

## Quarter 1 and 2 2025/26

### SPSO Customer Satisfaction Survey Results and Analysis

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#### 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the feedback gathered from customers of SPSO's public service complaints (PSC) service during Quarters 1 and 2. This is a rolling report with overviews added per quarter. It covers response rates, satisfaction from members of the public who received a decision in all complaints considered and closed post triage and early decision<sup>1</sup> ([How we handle complaints | SPSO](#)) and plans for improvement generated from feedback.

The main findings during quarter 1 are listed below:

#### 2.1 Quarter 1

1.	Respectful, professional, clear communication from SPSO is valued by complainants and has evidently been provided in many interactions via various communication methods.
2.	The available word count on SPSO's online complaint form requires to be increased to allow complainants suitable space to express their complaint.
3.	Feedback indicates that SPSO's online complaint form is user friendly and accessible.
4.	Satisfaction levels are low in terms of time taken to consider complaints.

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of prisoner complaints

## 2.2 Quarter 2

<b>1.</b>	Respectful, professional, clear communication from SPSO is valued by complainants and has evidently been provided in many interactions via various communication methods.
<b>2.</b>	Feedback indicates that SPSO's online complaint form and website is user friendly and accessible.
<b>3.</b>	Satisfaction levels are low in terms of time taken to consider complaints.

## 3 Distribution and Returns

SPSO's satisfaction survey is issued with final decision statement of reasons, letters, or investigation reports. The distribution method is email, complainants can request a paper copy of the survey if required. The return rate is calculated on the number of surveys returned at the end of each calendar month.

### 3.1 Quarter 1

Total no. of surveys issued	469
Total no. of surveys completed	39
Response rate %	8%

During Q1 response rates were low, even when complainants were invited to complete the survey more than once. A trial was conducted to issue survey reminders for April

closures during May, which raised the return rate. Even after additional work was carried out the overall return rate remains under 10% for the quarter.

The trial was a resource intensive exercise (around 7 hours of one staff members time). Consideration is being given as to whether and how this task might be replicated and resourced during Q2, with our ambition being to raise the return rate to around 10% or over.

### 3.2 Quarter 2

Total no. of surveys issued	466
Total no. of surveys completed	59
Response rate %	13%

We are pleased to have achieved a return rate of 13% during Q2. We repeated the exercise of issuing reminder emails to complainants twice during Q2 which has increased survey returns.

## 4 Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Results

Quarter 1 : <https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53372282/details>

Quarter 2: <https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A54422545/details>

## 5 Analysis of Customer Satisfaction Feedback

Feedback has been analysed by SPSO's Head of Investigations, Public Sector Complaints, and Operational Managers. The feedback has also been shared with SPSO's Leadership Team, Service Improvement Forum and all SPSO PSC colleagues:

## 5.1 Quarter 1

Notable points of improvement	Relevant service standard(s)	Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken
1. Low level of satisfaction (quantitative and qualitative) in terms of time taken to consider complaints.	Timeliness	Many complainants during the period surveyed will have experienced a delay in their complaint being allocated of at least 12 weeks. Although this delay is a significant decrease from previous years, it is clear that it leads to dissatisfaction. Whilst the number of complaints received continue to increase and available resourcing remains static it is difficult to overcome this challenge. Nevertheless, SPSO are committed to continuing to reduce this delay. The PSC management team monitor the age profile of cases and the Unallocated Pool Project (UPP) has made significant progress in terms of reducing the number and age of unallocated cases.

<p>2. The limited word count available on SPSO's online complaint form was raised as an issue by 3 separate respondents.</p>	<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>Whilst the word count set signifies the level of detail we believe is normally required to allow SPSO to assess a complaint, we are mindful this feedback has also been echoed during telephone conversations. We will therefore increase the word count by 50% (250 words) and monitor the effect.</p> <p>Action taken : August 2025. Impact will be monitored during Q3.</p>
<p>3. The following comment regarding reviews was received :</p> <p><i>'having dug through your annual report, I now realise my review request has a 3% chance of success!'</i></p>	<p>Transparency and Reaching Sound Outcomes</p>	<p>LT may for transparency wish to consider communicating the low level of complaints that original decisions are overturned on when reviewed. This may assist in managing complainants expectations and give assurance of the high quality of SPSO's decision making.</p>
<p>4. The following comment was received regarding accessing support:</p>	<p>Understanding</p>	<p>The SPSO has recently launched the following guidance on the website and in leaflet form which explains when to contact a Councillor to assist with</p>

<i>'Help on how to engage with councillors and MSPS'</i>		<p>complaints <a href="#">Difficulties and delays in the complaints process   SPSO</a></p> <p>Our guide for MSPs will be refreshed for new MSPs joining the Scottish Parliament in 2026.</p>
<b>Notable points of satisfaction</b>	<b>Relevant service standard(s)</b>	<b>Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken</b>
<p>1. Around 82% of complainants found it clear and easy to submit their complaint.</p> <p>This was also supported by a number of positive comments:</p> <p><i>'Online system easy to understand and accessible'.</i></p> <p><i>'Very accessible'.</i></p> <p><i>'Technically the SPSO complaint form was accessible. It is clear what questions need</i></p>	Accessibility	<p>We welcome this positive feedback and note that the majority of complainants surveyed had submitted their complaints using SPSO's online complaint form (85%).</p>

<i>answered and what evidence needs uploaded'</i>		
2. Several positive comments have been received noting appreciation of the respectful and professional communication delivered throughout the complainant's journey.	Respect and Dignity.	<p>A selection of the feedback describing service delivery:</p> <p><i>Sensitive and respectful communication, treated with respect and understanding, courteous and informative, always polite, perfectly respectful, gave me dignity, asked questions in a sensitive way.</i></p> <p>Action: feedback shared with PSC colleagues August 2025.</p>
3. Several positive comments have been received noting appreciation of the clarity of communication throughout the complainant's journey.	Clarity	<p>A selection of the feedback describing service delivery:</p> <p><i>Answer was clear and concise, the information on how SPSO has handled the report was clearly explained, clarity of communications I thought were good.</i></p> <p>Action: feedback shared with PSC colleagues August 2025.</p>

## 5.2 Quarter 2

Notable points of improvement	Relevant service standard(s)	Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken
<p>1. Low level of satisfaction (quantitative and qualitative) in terms of time taken to consider complaints.</p> <p>Comments have been received by complainants regarding SPSO resourcing:</p> <p><i>‘The complaint took approx 8 months to deal with...may need more staff’</i></p> <p><i>‘You need to hire more investigators. Justice delayed’</i></p>	Timeliness	<p>Most complainants during the period surveyed have experienced a delay in their complaint being allocated of 12 weeks. Whilst we have implemented a number of efficiencies in recent years (statement of reasons and the UPP), given the number of complaints received continue to increase and available resourcing remains static it will remain difficult to overcome this challenge.</p>



<p>2. Again, the limited word count available on SPSO's online complaint form was raised as an issue.</p> <p><i>'What I found difficult was trying to fit the details of my complaint into the online boxes that provide very limited space'.</i></p>	<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>We made an increase to the word count by 50% (250 words) on sections of our online complaint form in August 2025.</p> <p>Complainants surveyed during Q2 have used the complaint form prior to this improvement being introduced.</p>
<p>3. The following comment was received regarding SPSO colleagues working patterns:</p> <p><i>'Everyone seems to be working from home and it appears that many are employed on a part time basis. Consequently continuity at times can be difficult'.</i></p>	<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>Further to a discussion at the Service Improvement Forum (SIF), PSC HoS has recommended that staff use voicemail and email auto replies to communicate their working pattern and our service standard of three working days in order to manage assumptions of an immediate or same day reply, which may not be realistic.</p> <p>Action taken : October 2025</p>

<p>4. The following comment was received regarding understanding of SPSO's complaint handling process:</p> <p><i>'I didn't understand that after the SPSO agreed to take forward the complaint, that they could still then say many months later, that they wouldn't be taking it to a full report and instead simply giving the organisation feedback. This was a bit anti-climactic and made me feel like it wasn't any decision at all'.</i></p>	<p>Explaining our scope</p>	<p>Descriptors of each stage of the PSC process were reviewed and launched in April 2025, this includes possible outcomes throughout a complainants journey:</p> <p><a href="#">How we handle complaints   SPSO</a></p> <p>Complainants from April 2025 have been issued this information with the acknowledgement of their complaint submission. Templates at each stage of the process are currently being reviewed to also include this information.</p> <p>This will assist in clearly explaining that many complaints can be resolved or otherwise decided at the preliminary investigation stage without the requirement for a 'full report' to be produced.</p>
<p>Notable points of <b>satisfaction</b></p>	<p>Relevant service standard(s)</p>	<p>Management response/action/recommendation. Date of any action taken</p>

<p>1. Around 78% of complainants found it clear and easy to submit their complaint.</p> <p>This was also supported by a number of positive comments:</p> <p><i>‘I found everything I required was accessible’.</i></p> <p><i>‘Was all really easy to navigate’.</i></p> <p><i>‘Easy website and great communication’.</i></p>	<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>We welcome this positive feedback and note that the majority of complainants surveyed had submitted their complaints using SPSO’s online complaint form (93%).</p>
<p>2. Comments were received noting appreciation of the respectful and professional communication delivered throughout the complainant’s journey.</p>	<p>Respect and Dignity.</p>	<p>A selection of the feedback describing respectful service delivery:</p> <p><i>‘Your emails were compassionate and you were very kind’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I cannot fault my reviewers communication at all. He was aware of the trauma and stress</i></p>

		<p><i>behind my complaint and continued to be reassuring and empathetic’.</i></p> <p><i>‘my stress attached to my complaint was so well understood and my boundaries within communication were well respected’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I received an outcome that wasn't what I hoped for and I was prepared before opening the pdf because the Complaints Reviewer explained in the email what I may have to expect so I could open and read it in my own time and allow myself the space for support’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I genuinely couldn't ask for more, especially when I've had so many upsetting experiences in this journey’.</i></p> <p>Action: feedback shared with PSC colleagues November 2025.</p>
3. Comments have been received noting appreciation of updates	Keeping you informed.	Comments received which demonstrate the importance of

<p>throughout the complainant's journey from Complaints Reviewers especially in relation to complaints which have taken SPSO a lengthy time to consider/conclude.</p>		<p>regularly providing complaint updates:</p> <p><i>'The length of time was too long but the updates were clear'.</i></p> <p><i>'I found the time factor difficult but I am aware that an organisation whose job is to investigate has to engage in processes that are necessarily lengthy and that the complexity of any situation can generate its own delays'.</i></p> <p><i>'I was well informed throughout which helped me tolerate the wait for resolution'.</i></p> <p>Action: feedback shared with PSC colleagues November 2025.</p>
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## 2. Significant comparison points between quarterly feedback

- a. **Quarter 1** : not applicable.
- b. **Quarter 2** : Timeliness continues to be a reason for poor satisfaction. Accessibility and Respect and Dignity continue to be recognised and appreciated.