

Annual INWO Customer Satisfaction Survey Results and Analysis

2024-25

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the feedback gathered from customers of SPSO's Independent National Whistleblowing Officer service over the past year. It covers response rates, satisfaction from customers who received a decision at the final investigation stage and plans for improvement generated from feedback.

The main findings over the past year are listed below:

- 1.1** The majority of responses were positive, indicating a high standard of service. All respondents felt they were treated with dignity and respect, had the process clearly explained, received a clear explanation of the decision, and knew who to contact with queries.
- 1.2** A small number of customers gave negative responses regarding the clarity of language used, access to support, understanding of INWO's role and scope, communication levels and timeliness.
- 1.3** Positive qualitative feedback emphasised that customers felt listened to, experienced objectivity and compassion, were kept informed, and appreciated the thoroughness of investigations.
- 1.4** Areas for development in the qualitative feedback included accessibility issues, the focus of the investigation, perceptions of impartiality, communication gaps, delays and concerns about how well the complaint was understood.

2. Distribution and Returns

Survey distribution for investigation cases commenced in Quarter 3. Prior to this, feedback was collected through direct contact following case closure and via text

surveys after initial contact. From Quarter 3 onwards, email surveys were issued by Complaints Reviewers alongside final decision communications.

2.1 Annual Total

Total no. of surveys issued	11
Total no. of surveys completed	7
Response rate %	64%

We are satisfied with this response rate, noting that it is higher than average for most customer service surveys. As part of our ongoing efforts to improve feedback opportunities, we plan to introduce surveying at an earlier stage in 2025–26 to broaden the sample and enhance representativeness. We also plan to issue the survey the day after the decision to introduce some separation from the decision and hopefully improve response rates. This approach has proved effective in other SPSO teams.

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Results

- Quarter 1: n/a
- Quarter 2: n/a
- Quarter 3: [2024-25 - Q3 - INWO customer survey \(A53112827\)](#)
- Quarter 4: [2024-25 - Q4 - INWO customer survey \(A53112834\)](#)

4. Analysis of Customer Satisfaction Feedback

Feedback has been analysed by the Head of Investigations for Independent National Whistleblowing Officer & Scottish Welfare Fund Reviews, the INWO Team Manager and

the SWF Team Manager . It has also been shared with SPSO's Leadership Team, the Service Improvement Forum and all INWO colleagues.

4.1 Analysis of feedback

Notable points of improvement	Relevant service standard(s)	Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken
1. While response rates are high, the volume of survey data is low which limits the extent to which reliable conclusions can be drawn.	n/a	Decision to expand survey process to stage 2 decisions from June 2025. Also planning to issue the survey separately from the decision from August 2025.
2. No questions covering timeliness were included in Q3 due to an oversight.	Timeliness	Timeliness questions added from March 25.
3. Long investigation timescales and a desire for more regular updates were identified in the feedback.	Timeliness	This is already a management focus, with steps taken to improve efficiency. Discussed at the 23 May 2025 team session and subject to ongoing monitoring.
4. A small number of comments relating to independence, accessibility, lack of independent support	Various	Management and team reflected on the feedback during the 23 May 2025 session. A bulletin was issued to remind boards of their

and around lack of focus on patient safety.		duty to support whistleblowers in line with the standards.
Notable points of satisfaction	Relevant service standard(s)	Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken
1. The majority of responses across most questions were positive, providing assurance that the quality of the service is high overall. In particular, comments were received around compassion, thoroughness and being listened to.	Various	Feedback to team at session on 23 May 2025.

5. Conclusion

We are pleased that most survey responses were positive, indicating satisfaction with the service. We are particularly heartened by the comments highlighting that individuals felt treated with compassion, listened to, and that our work was thorough. These qualities are especially important, given the nature of our work and the situations our customers can face.

At the same time, we remain mindful of the areas for improvement identified in the feedback. In particular, we recognise the need to reduce investigation times and to provide regular updates to our customers. Work is already underway to address these issues, and we will continue to monitor progress closely.

We were also concerned by a comment noting a lack of independent support. NHS boards have a responsibility to offer support to whistleblowers throughout the process, and we have taken steps to remind them of this duty.

While we were pleased with the overall response rate, we acknowledge the need to reach a broader pool of respondents to enhance the reliability of the data. In 2025–26, we will expand the survey distribution to include individuals whose cases are closed earlier in the process. Additionally, we will issue the survey separately from the decision notification, a method that has proven effective in increasing response rates in other SPSO teams. Plans are also underway to amend our survey questions to make them more closely aligned with newly revised customer service standards.