



Strategic Objectives and Business Priorities

2011 – 2012

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2011-15

The high level objectives for the office maintain the focus on our 5 key strands of work.

Strategic objective 1: To provide a high quality, independent complaints handling service

By developing our capacity as complaints handlers to be able to deliver individual benefit to complainants who have suffered maladministration or service failure - by being accessible and dealing with all enquiries and complaints impartially, consistently, effectively, proportionately and in a timely manner; and by producing clear, accurate and influential decisions about complaints.

Strategic objective 2: To support public service improvement in Scotland

By continuing to raise informed awareness of the role of the SPSO and to feed back and capitalise on the learning from our consideration of individual enquiries and complaints, to work in partnership with public service deliverers, policy makers, scrutiny bodies and regulators to promote good administrative practice.

Strategic objective 3: To improve complaint handling by public service providers

By using our expertise and resources to monitor, promote and facilitate the sharing of best practice and supporting service providers in improving their complaints handling.

Strategic objective 4: To simplify the design and operation of the complaint handling system in Scottish public services

By working in partnership with service providers and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of simplified, standardised and user-focussed Complaints Handling Procedures across the public sector as an integral part of the wider administrative justice system in Scotland.

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.

BUSINESS PLAN KEY PRIORITIES 2011-12

1. Deliver an efficient and effective complaint handling service, working to stretching but achievable targets, continuously building quality and accessibility
2. Share strategic lessons from our casework with service providers and appropriate scrutiny bodies; ensure service providers implement SPSO recommendations; and use communications tools effectively to promote understanding of the SPSO
3. Through the Complaints Standards Authority and training and outreach activities, build and coordinate sectoral complaints handling networks and facilitate the sharing of good practice in complaints handling
4. Lead the simplification and standardisation of complaints handling by working in partnership to develop and implement model Complaints Handling Procedures (CHPs), based upon the SPSO Statement of Complaints Handling Principles and Guidance on a Model Complaints Handling Procedure, prioritising the local authority sector
5. Deliver operational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through clearly defined priorities, performance measures and resources that meet business needs, while supporting development of new areas of business

Strategic objective 1: To provide a high quality, independent complaint handling service

By developing our capacity as complaints handlers to be able to deliver individual benefit to complainants who have suffered maladministration or service failure - by being accessible and dealing with all enquiries and complaints impartially, consistently, effectively, proportionately and timely; and by producing clear, accurate and influential investigation and by producing clear, accurate and influential decisions about complaints.

Key Priority 1: Deliver an efficient and effective complaint handling service, working to stretching but achievable targets, continuously building quality and accessibility

a. Improve case handling times

- Handle complaints **efficiently** to meet relevant, stretching casework time targets to ensure timely decisions on cases
- **Re-direct premature** complaints speedily to relevant service providers
- Successfully integrate any **new areas of jurisdiction** to ensure a seamless transfer with no disruption to service

b. Improve quality of casework

- Develop **specialist knowledge sets** to ensure a requisite knowledge bank is available to support casework
- Ensure complaints team members have the requisite **skills and resources** to implement the complaints handling process
- Externally benchmark the **complaint handling process** to ensure it reflects best practice
- Evaluate the **quality assurance and service delivery complaints systems** to ensure they reflect best practice and support continuous improvement
- Evaluate systems and processes for obtaining **expert advice** (legal and jurisdictional) to ensure timeliness, quality and value for money.

c. Deliver an accessible, high quality service to all service users

- Ensure that SPSO incorporates best practice in making its service **accessible** to all users and shares learning about **equalities and diversity** issues

Strategic objective 2: To support public service improvement in Scotland

By continuing to raise informed awareness of the role of the SPSO and to feed back and capitalise on the learning from our consideration of individual enquiries and complaints, to work in partnership with public service deliverers, policy makers, scrutiny bodies and regulators to promote good administrative practice.

Key Priority 2: Share strategic lessons from our casework with service providers and appropriate scrutiny bodies; ensure service providers implement SPSO recommendations; and use communications tools effectively to promote understanding of the SPSO

a. Ensure strategic lessons from casework trends and findings are shared effectively with service providers and appropriate scrutiny and other bodies

- Design and implement an **engagement strategy** that identifies and supports BUJs where SPSO finds a high degree of service delivery or complaints handling failings relative to other, similar BUJs
- Develop commentary, annual report, annual letters and other **communication channels** to enhance feedback and support provided
- Issue **thematic reports** based on decision letters (as well as investigation reports) that draw attention to issues raised in complaints considered by SPSO
- Enhance how SPSO uses casework to contribute more effectively to **consultations, inquiries and other policy agenda matters**

b. Ensure service providers implement report recommendations

- Continue to support the development and implementation of systems to **capture case knowledge** and to track the **implementation of recommendations** by BUJs

c. Continue to promote informed awareness of the purpose, role and activities of the SPSO

- Continue to measure key stakeholders' satisfaction with its service
- Publish an **Annual Report** which informs and influences all stakeholders
- Review partnership arrangements such as **Memorandums of Understanding** to ensure effectiveness
- **Use communications tools**, especially IT, to improve understanding of the SPSO
- Enhance partnership working with **advocacy, consumer and voluntary groups** to support them in communicating the role of the SPSO to their clients
- Ensure **staff awareness** of SPSO's changing role, purpose and activities

Strategic objective 3: To improve complaints handling by public service providers

By using our expertise and resources to monitor, promote and facilitate the sharing of best practice and supporting service providers in improving their complaints handling.

Key Priority 3: Through the Complaints Standards Authority and training and outreach activities, build and coordinate sectoral complaints handling networks and facilitate the sharing of good practice in complaints handling

a. Build and coordinate networks

- Establish relationships with key bodies in each sector through which to **coordinate networks** that will support complaints handling practitioners, including through expanding the Valuing Complaints website

b. Facilitate sharing of good practice

- Continue to develop and quality assure the complaints handling **training unit service** for service providers, to develop their skills in frontline resolution and complaints investigation
- **Identify and promote good practice** in complaints handling and share that knowledge through the CSA, training and outreach activities, and on the Valuing Complaints website

Strategic objective 4: To simplify the design and operation of the complaints handling system in Scottish public services

By working in partnership with service providers and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of simplified, standardised and user-focussed Complaints Handling Procedures across the public sector as an integral part of the wider administrative justice system in Scotland.

Key Priority 4: Lead the simplification and standardisation of complaints handling by working in partnership to develop and implement model Complaints Handling Procedures (CHPs), based upon the SPSO Statement of Complaints Handling Principles and Guidance on a Model Complaints Handling Procedure, prioritising the local authority sector

a. Through the work of the Complaints Standards Authority:

- Promote awareness amongst all BUJs of the SPSO **Statement of Complaints Handling Principles**
- Identify partners in all sectors with which the CSA will progress the development of **model CHPs**; in the **local authority sector**, work with key stakeholders to facilitate the development and implementation of a model CHP; in other sectors, agree clear plans for the development and implementation of model CHPs
- Progress, with appropriate bodies such as Audit Scotland, Scottish Government and Consumer Focus Scotland, **research and analysis of the cost and volume** of public sector complaints handling prioritising the local authority sector
- With appropriate bodies, such as Audit Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator, develop a consistent method for **monitoring performance** against the model CHPs

b. Ensure a smooth transfer of new / potential jurisdiction complaints to SPSO

- Engage as appropriate with stakeholders on the proposed transfer of **water complaints** to SPSO
- Ensure a smooth transfer of prisons complaints about health issues to SPSO
- Work with the Government, SPCB and Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland (PCCS) on the Government's proposal to transfer the **PCCS functions** to SPSO
- Proactively support the Government in progressing their proposal for **reviewing social work complaints** including identifying and consulting on the key options

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.

Key Priority 5: Deliver operational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through clearly defined priorities, performance measures and resources that meet business needs, while supporting development of new areas of business

<p>a. Manage resources effectively to meet business needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and manage efficiency savings in line with SPCB and legislative requirements. • Maintain productivity levels in terms of the average number of cases closed / individual complaints reviewer per month and the number of cases carried forward at year end • Support new business developments in line with statutory obligations • Continue to explore shared service opportunities for efficiency savings where appropriate
<p>b. Improve operational efficiency through high quality business support services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure audit processes support continuous improvement and effective management of risks • Consult with stakeholders on the development of the strategic plan in line with statutory obligations • Ensure realistic corporate plans and performance targets are produced on a timely basis and monitored closely • Ensure ICT requirements are met for future needs, e.g., paperless office • Ensure quality and value for money for all services received
<p>c. Promote improvements in organisational performance and staff professional development through implementation of the learning and development plan</p>
<p>d. Continue to meet obligations and statutory duties in relation to risk, governance, health and safety, FOI/DPA requirements etc</p>