

## **Vision, Values, Strategic Objectives (2008-11) and Business Priorities 2010-11**

### **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.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2008-11**

Over the period our main aims are:

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.
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.
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.
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.
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 2010-11**

1. Deliver an efficient and effective complaint handling service, working to stretching targets, continuously building quality and accessibility
2. Promote improvement of frontline complaints handling through outreach and training activities
3. Share strategic lessons from our casework with service providers and appropriate scrutiny bodies, and ensure service providers implement SPSO recommendations
4. Lead the simplification of complaints handling across Scottish public services through introducing core principles and establishing SPSO as the Complaints Standards Authority
5. Deliver operational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through clearly defined priorities, performance measures and resources that meet business needs

**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 Priority 1:** Deliver an efficient and effective complaint handling service, working to stretching 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
- Ensure complaints team members have the requisite **skills and resources** to successfully implement the new complaints handling process
- Successfully integrate **new area of jurisdiction** (prisons complaints) to ensure a seamless transfer with no disruption to service

**b. Improve quality of casework**

- Review the **quality assurance & service delivery complaints systems** to ensure they are joined up, proportionate and support continuous improvement
- Review systems and processes for obtaining **expert advice** (legal and jurisdictional) to ensure timeliness, quality and value for money

**c. Deliver a consistently high quality of service to all service users**

- Provide a **quality of service** that meets SPSO's expressed organisational commitments and reflects SPSO's policies, procedures and practices
- Realise the perceived benefits of the new SPSO **Business Process** through effective implementation
- 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:**      **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 Priority 2:**              Promote improvement of frontline complaints handling through outreach and training activities

**a. Support improvement of frontline complaints handling by service providers**

- Deliver **outreach events** for service providers, focusing particularly on key principles of effective complaints handling and sharing the learning to inform improvement
- Continue to develop and quality assure the complaints handling **training service** for service providers on a cost recovery basis, to develop their skills and encourage early local resolution
- Promote increased ownership and greater understanding of **local complaints handling** responsibilities
- Continue to build and strengthen links with service providers and other stakeholders, including professional regulatory bodies, and oversee **cross-sectoral networking provisions**

**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 Priority 3:**                Share strategic lessons from our casework with service providers and appropriate scrutiny bodies, and ensure service providers implement SPSO recommendations

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

- Develop commentary, annual report, annual letters and other **communication channels** to enhance feedback provided
- Extend publication of SPSO investigatory work to include pre-investigation work and consider issuing **thematic reports**
- Deliver a strategy for improving 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

**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 Priority 4:**                Lead the simplification of complaints handling across Scottish public services through introducing core principles and establishing SPSO as the Complaints Standards Authority

**a. Establish SPSO Complaints Standards Authority**

- Consult on a set of **principles** as the basis for all public service complaints handling procedures and obtain Parliamentary approval
- In consultation with service providers and others, develop guidance on a **model complaints handling process**
- Engage with the **local authority sector** to develop a simplified, standardised model complaints handling procedures for the sector
- In conjunction with Audit Scotland and the Government develop a consistent method to capture **performance** against the complaints handling principles

**b. Ensure a smooth transfer of prisons complaints to SPSO and continue planning for the transfer of water complaints in July 2011**

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

- Improve how SPSO measures 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
- Ensure **staff awareness** of SPSO's changing role, purpose and activities

**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 Priority 5:**                Deliver operational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through clearly defined priorities, performance measures and resources that meet business needs

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| <p><b>a.    Manage resources effectively to meet business needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan and manage <b>efficiency savings</b> in line with SPCB and legislative requirements.</li><li>• Maintain <b>productivity</b> 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</li><li>• Continue to explore <b>shared service</b> opportunities for efficiency savings where appropriate</li></ul> |
| <p><b>b.    Improve operational efficiency through high quality business support services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure <b>audit</b> processes support continuous improvement and effective management of risks</li><li>• Ensure realistic <b>corporate and strategic plans and performance targets</b> are produced on a timely basis and monitored closely</li><li>• Ensure <b>ICT requirements</b> are met for future needs, e.g., paperless office</li></ul>                                  |
| <p><b>c.    Promote improvements in organisational performance and staff professional development through progress towards IIP</b></p>   |
| <p><b>d.    Continue to meet obligations and statutory duties in relation to risk, governance, health and safety, FOI/DPA requirements etc.</b></p>  |