

Customer Service Complaints Report

2023-24 Quarter 3

Meeting Date	25 th of January 2024
Meeting name	Casework Performance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement
Dashboard link	[INTERNAL LINK]
Outcomes sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noting quarterly statistics: [INTERNAL LINK] 2. Note findings, learning and improvement actions taken: [INTERNAL LINK] 3. Noting the future development and actions taken: [INTERNAL LINK] 4. Noting the new process for stage 2 CSCs

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 – 2023-24 Q3

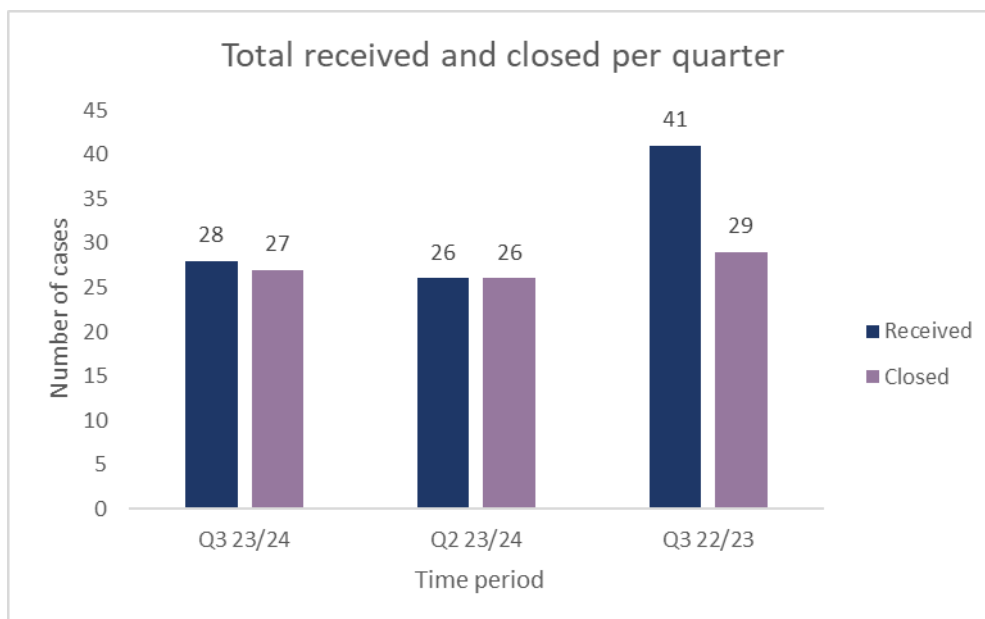
2. The table below shows the total received and closed cases in Q3 of 2023-2024. These are split by stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 cases are further separated into cases that were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and cases that surpassed stage 1 and escalated directly to stage 2.

Q3 headlines:

- At stage 1; we received 19 cases and closed 14 cases.
- At stage 2; including both stage 2 escalated and direct cases, we received 6 cases and closed 10 cases.
- At stage 3; at stage 3 we received 3 cases and we closed 3 cases.

Customer Service Complaints	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	19	14
Stage 2 - Direct to stage 2	3	6
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	3	4
Stage 3 - Independent Review	3	3
SPSO Total	28	27

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



- Q3 2023/2024: closed 96% of cases received
- Q2 2023/2024: closed 100% of cases received
- Q3 2022/2023: closed 71% 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

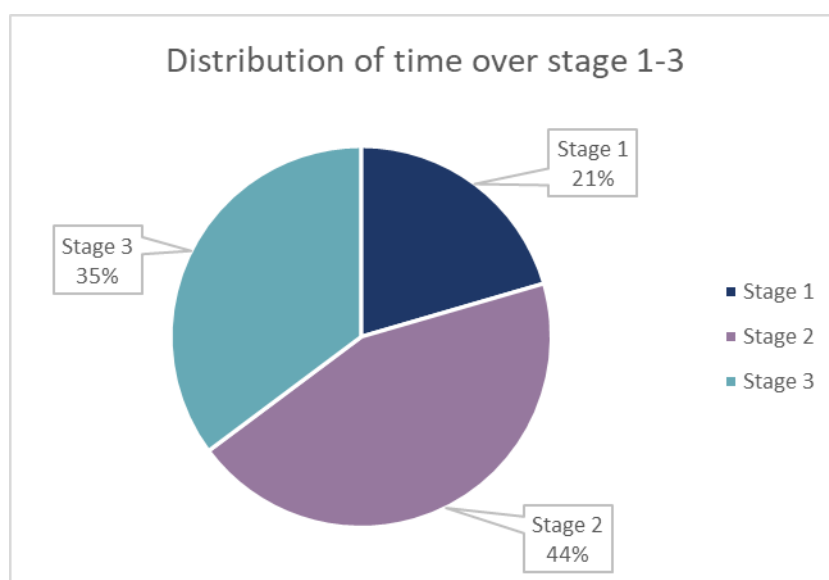
5. The table below summarises the average timescales in working days to close service complaints at each stage, how many were closed on time and how many missed the target during Q3. Additionally, the oldest case at each stage is noted to address any cause for delay that is within our gift. Stage 3 cases take the longest time on average (31 working days) to close. The oldest current case is a stage 3 case still within the limit of 40 working days.

Average timescales	Average	On Time	Missed	Oldest Case
Stage 1	4	13	1	11
Stage 2	15	10	0	20
Stage 3 - Independent Review	31	3	0	40

6. The table below shows the time that all SPSO staff spent on the customer service complaints closed during Q3 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 December 2023.

Stage	Total Time	Average Time	Range of Time
Stage 1	1,535	90	30-240
Stage 2	3,320	332	30-540
Stage 3 - Independent Review	2,638	879	140-2,078
Total	7,493		

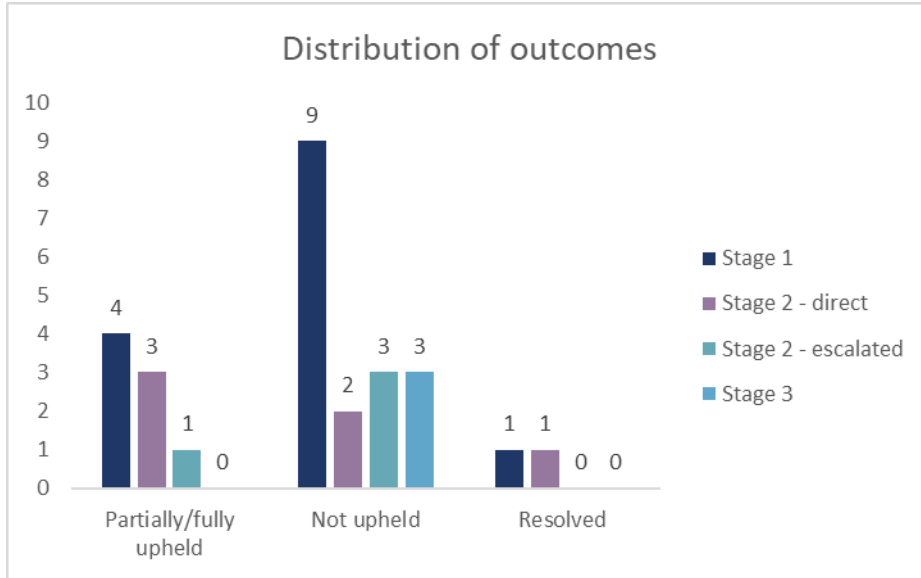
- The total time spent on closing a case at stage 2 is 2.16 times that of the total at stage 1
- The average time to close a stage 3 case is 1.65 times the time spent on average to close a stage 2 case
- Time spent on stage 3 admin is not included in this table but accounts for 170 minutes



- Majority of the total time spent on closing cases was dedicated to stage 2 cases

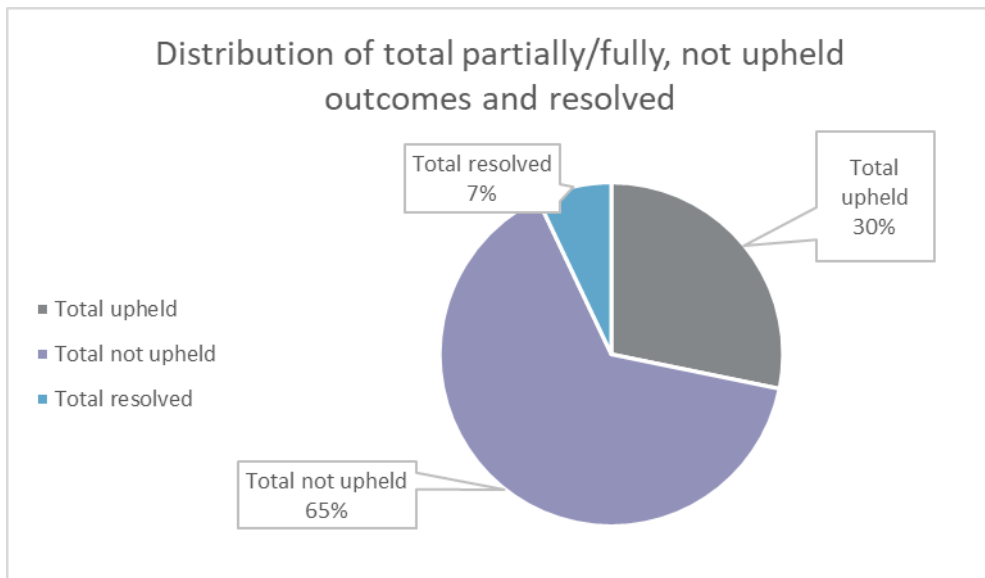
Outcomes and subject analysis

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.



- 15% of stage 1 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 11% of direct stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- 4% escalated stage 2 complaints were partially or fully upheld
- None of the stage 3 complaints were partially or fully upheld

9. Highlights Q3 23/24:



- 65% of the outcomes across all stages were not upheld
- 30% of the outcomes across all three stages were partially or fully upheld
- Out of the 30% of complaints that were partially or fully upheld, 50% of the upheld complaints were at stage 1

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

3 out of 9 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld, these cases were both at stage 1.

b. Communication - clarity

4 out of 9 cases within this service standard were upheld/some upheld, this case was at stage 1.

12. The subject upheld most often was communication – timeliness with 4 instances, followed by communication – clarity and communication – keeping you informed with 3 instances

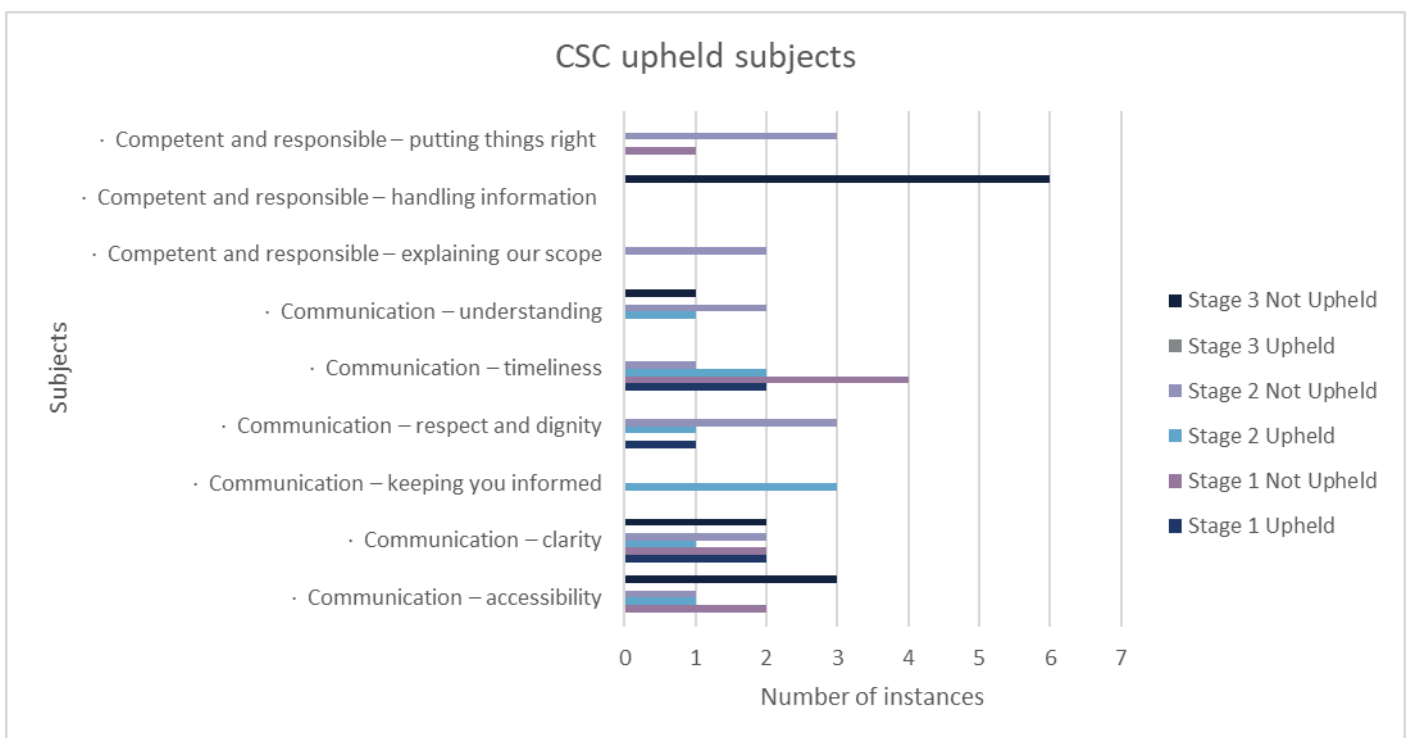


TABLE OF SUBJECTS, arranged by total frequency, and then by most upheld complaints	Stage 1 Upheld	Stage 1 Not Upheld	Stage 1 No Finding	Stage 2 Upheld	Stage 2 Not Upheld	Stage 2 No Finding	Stage 3 Upheld	Stage 3 Not Upheld	Total Upheld	Total Not Upheld	Total*
Communication – accessibility	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	6	7
Communication – clarity	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	3	6	9
Communication – keeping you informed	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Communication – respect and dignity	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	3	5
Communication – timeliness	2	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	5	9
Communication – understanding	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	3	4
Competent and responsible – ensuring impact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Competent and responsible – expertise	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Competent and responsible – explaining our scope	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Competent and responsible – handling information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	6
Competent and responsible – putting things right	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4	4
Competent and responsible – reaching sound outcomes	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Open and fair – fairness	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	5	5
Open and fair – impartiality and independence	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2
Open and fair – transparency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

13. Actions taken as a result of CSCs determined in this quarter, where action other than an apology has been recorded:

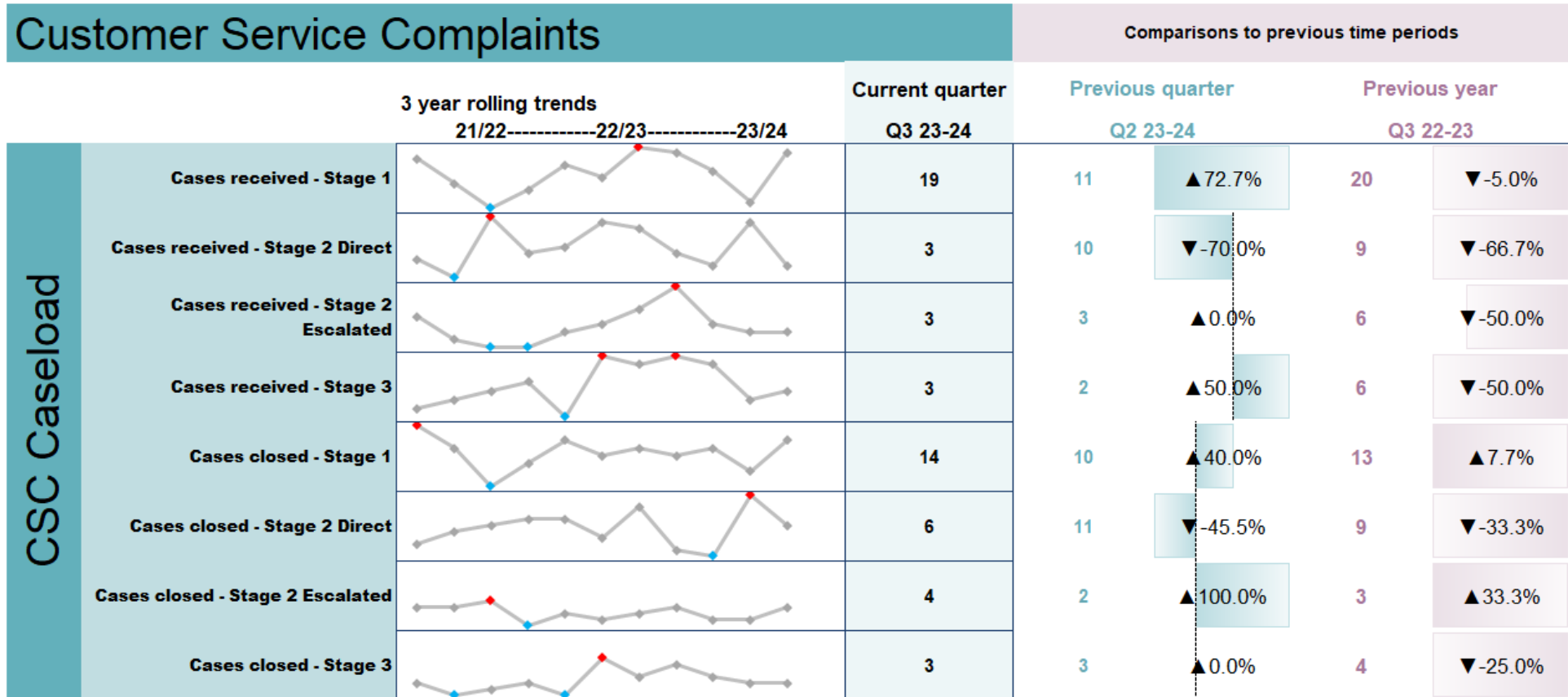
Case Ref:	Workflow Stage	Subject	Substance of complaint	Head of Complaint Outcome	Decision	Learning and improvement recommendations
CSC-202305694	Stage 1 & 2	(1) Communication - respect and dignity (2) Communication - timeliness (3) Communication - clarity (4) Communication - accessibility	(1) The complainant claimed the CR downplayed the impact of their disabilities (2) The complainant claimed the CR delayed their decision until the last possible moment (3) The CR gave the complainant incorrect contact details for social work (4) The complainant felt discriminated against	(1) Fully Upheld (2) Not Upheld (3) Partially Upheld (4) Partially Upheld	(1) Some Upheld - Apology given and other action (2) Some Upheld - Apology given and other action (3) Some Upheld - Apology given and other action (4) Some Upheld - Apology given and other action	Failed to take into account disability when considering ease of setting up online banking. Discussion with CR and team to share learning. Make this a focus of quality control (sign-off process).
CSC-202306354	Stage 2	(1) Communication - keeping you informed (2) Communication - keeping you informed (3) Communication - timeliness	(1) We failed to keep the complainant updated on their complaint (2) We failed to call them back on a number of occasions when they asked us to or used an incorrect number on a number of occasions when we did so (3) We delayed in responding to them when they provided further information	(1) Fully Upheld (2) Fully Upheld (3) Fully Upheld	(1) Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback (2) Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback (3) Fully Upheld - Apology given and staff feedback	Discussion with CR re updating complainants, phoning complainants back when asked to do so and responding to complainants promptly when further information is provided.

14. The following recommendations were issued this quarter:

- Improve our quality control process so that any disabilities are taken into account
- Ensuring complainants are kept informed and responded to promptly

15. Stage 2 CSC's will now be requested through a separate mailbox CSCstage2@spsso.gov.scot this will support the ISE TA to administer the allocation of these between the Head's of service.

Appendix 1: CSC Caseload Dashboard



Highest points highlighted in red
Lowest points highlighted in blue

Appendix 2: Standards and guidance

15. 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](#)
16. 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](#)
17. 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.
18. 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](#)