

Customer Service Complaints Report

2025-26 Quarter 1

Meeting Date	27 August 2025
Meeting name	LT Governance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement
Dashboard link	250701 Customer Service Complaints Dashboard Q1 2025-26 details - Objective
Linked reports	
Outcomes sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Noting quarterly statistics: <u>Statistics – 2025-26 Q1</u>2. Note findings, learning and improvement actions taken: <u>Findings, learning and actions</u>3. Noting the future development and actions taken: <u>Future development and actions</u>
Executive summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 6 more cases were closed than received in Q1. This closing rate of 125% is a lot higher than usual. However, the total number of cases received and closed was lower compared to Q4 24/25.2. 3 cases missed their target date. This is higher than usual as it is not common to miss the target date.3. 7,650 minutes were spent on stage 3 cases. This is the highest we have ever seen. Second highest was Q1 24/25 with 3,330 minutes.4. Most upheld cases were at stage 1 (4 cases). Most not upheld cases were at stage 3 (10 cases).5. This quarter saw a higher overall amount of subjects used in complaints, meaning cases had more elements to the complaint. The top three subjects were featured 15, 12 and 11 times.6. Timeliness, communication to keep the complainant informed and neurodiversity training were the key learnings for improvement this quarter.

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 – 2025-26 Q1

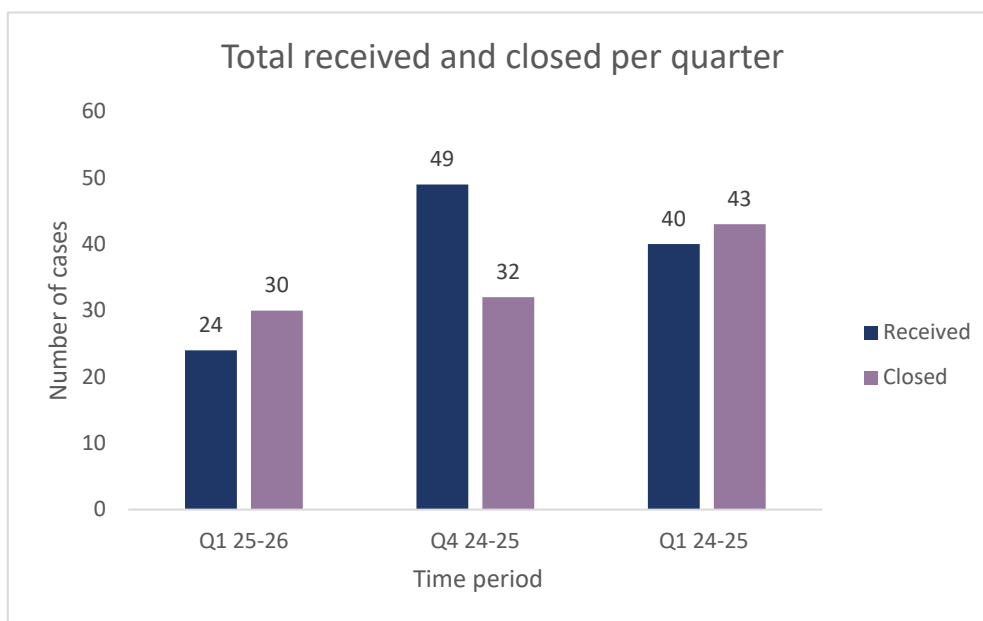
2. The table below shows the total received and closed cases in Q1 of 2025-2026. These are split by stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 cases are further separated into cases that were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and cases that surpassed stage 1 and escalated directly to stage 2.

Q1 headlines:

- At stage 1; we received 10 cases and closed 10 cases
- At stage 2; including both stage 2 escalated and direct cases, we received 7 cases and closed 9 cases
- At stage 3; we received 7 cases and we closed 11 cases

Customer Service Complaints	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	10	10
Stage 2 - Direct to stage 2	4	5
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	3	4
Stage 3 - Independent Review	7	11
SPSO Total	24	30

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



- Q1 2025/2026: closed 125% of cases received
- Q4 2024/2025: closed 65% of cases received
- Q1 2024/2025: closed 108% of cases received

Timescales

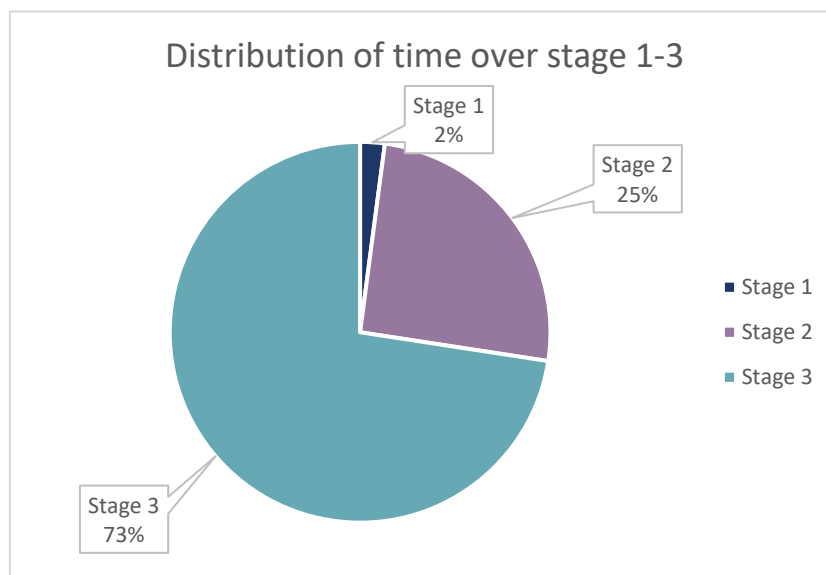
4. The timescales by which we measure our performance against the requirements of the complaints procedure are:
- 5 working days at stage 1
 - 20 working days at stage 2
 - 40 working days for independent review
5. The table below summarises the average timescales in working days to close service complaints at each stage, how many were closed on time and how many missed the target during Q1. Some targets were missed due to complexity and miscommunication.

Average timescales	Average	On Time	Missed	Oldest Case
Stage 1	3	10	0	5
Stage 2	15	8	1	29
Stage 3 - Independent Review	30	9	2	45

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 July 2025.

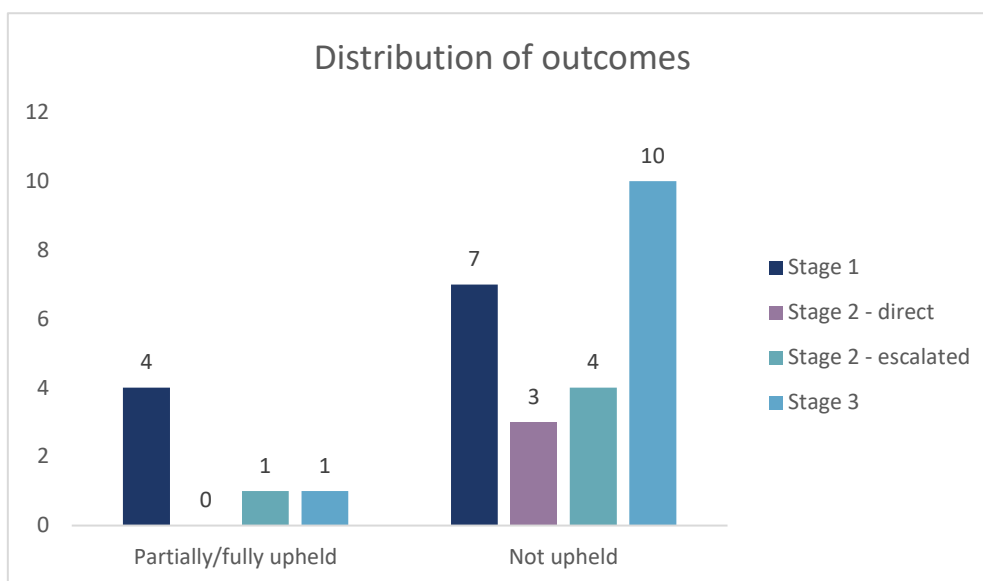
Stage	Total Time	Average Time	Range of Time
Stage 1	220	55	20-180
Stage 2	2,670	297	50-1260
Stage 3 - Independent Review	7,650	696	240-1590
Total	10,540		

- The total time spent on stage 1 cases is significantly less than previous quarters which range from 915-2475 minutes in total in 2024-2025.
- The total time spent on stage 3 is significantly higher compared to last year, where the range was 315-3330 minutes in total.



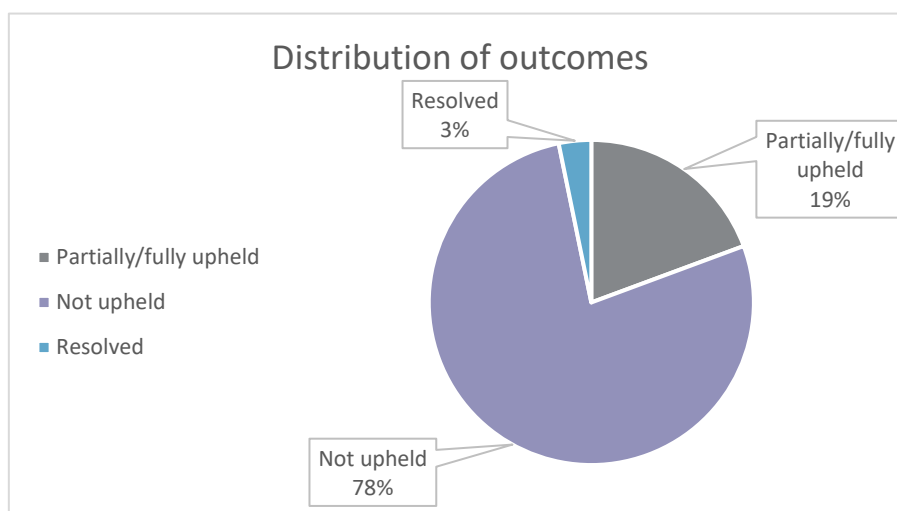
Outcomes and subject analysis

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.



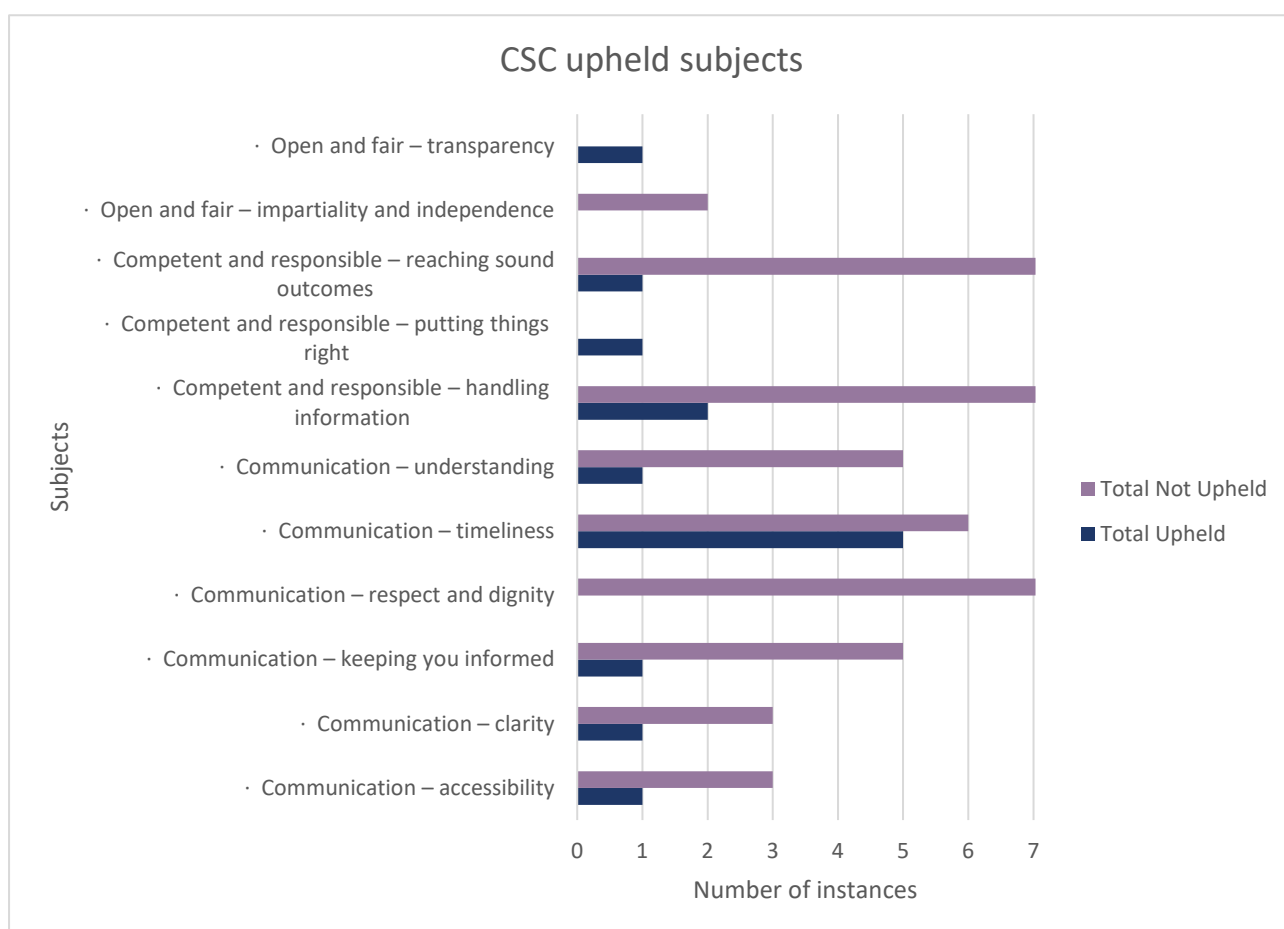
- Majority of the partially or fully upheld complaints were at stage 1, this can be explained by the higher volume of cases received at this stage
- No direct stage 2 complaints were upheld
- Only 1 stage 3 complaint was upheld, compared to the 10 that were not upheld

9. Highlights Q1 25/26:



- 78% of the outcomes across all stages were not upheld, which is higher than last quarter
- 19% of the outcomes across all three stages were partially or fully upheld compared to 27% in Q4
- One complaint was resolved as the complainant was satisfied with the outcome

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

5 out of 11 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

b. Competent and responsible – handling information

2 out of 15 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

c. Competent and responsible – reaching sound outcomes

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

12. The subjects upheld most often was communication – timeliness. These were all upheld on 5 occasions.

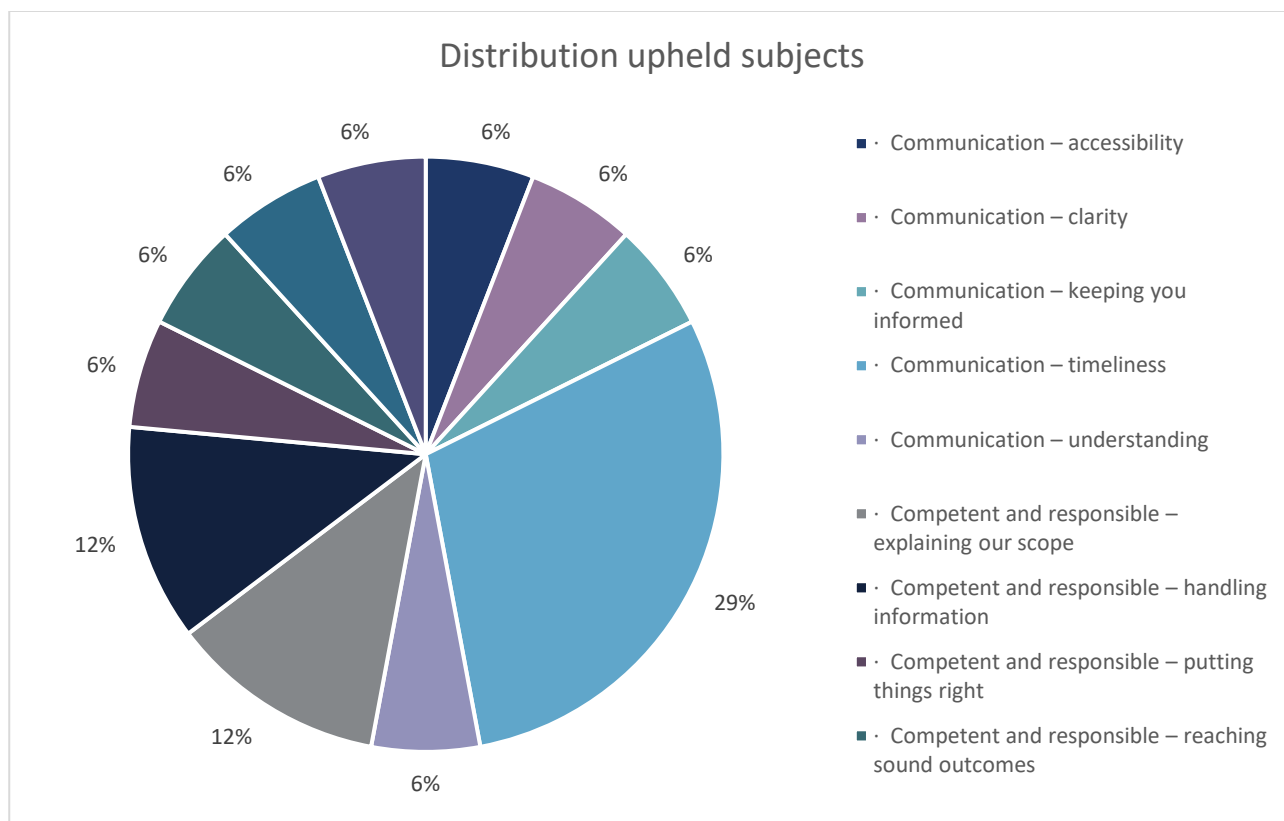


TABLE OF SUBJECTS, arranged by total frequency, and then by most upheld complaints	Stage 1 Upheld	Stage 1 Not Upheld	Stage 2 Upheld	Stage 2 Not Upheld	Stage 3 Upheld	Stage 3 Not Upheld	Total Upheld	Total Not Upheld	Total*
Communication – accessibility	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	4
Communication – clarity	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	4
Communication – keeping you informed	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	5	6
Communication – respect and dignity	0	2	0	2	0	5	0	9	9
Communication – timeliness	2	1	2	3	1	2	5	6	11
Communication – understanding	0	1	1	0	0	4	1	5	6
Competent and responsible – ensuring impact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Competent and responsible – expertise	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	6	6
Competent and responsible – explaining our scope	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	4
Competent and responsible – handling information	2	0	0	2	0	11	2	13	15
Competent and responsible – putting things right	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Competent and responsible – reaching sound outcomes	0	0	1	5	0	6	1	11	12
Open and fair – fairness	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Open and fair – impartiality and independence	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Open and fair – transparency	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

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

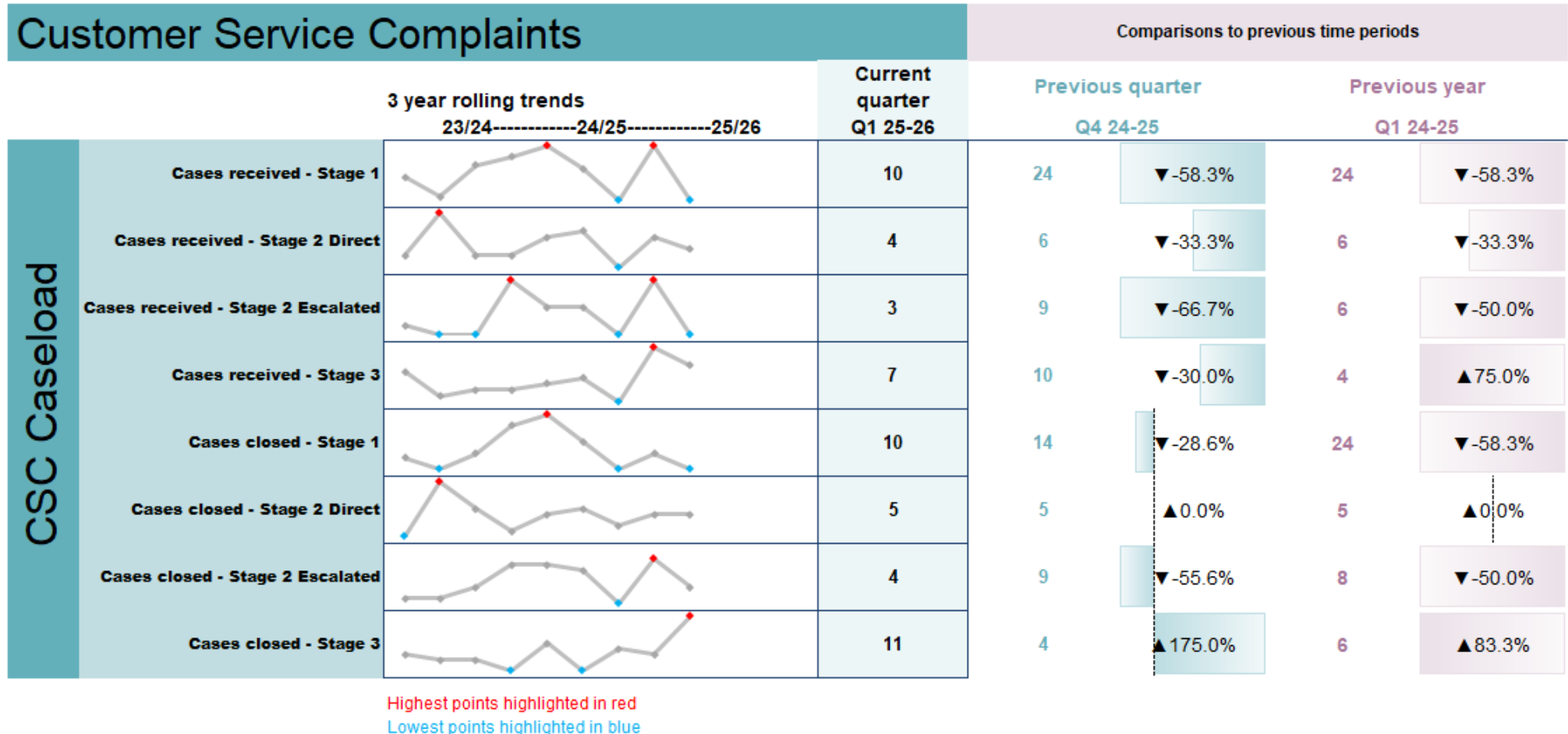
Findings, learning and actions

Case Ref:	Workflow Stage	Subject	Substance of complaint	Decision	Learning and improvement
CSC-202501949	Stage 1	(1) Competent and responsible - handling information (2) Open and fair – transparency	An incorrect email address for the board was used when making an enquiry, leading to a delay receiving the information	Fully Upheld - Apology given and other action	Delete the wrong email address from history in outlook. Only provide information that cannot be questioned later on.
CSC-202409085	Stage 2	(1) Communication – timeliness (2) Communication – keeping you informed (3) Communication – clarity (4) Communication – understanding (5) Communication – accessibility	Delay in reviewing application of engagement policy and did not keep C informed or updated.	Some Upheld - Apology given and other action	Reminder about importance of responding to Engagement Policy reviews on time and keeping people informed. Added to leadership team agenda.
CSC-202409547	Stage 2	(1) Communication – understanding (2) Competent and responsible - reaching sound outcomes (3) Competent and responsible - putting things right (4) Open and fair – fairness (5) Communication – accessibility (6) Communication – clarity (7) Competent and responsible – expertise (8) Communication - respect and dignity (9) Open and fair - impartiality and independence	The decision was not explained in enough detail over email, taking into account the information provided regarding communication needs.	Some Upheld - Apology given and other action	Feedback to staff member, discussion at team meeting and request for neurodiversity training.

Future development and actions

13. New Customer Service Standards will be launched in Q2 2025-26.

Appendix 1: CSC Caseload Dashboard



Appendix 2: Standards and guidance

14. 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](#)
15. 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](#)
16. 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.
17. 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](#)