



## Vision, Values, Strategic Objectives (2008-11) and Business Priorities 2009-10

### **VISION**

Our vision is of enhanced public confidence in high quality, continually improving public services in Scotland which consistently meet the highest standards of public administration – we aim to bring this about by providing a trusted, effective and efficient complaint handling service which remedies injustice for individuals resulting from maladministration or service failure.

### **VALUES**

We aim to be:

- courteous, considerate and respectful of people's rights;
- independent, impartial, fair and expert in responding to complaints;
- accessible to all, and responsive to the needs of our users: complainants and service providers;
- collaborative in our work with service providers, policy makers and other stakeholders;
- open, accountable and proportionate about our work and governance, ensuring stakeholders understand our role and have confidence in our work;
- a best value organisation which is efficient, effective, flexible, and makes good use of resources;
- and
- best practice employers with well trained and highly motivated staff.

## **SPSO BUSINESS PLAN 2009-10**

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Over the period 2008-11 our main aims are:

- Strategic objective 1:**      **To provide a high quality, independent complaint handling service –** by being accessible and dealing with all enquiries and complaints impartially, consistently, effectively, proportionately and speedily; and producing clear, accurate and influential investigation reports.
- Strategic objective 2:**      **To improve complaint handling by public service providers -** by working in partnership with others to promote early local resolution of disputes and complaints and to promote best practice.
- Strategic objective 3:**      **To support public service improvement in Scotland -** by working in partnership with public service deliverers, policy makers, scrutiny bodies and regulators to feed back and capitalise on the learning from our consideration of enquiries and complaints and to promote good administrative practice.
- Strategic objective 4:**      **To simplify the design and operation of the complaint handling system in Scottish public services -** by working in partnership with others to promote an integrated, effective, standardised and user-friendly system as an integral part of the wider administrative justice system in Scotland; and to promote informed awareness of the role and activities of the SPSO.
- Strategic objective 5:**      **To be an accountable, best value organisation –** by making best use of our resources and demonstrating continuous improvement in our operational efficiency and supporting the professional development of our staff.

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**Strategic objective 1:** Provide a high quality, independent complaint handling service - being accessible and dealing with all enquiries and complaints impartially, consistently, effectively, proportionately and speedily; and producing clear, accurate and influential investigation reports.

Key priorities for 2009-10	Target / measure
<p><b>a. Improve case handling times</b></p> <p><b>Handle complaints efficiently to meet casework time targets and reduce age profile.</b></p> <p>Make best use of <i>Workpro</i>.</p> <p>Establish effective knowledge-sharing systems to support specialist areas.</p> <p>Seek continuous improvement of case handling systems.</p> <p>Deliver 3 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Clear all cases over 12 months old.</b></li> <li><b>2. Clear backlog of cases with challenges to decisions.</b></li> <li>3. Embed expanded Gateway review process for enquiries and complaints.</li> </ol>	<p align="center">1,2,3,4</p>
<p><b>b. Improve quality of casework</b></p> <p>Deliver 5 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pilot the use of team investigations to develop a standardised investigative toolkit.</li> <li>2. Review judgements and test processes across teams to ensure internal consistency.</li> <li>3. Implement a casework knowledge management strategy to strengthen internal learning from casework and ensure consistency of approach.</li> <li>4. Review quality assurance &amp; improvement frameworks to ensure they are joined up, proportionate and support continuous improvement.</li> <li><b>5. Deliver 2009-10 review of working practice against written guidance and update best practice guidance as appropriate.</b></li> </ol>	
<p><b>c. Deliver a consistently high quality of service to all Service Users</b></p> <p>Deliver a high quality enquiry &amp; complaint handling service.</p> <p>Communicate with all stakeholders quickly and courteously.</p> <p>Provide guidance, support and signposting to people who bring premature complaints to the SPSO including managing expectations at first contact about what the SPSO can and cannot do.</p>	<p align="center">5</p>

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<b>Key priorities for 2009-10</b>	<b>Target / measure</b>
<p>Deliver 3 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Gather feedback from Service Providers and other stakeholders to measure and track satisfaction with our service.</li><li>2. Seek information on the needs of service users with disabilities.</li><li>3. Review the mechanism and criteria for determining challenges to casework decisions, to ensure appropriateness and consistency.</li></ol>	

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**Strategic objective 2: Improve complaint handling by public service providers** - by working in partnership with others to promote early local resolution of disputes and complaints and to promote best practice.

Key priorities for 2009-10	Target / measure
<p><b>a. Support improvement of front line complaints handling by Service Providers</b></p> <p>Deliver outreach events for Service Providers, focusing particularly on key principles of effective complaint handling and sharing the learning to inform improvement.</p> <p><b>Develop, pilot and quality assure a complaints handling training service for Service Providers on a cost recovery basis, to develop their skills and encourage early local resolution.</b></p> <p>Continue to gather intelligence about causes of prematurity through Gateway and work with Service Providers to develop strategies to address these.</p>	<p align="center">6</p>
<p><b>b. Prepare to establish SPSO as best practice Design Authority on complaint handling.</b></p> <p>Deliver 3 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. In partnership with Service Providers and other stakeholders, develop a set of principles as the basis for all public service complaints handling processes.</b></li> <li><b>2. In consultation with Service Providers, and building on the learning from the project to streamline the handling of planning complaints, work towards the development of a standardised complaint handling process for each sector, with priority given to sectors where there is greatest risk to consumers from service failure.</b></li> <li><b>3. Develop Valuing Complaints material for the website.</b></li> </ol>	

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**Strategic objective 3: Support public service improvement in Scotland** - by working in partnership with public service deliverers, policy makers, scrutiny bodies and regulators to feed back and capitalise on the learning from our consideration of enquiries and complaints and to promote good administrative practice.

Key priorities for 2009-10	Target / measure
<p><b>a. Ensure strategic lessons from casework trends and findings are shared effectively with Service Providers and appropriate scrutiny bodies</b></p> <p>Continue to build and strengthen links with Service Providers and other stakeholders, including professional regulatory bodies, and oversee cross-sectoral networking provisions.</p> <p>Deliver 2 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop commentary and other communication channels to enhance feedback provided.</li> <li>2. Develop systems for sharing the lessons learned through the examination and assessment of cases and promote their use through staff PDP reviews.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>b. Ensure Service Providers implement report recommendations</b></p> <p>Deliver a specific project to develop and implement a systematic approach to tracking implementation of recommendations to ensure compliance.</p>	7

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**Strategic objective 4:** **Simplify the design and operation of the complaint handling system in Scottish public services** - by working in partnership with others to promote an integrated, effective, standardised and user-friendly system as an integral part of the wider administrative justice system in Scotland; and to promote informed awareness of the role and activities of the SPSO.

Key priorities for 2009-10	Target / measure
<p><b>a. Continue to promote informed awareness of the purpose, role and activities of the SPSO</b></p> <p>Deliver 4 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Develop an effective media strategy that publicises the role of the SPSO in supporting public service improvement;</b></li> <li>2. <b>Publish an Annual Report which informs and influences all stakeholders;</b></li> <li>3. Develop a plan to achieve Crystal Mark status for online and printed publications;</li> <li>4. Ensure staff awareness of SPSO's changing role, purpose and activities.</li> </ol>	<p align="center">8.</p>
<p><b>b. Champion a simplified, more effective complaint system and influence complaint handling policy development post-Crerar.</b></p> <p>Continue to engage with the Government, Parliament, Councillors and umbrella groups (in particular those that have direct links with the general public) to champion the development of a simpler and more effective complaint handling system.</p> <p>Deliver 2 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Influence the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament to amend legislation to enhance SPSO remit and powers to direct and support the development of standardised public service complaints handling systems.</li> <li>2. Scope potential for greater collaboration/shared service work between scrutiny/complaint handling bodies.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>c. Lead and influence development of policy on wider administrative justice (AJ) landscape</b></p> <p>Contribute to the finalisation of the second AJSG report and to the wider discussion of it.</p>	

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**Strategic objective 5: Be an accountable, best value organisation** – by making best use of our resources and demonstrating continuous improvement in our operational efficiency and supporting the professional development of our staff.

Key priorities for 2009-10	Target / measure
<p><b>a. Manage resources effectively to meet business needs</b></p> <p><b>Live within financial means, achieving efficiency savings across all areas of work.</b></p> <p>Monitor all projects to ensure that they are delivering on time and on budget</p> <p>Maintain productivity levels in terms of the average number of cases closed / individual investigator per month and the number of cases carried forward at Year End.</p> <p>Systematically review resourcing and productivity requirements, especially in the context of changing role and function.</p> <p>Continue to explore shared service opportunities for efficiency savings where appropriate.</p> <p>Deliver a project that seeks to secure additional resources where necessary to support changing role/ function.</p>	<p align="center">9.</p>
<p><b>b. Improve operational efficiency through high quality business support services</b></p> <p>Deliver 4 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review governance arrangements and financial memorandum, especially in the light of the changing role and function of the SPSO; seek amendments where required.</li> <li>2. Test business continuity systems and amend/update as required.</li> <li>3. Develop Management Information in Workpro, to ensure accurate, timely and user-friendly statistics.</li> <li>4. Develop an ICT strategy with clear long term objectives for storing, managing and exchanging information and clear operational deliverables for 2009/10 and 2010/11.</li> </ol> <p>Ensure audit processes support continuous improvement and effective management of risks.</p> <p>Run timely strategic &amp; operational planning processes to support improvements in organisational performance.</p>	



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<b>Key priorities for 2009-10</b>	<b>Target / measure</b>
<p>Monitor and evaluate recently implemented ICT arrangements to ensure they deliver required benefits.</p>	<p align="center">16</p>
<p><b>c. Promote improvements in organisational performance and staff professional development</b></p> <p>Promote organisational learning and the sharing of best practice with the wider Ombudsman and SPCB-funded officeholder community.</p> <p>Deliver 3 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve accountability and responsiveness to our stakeholders by enhancing the clarity of performance and activity reporting.</li> <li>2. Enhance learning/development and career development planning processes to support employee development.</li> <li>3. Improve individual and organisational performance management systems.</li> <li>4. Review our equalities and diversity strategy in light of changing legislative requirements.</li> </ol>	<p align="center">10.</p>
<p><b>d. Make the SPSO a meaningful place to work</b></p> <p>Deliver 3 specific projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review health, safety and security procedures to ensure the working environment is safe and secure.</li> <li>2. Implement sustainable development plan for an efficient and sustainable environment.</li> <li>3. Improve internal communication channels (including staff consultation mechanisms) to improve employee satisfaction and meet legal requirement as the organisation grows.</li> </ol>	