication arrangements set out in paragraph 37.

Executive summary

Reporting - Compliments 2023-24 Q1 and Q2

- Each financial year we record the compliments that we have received about our services. In 2023-24 Q1 and Q2 we recorded 80 compliments, a 175% increase on the number received in 2022-23 Q1 and Q2 (29 compliments).
- There are no service standards or targets relating to compliments and the following should be noted:
 - Over 50% of the compliments came from applicants (44) and 24 of those were received by the Validation Team
 - 18 compliments related to our Enquiries Service
 - There were also a number of compliments (10) from public authorities covering appeals, enquiries and our outreach work
 - The attached pdf document “Service Standards - Record of Compliments” provides details of the compliments received.
- Information on compliments is published in the Annual Report.

Complaints

Review of Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP)

6. The CHP was reviewed in line with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and approved by the Senior Management Team on 11 October 2023.
7. The aim of the CHP is to have quick, simple and responsive complaints handling with early outcomes, if possible.
8. The CHP defines a complaint as:

“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.”
9. A complaint may relate to:
 - failure or refusal to provide a service
 - inadequate quality or standard of service or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
 - dissatisfaction with one of the Commissioner’s policies or its impact on the individual
 - failure to properly apply the law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
 - conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (except where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves)
 - disagreement with a decision except where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, for example an appeal to resolve the matter
 - the Commissioner’s failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
10. These are just examples and the above list does not cover everything.
11. We value all complaints, treat them seriously and take the appropriate action in accordance with the CHP.

CHP and outcome categories

12. The complaints procedure has two main stages
 - Stage 1 – frontline response
 - Stage 2 - investigation
13. It is expected that the majority of complaints will be handled at Stage 1. If the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied after Stage 1, they can request that we look at it again, at Stage 2. If the complaint is complex enough to require an investigation, the complaint can go straight to Stage 2.
14. A complaint can also be resolved when both the organisation and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld.
15. With the introduction of a resolved category there are now four outcome categories
 - resolved
 - upheld

- partially upheld
- not upheld

Complaints - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

16. Complaints are recorded in Workpro and guidance for staff on how to do this is set out in the CHP.
17. Our complaint KPIs and target response timescales are included in C7 Performance and Quality Framework 2023-24 in line with the relevant KPIs published by the SPSO
18. In line with the related SPSO’s reporting requirements and the updated Governance Reporting Arrangements (GRA), the HOCS now reports quarterly to the SMT on:
 - performance statistics (relating to the 4 outcome categories) in line with the relevant KPIs published by the SPSO
 - as appropriate, provide an analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this may include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).
19. Information on complaints will be published on our website (quarterly by way of this CR) and in the Annual Report.

Reporting - Complaints 2023-24 Q1 and Q2

20. This CR analyses the number of complaints received and responded to in 2023-24 Q1 and Q2 as regards the timescales set out in the related KPIs.
21. In 2022-23:
 - 14 complaints were received
 - 16 complaints were closed (2 complaint cases were open at 31 March 2022 and closed in Q1 of 2022-23 and, therefore, included in the 2022-23 statistics)
 - there were no complaints open at 31 March 2023.
22. For 2023-24 Q1 and Q2, the relevant statistics for complaints received and responded to under the CHP are set out in the tables below:

Stage 1 Frontline Response

	2023-24 Q1	2023-24 Q2	2023-24 Q3	2023-24 Q4	2023-24 Total
Total received	0	1			1

Stage 2 Investigation

	2023-24 Q1	2023-24 Q2	2023-24 Q3	2023-24 Q4	2023-24 Total
Total received	1	0			1

Stage 2 Escalation¹

	2023-24 Q1	2023-24 Q2	2023-24 Q3	2023-24 Q4	2023-24 Total
Total received	0	0			0

Response time targets:

23. For both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, the response time targets for closing complaints in full were met, but the time targets relating to the average working days for a full response were not met.
24. As there was only 1 complaint closed at each stage, the average time targets could not be met unless each complaint had been responded to in full in 3 working days and 15 working days respectively. However, as the year progresses, the average time targets may help us to better understand the resource required to enable us to meet these targets.

Stage 1 Frontline Response

	Total	Target	Met
No of cases closed	1		
No of cases closed ≤ 5 days	1		
% closed in ≤ 5 days	100%	100%	Y
% Average time to close ≤ 3 days	0%	85%	N

Stage 2 Investigation

	Total	Target	Met
No of cases closed	1		
No of cases closed ≤ 20 days	1		
% closed in ≤ 20 days	100%	100%	Y
% Average time to close ≤ 15 days	0%	85%	N

Outcome targets

	Total	Outcome	Target	Met
Stage 1 - cases closed	1	upheld	less than 15%	N
Stage 2 - cases closed	1	upheld	less than 15%	N

¹ Escalated complaints are those that have been considered at Stage 1 and then have either moved to Stage 2 at the complainant's request (because the complainant was unhappy with the response at Stage 1) or because they have exceeded the maximum of 5 working days at Stage 1 and, therefore, have automatically been moved to Stage 2

25. The outcome response targets, in effect, are annual targets and will also be reported on annually. The quarterly reporting helps us to monitor these targets throughout the reporting year.
26. No complaint cases were open as at 30 September 2023.
27. Even though the number of complaints is small, we are committed to improving our service as a result of learning from these complaints and addressing any systematic issues that may be identified.

Risk impact

28. 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 SPSO and the CHP helps to mitigate this risk.
29. 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.

Equalities impact

30. There is no direct impact identified.

Privacy impact

31. There is no direct impact identified.

Resources impact

32. None identified.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

33. None identified.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

34. None.

Consultation and Communication

35. QSMTM Q2 minute and publication of this report.
36. A service standards report is included in the Annual Report.

Publication

37. Publication recommendation:

- 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
 - 2023-24 Record of Compliments
 - 2023-24 Record of Complaints