

## 2017-18 Q4 Organisation Learning from Customer Service Complaints

From: **John Stevenson, Head of Improvement Standards and Engagement**

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### Purpose

To provide a summary of Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) received and responded to by the SPSO and where appropriate to provide a summary of outcomes, trends and actions taken as a result of these complaints including key learning points for SPSO service improvement.

### Reporting customer service complaints

Details of all CSCs are recorded (on WorkPro) and we publish on a quarterly basis the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. These are then analysed for trend information to ensure we identify areas where our service could improve and take appropriate action.

We publish this report on a quarterly basis to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. This includes statistics showing the volumes and types of complaints and key performance details, including the time taken and the stage at which complaints were resolved.

### Q4 statistics for customer service complaints

#### *Received & closed*

Table 1 provides a breakdown of complaints received and closed

<b>Summary</b>	<b><i>Received</i></b>	<b><i>Closed</i></b>
<b>Stage 1 - Frontline resolution</b>	14	16
<b>Stage 2 - Investigation</b>	4	5
<b>Escalated Complaints</b> (escalated from stage 1 to stage 2)	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>

Where a difference exists in the number of cases received in the quarter and the number of cases closed in the quarter, this is due to cases received in an earlier quarter being closed in Q4.

### ***Upheld/Not upheld***

Table 2 provides a breakdown of complaints upheld and not upheld

<b>Summary</b>	<b><i>Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Not Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>% upheld</i></b>
<b>Stage 1 - Frontline resolution</b>	4	12	<b>16</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Stage 2 - Investigation</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Escalated Complaints</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	

### ***Timescales***

The timescales to close complaints are:

- 5 working days at stage 1
- 20 working days at stage 2
- 20 working days for 'escalated complaints.

Table 3 provides further information in relation to our performance in relation to timescales.

<b>Timescales</b>	<b><i>Met timescale (cases)</i></b>	<b><i>Did not meet timescale (cases)</i></b>	<b><i>Total number of working days</i></b>	<b><i>Average time in working days to close</i></b>
<b>Stage 1 - Frontline resolution</b>	8	6*	<b>74</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Stage 2 - Investigation</b>	2	3	<b>147</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>Escalated Complaints</b>	1	1	<b>64</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>		

\* Two (frontline resolution) service complaints were identified and responded to through our review process. These are not included here, as they are reported in our reviews timescales performance. Of the 14 remaining complaints closed at Stage 1 in Q4 the average time taken to close was 5.2 working days.

We did not meet our timescales to respond to three complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure and one escalated complaint. Performance in handling Stage 2 and escalated complaints has been impacted as a result of a resource shortfall during the quarter. We will look to address this resource shortfall in a positive way going forward.

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## **Summary of complaints outcomes and service failures**

### ***Stage 1 upheld complaints***

We upheld four complaints at Stage 1. A clear trend in the complaints we upheld related to poor communication, and a failure to meet our service standards in respect of communication. In each case we apologised to the customer for failing to meet our service standards. We also reminded staff concerned of the service standards we commit to provide. This information was also shared with our Service Improvement Group and the Leadership Team.

### **Stage 2 and escalated upheld complaints**

We also upheld six Stage 2 or escalated complaints. Areas where we failed to deliver a standard of service that we expect of ourselves included:

- delays in progressing the investigation in good time
- failure to communicate effectively with our customers, and
- a failure to update on the progress of a complaint.

In each case we apologised to the customer for the service failure. We also committed to reminding staff of our service standards and the requirement to meet these standards. We also reiterated the value of phone contact with our customers to ensure that they are fully heard and understood.

### **Independent Customer Complaints Reviewer (ICCR)**

During Q4 the ICCR closed four cases. None were upheld.

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### **Next steps**

This report has been prepared to update the Leadership Team and the Service Improvement Group. Its findings are also shared with staff and made available online.

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