

**Report to:** The Executive Board  
**Month:** June 2008  
**From:** Fiona Paterson  
**For:** Noting and Discussion  
**Subject:** Service Delivery Complaints – Quarter 4 and Year-end report  
**Status:** Open See paper 08-06EO-03 for process review and discussion points.

## 1. Purpose

- i. To provide the Executive Board with a summary of the nature and outcome of service delivery complaints received by the SPSO in the fourth quarter of 2007-08 and any learning that has resulted from these complaints.
- ii. To confirm the total number of service delivery complaints for publishing on the website.

## 2. Contribution to the Business Plan

Strategic objective 1 – to provide a high quality, independent complaint handling service.

## 3. Key points

Service delivery complaints (SDCs) during the fourth quarter of 2007-08 were determined under the interim Service Delivery Process on the departure of Carolyn Hirst, the Independent Service Reviewer. This interim process is currently under review by the Ombudsman and Director of Investigations and is dealt with in a separate paper tabled for discussion at this meeting.

Seven SDCs were recorded in the fourth quarter of 2007-08 (similar amount to the third quarter, but about half received in both of the first two quarters of 2007-08). All complaints had been determined by the quarter end. The main reasons for complaint were issues relating to process and communication. Please refer to Annex 1 for the year-end statistics and Annex 2 for quarter 4 statistics and case details.

This Report sets out the learning for the SPSO from the determined Service Quality complaints.

### Learning from Service Quality Complaints

Three out of the seven complaints determined were either fully or partly upheld. Of these, one complaint was fully upheld. This referred to a case that was received by the SPSO in December 2004 and had been fully worked with input from two CIs and one manager, before a second manager on reviewing the case found it to be out of the jurisdiction of the SPSO. The case was closed at step 4 without reporting in January 2008. Sincere apologies were offered to the complainant; the screening process for cases on initial receipt has been changed and reviewed; and timescales have been significantly improved following receipt of additional resources.

Two other cases were partly upheld. The parts of the complaints that were upheld were about

- i. communication where the outcomes of an investigation were shared with listed body before the complainant; and
- ii. delay.

A further two cases were presented as SDCs, but were specifically about reported findings and a third about a decision on a complaint. These complaints would no longer be recorded as service delivery complaints with the current criteria, as they relate to decisions taken on a case not the service provided.

A final complaint was recorded as a formal SDC, but was dealt with informally. It regarded the confusion on the part of the complainant regarding information she was given about the Scrutiny Review by a member of staff. The information given was correct and this was clarified with the complainant by the line

manager. The complainant confirmed she did not have a problem with any staff member.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

None

#### **5. Recommendations**

Further improve the criteria for recording service delivery complaints that will clearly identify the difference between casework challenges and service delivery complaints for staff and complainants.

#### **6. Actions required**

Confirm the year-end statistics for publishing on the website.

Quarter 4 Service Delivery Complaints

Main Reason for Complaint	Upheld	Partly upheld	Not upheld	No Finding/ Withdrawn	Total Cases
Delay					0
Delay and Process		1			1
Communication		1	1		2
Process	1		3		4
Dissatisfaction					0
Q4 Total	1	2	4	0	7

SQC07/33	10/01/08	200702349	Not upheld (appeal not upheld)	COMMUNICATION - Not upheld Request for information that had already been offered, and CI handling case when SDC was open.
SQC07/34	14/01/08	200602837	Partly upheld	COMMUNICATION - Partly upheld Findings shared with body before complainant. Action did not change outcome of case, but was considered to be poor practice.
SDC07/35	24/01/08	200501028	Partly Upheld	DELAY - Upheld Case took too long, apology and explanation provided. PROCESS - not upheld Investigation properly planned and evidence appropriately interrogated, conclusions soundly reached.
SDC07/36	08/02/07	200603174	Not upheld	PROCESS - Not upheld Complaint about reports laid before Parliament.
SDC07/37	28/01/08	200402036	Not upheld	PROCESS - Not upheld Complaint about report laid before parliament.
SDC07/38	07/01/08	200602676	Not upheld	PROCESS - Not upheld Complainant unhappy with decision. Careful consideration of evidence by CI.
SDC07/39	13/03/08	200401620	Upheld	PROCESS - Upheld Jurisdictional decision incorrect: case worked, but not in jurisdiction.

2007-08 Year-end Statistical Summary

Main Reason for Complaint	Upheld	Partly upheld	Not upheld	No Finding/ Withdrawn	Total Cases
Delay	5	2	3	0	10
Delay and Process	0	1	2	0	3
Communication	1	4	1	3	9
Process	1	3	10	3	17
Dissatisfaction / Error	1	1	0	1	3
<b>2007-08 TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>

Quarterly breakdown

Q1 Total	2	4	4	3	13
Q2 Total	4	3	6	2	15
Q3 Total	1	2	2	2	7
Q4 Total	1	2	4	0	7
<b>2007-08 TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>

