



Business Priorities

2012 – 2013

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2012-16

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 our customers; 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, for example, through thematic reports, and by working 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 support 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, regulators and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of and compliance with 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.

Equalities commitments

Our five equalities commitments form an integral part of the Strategic Plan. They are:

1. to take proactive steps to identify and reduce potential barriers to ensure that our service is accessible to all.
2. to identify common equality issues (explicit and implicit) within complaints brought to our office and feed back learning from such complaints to all stakeholders.
3. to ensure that we inform people who are taking forward a complaint of their rights and of any available support, and that we encourage public authorities to do the same.
4. to ensure that we play our part in ensuring that service providers understand their duties to promote equality within their complaints handling procedures.
5. to monitor the diversity of our workforce and supply chain and take positive steps where under-representation exists.

BUSINESS PLAN KEY PRIORITIES 2012-13

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.
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, user-focussed independent complaints handling service

By developing our capacity as complaints handlers to be able to deliver individual benefit to our customers; 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.

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

<p>a. Improve case handling times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle complaints efficiently to meet relevant, stretching casework time targets to ensure timely decisions on cases • Effectively provide advice to members of the public on how to progress their premature complaints • Successfully integrate or expand any new areas of jurisdiction to ensure a seamless transfer and effective ongoing resource with minimal disruption to service • Ensure effective signposting to relevant advisory and regulatory and support services as applicable
<p>b. Improve quality of casework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specialist knowledge sets to ensure a requisite knowledge bank is available to support casework • Monitor the complaints handling process to ensure it reflects best practice and ensure complaints team members have the requisite skills and resources to implement the complaints handling process • Monitor the quality assurance and service delivery complaints systems to ensure they reflect best practice and support continuous improvement • Effectively manage processes for obtaining expert advice (legal and jurisdictional) to ensure range of expertise, timeliness, quality and value for money
<p>c. Deliver an accessible, high quality service to all service users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that SPSO incorporates best practice in making its service accessible to all users and shares learning about equalities and diversity issues • Develop effective processes for managing expectations and building service users' understanding of our powers
<p>d. Ensure service providers implement report recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the development and implementation of systems to capture case knowledge and to track the implementation of recommendations by BUJs

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, for example, through thematic reports, and by working 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

<p>a. Ensure strategic lessons from casework trends and findings are shared effectively with service providers and appropriate scrutiny and other bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to 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
<p>b. Continue to promote informed awareness of the purpose, role and activities of the SPSO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to gather feedback from key stakeholders about their satisfaction with our 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 • Promote understanding of SPSO among councils and in Parliament to support them in communicating the role of the SPSO to their customers and constituents • Ensure staff awareness of SPSO's changing role, purpose and activities
<p>c. Identify common equality issues (explicit and implicit) within complaints brought to our office and feed back learning from such complaints to all stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and publish information about equalities issues

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 support 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.

<p>a. Support public services to achieve best practice through building, coordinating and supporting networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With key bodies in each sector build, coordinate and support networks of complaints handlers that will develop best practice, support complaints handling practitioners and provide a forum for complaints benchmarking, including through the Valuing Complaints website online community forum for complaints handlers.
<p>b. Promote good complaints handling by public service providers through the sharing of good practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Promote and further develop the Valuing Complaints website as a centre of best practice in complaints handling
<p>c. Promote good complaints handling by public service providers by developing and delivering training in complaints handling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the training unit service develop and deliver high quality training in complaints handling for service providers, to develop their skills in frontline resolution and complaints investigation

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, regulators and other key stakeholders to facilitate the development of and compliance with 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

a. Through the work of the Complaints Standards Authority:

- Promote awareness amongst all BUJs of the SPSO **Statement of Complaints Handling Principles and Guidance on a Model CHP**
- In all sectors work with key stakeholders to facilitate the development and implementation of a model CHP
- With appropriate regulatory bodies, including Audit Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator, develop a consistent method for **monitoring compliance and performance** against the model CHPs within existing regulatory structures, including through self-assessment
- Engage with the Care Inspectorate and other key stakeholders on issues raised by the integration of health and social care, including by promoting the SPSO model CHP guidance

b. Engage effectively to ensure SPSO involvement in proposed legislative changes relating to complaints

- Proactively engage with the Scottish Government on their review of **social work complaints**
- Proactively engage with **stakeholders** on the implications of the proposed **integration of health and social care** to ensure clarity and simplification of complaints processes from user perspective

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 • Ensure realistic corporate plans and performance targets are produced on a timely basis and monitored closely • Ensure ICT requirements are met for future needs, eg, 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, Equalities and diversity etc</p>