

## SPSO Risk Appetite

### *General statement:*

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman recognises that assessing the level of risk it accepts will help the organisation achieve its aims of delivering beneficial outcomes to its stakeholders.

The SPSO aims to balance the methods it uses to control risks so it can both support innovation and the imaginative use of resources and continue to provide a best value public service. The SPSO will seek to control all probable risks which have the potential to:

- cause significant harm to service users, staff, visitors and other stakeholders;
- compromise severely the reputation of the organisation;
- have financial consequences that could endanger the organisation's viability;
- jeopardise significantly the organisation's ability to carry out its core purpose;
- threaten the organisation's compliance with law and regulation.

The organisation's current overall risk appetite is defined as **OPEN**. This means the SPSO will continue to encourage new thinking and invest in people, systems and processes that will enable the organisation to achieve continuous improvement in the quality and user-focus of our services.

### *Appetite for each Strategic Objective:*

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Appetite</b>	<b>Detailed statement</b>
1. To provide a high quality, user-focussed independent complaints handling service	Cautious	We will accept only low levels of risk that could undermine our provision of systems and processes that enable us to achieve continuous improvement in the quality and user-focus of our services.
2. To provide a high quality, user-focussed independent review service for Scottish Welfare Fund decisions	Cautious	We will accept only low levels of risk that could undermine our provision of this new service in an efficient and high-quality manner.
3. To simplify the design and operation of the complaints handling system in Scottish public services	Hungry	We will seek and implement innovative and pioneering approaches that improve the handling of complaints in Scottish public services
4. To improve complaints handling by public service providers	Hungry	We will encourage new thinking and ideas that could enable us to help service providers to improve their complaints handling.
5. To be an accountable, best value organisation	Moderate	We will accept only modest levels of risk as is reasonably possible in relation to our financial position and the probity of our governance arrangements
6. To support learning and improvement in public services	Hungry	We will seek and implement innovative and pioneering approaches to support learning and improvement by Scottish public services

*Descriptors:*

- AVOID** No appetite. Not prepared to accept any risks.
- AVERSE** Prepared to accept only the very lowest levels of risk, with the preference being for ultra-safe delivery options, while recognising that these will have little or no potential for reward/return.
- CAUTIOUS** Willing to accept some low risks, while maintaining an overall preference for safe delivery options despite the probability of these having mostly restricted potential for reward/return.
- MODERATE** Tending always towards exposure to only modest levels of risk in order to achieve acceptable, but possibly unambitious outcomes.
- OPEN** Prepared to consider all delivery options and select those with the highest probability of productive outcomes, even when there are elevated levels of associated risk.
- HUNGRY** Eager to seek original/creative/pioneering delivery options and to accept the associated substantial risk levels in order to secure successful outcomes and meaningful reward/return.