SPSO Scottish
Public
Services
Ombudsman

Business Objectives
& Performance Measures
2016–17

To be read in conjunction with our Strategic Plan 2016-20.
This document is supported by detailed operational plans**.**

Risk appetite

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

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 or reviews brought to our office and feed back learning from such cases to all stakeholders.
3.   To ensure that we inform people who are taking forward a complaint or review 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 and review procedures.
5.   To monitor the diversity of our workforce and supply chain, and take positive steps where under-representation exists.

Strategic Objective	Business Objectives	Goals	Measure
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. **Risk appetite: 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. **Measuring Performance through:** • Case handling time and age profile targets • Quality assurance measures for case handling and decision-making • Customer satisfaction measures • Tracking and reporting implementation of recommendations	**1a Efficiency - maintain case handling times** • 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 or bysignposting to relevant advisory and regulatory and support services as applicable	Meet performance indicator for measuring how quickly we establish whether a complaint is **suitable for us** and whether it has fully completed the complaints process of the organisation complained about.	**PI-1.1 Advice:** % of complaints will be closed after relevant advice or signposting given or progressed from **Advice** in 10 working days or less. *Target 95%*
		Meet performance indicator for measuring how quickly we establish whether we can examine a complaint under the SPSO Act, and where we see an opportunity for an **early resolution** of the complaint	**PI-1.2 Early Resolution:** % of complaints will be closed or progressed from **Early Resolution** in 70 working days or less *Target 95%*
		Meet performance indicator for measuring how quickly we **complete** all our investigations.	**PI-1.3 Investigations:** % of complaints at **Investigation** will be no later than 260 working days *Target 95%*
	1b Quality - maintain quality of casework • Monitor the quality assurance and service delivery systems to ensure they reflect best practice and support continuous improvement • 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 • Effectively manage processes for obtaining expert advice (legal and jurisdictional) to ensure range of expertise, timeliness, quality and value for money • Maintain and develop specialist knowledge sets to ensure a requisite knowledge bank is available to support casework	Meet performance indicator for measuring **case handling quality** by undertaking the QA process on time each quarter, reports prepared.	**PI-1.4 QA:** % cases each quarter are acceptable (decision is correct) *Target 95%*
		Meet performance indicator for measuring **decision-making quality**	**PI-1.5 Decision Reviews:** % of cases requested for review, decision is correct *Target 95%*

Strategic Objective	Business Objectives	Goals	Measure
Strategic objective 2: To provide a high quality, user-focussed independent review service for Scottish Welfare Fund decisions - by developing our capacity to manage reviews for the benefit of both applicants and local authorities by being accessible and dealing with all enquiries and applications impartially, consistently, effectively, proportionately and in a timely manner; and by producing clear, accurate and influential information about the outcomes of reviews. **Risk appetite: CAUTIOUS** We will accept only low levels of risk that could undermine our provision of this new service in an efficient and high-quality manne**r.** **Measuring Performance through:** • Developing an accessible service, attuned to the needs of people who may be vulnerable and in crisis • Case handling time • Quality assurance measures for case handling and decision-making • Analysing decision outcomes	**2a Service - deliver an accessible, high quality service to all service users** • Successfully develop and implement our capacity to manage and respond to applications for independent review of SWF decisions • Continuously assess, review and develop SWF process and guidance to ensure it enables us to provide an accessible, high quality service • Ensure SWF Review Team members have the requisite skills and resources to deliver a high quality service • Ensure that we incorporate best practice in making our service accessible to all users • Maintain effective processes for stakeholder engagement • Ensure effective signposting to relevant advisory and support services as applicable	Monitor, assess and review: a. SWF **service delivery, process and guidance**, and identify areas for improvement and development; and b. **accessibility** to identify improvements and ensure we are meeting the the needs of people who may be vulnerable and in crisis	**PI-2.1 SWF service** Strategy fully implemented *Target 100%*
	2b Quality - ensure quality of decisions and case handling • Monitor the quality of decisions through the quality assurance process to ensure they are consistent and robust • Continuously assess, review and develop SWF process and guidance to ensure it enables and supports good quality case handling • Develop and maintain specialist knowledge sets to ensure a requisite knowledge bank is available to support good decision-making	**Project**: Develop and implement QA framework and process **Project**: assess, review and develop SWF process and guidance **Project**: Develop and maintain specialist knowledge sets Meet performance indicator for measuring **decision-making quality**	**PI-2.2 Internal Reconsiderations**: % of cases requested for reconsideration, decision is correct *Target 95%*

	2c Efficiency – ensure we meet our commitment to case handling response times for Crisis (CG) • Handle applications efficiently to meet casework time targets to ensure timely decisions • Monitor and report performance	Meet performance indicators for measuring how quickly we **respond to applications** for review.	**PI-2.3 SWF Reviews** % of Crisis Grant applications will be responded to in **1 working day** from the point at which we have received all information. *Target 95%*
	2d Efficiency – ensure we meet our commitment to case handling response times for Community Care Grant (CCG) applications • Handle applications efficiently to meet casework time targets to ensure timely decisions • Monitor and report performance	Meet performance indicators for measuring how quickly we **respond to applications** for review.	**PI-2.4 SWF Reviews** % of Community Care Grant applications will be responded to within **21 working days** from the point at which we have received all information *Target 95%*
	2c Efficiency – ensure we meet our commitment to case handling response times for Crisis (CG)		**PI-2.3 SWF Reviews** % of Crisis Grant applications will be responded to in **1 working day** from the point at which we have received all

Strategic Objective	Business Objectives	Goals	Measure
Strategic objective 3: 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 continue to support and facilitate the development and operation 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. **Risk appetite: HUNGRY** We will seek and implement innovative and pioneering approaches that improve the handling of complaints in Scottish public services **Measuring Performance through:** • Monitoring and developing model CHPs for all sectors and continuing to support bodies to comply with them • Establishing compliance and performance-monitoring measures for all sectors	**3a Support good complaints handling, including through operation of a streamlined, standardised approach to complaints handling:** • Work with key stakeholders across health and social care to develop and publish model CHPs and associated products for both NHS Scotland and social work services • Support NHS Boards and other providers and local government through implementation of model CHPs and development of a positive valuing complaints culture focused on early resolution. • Continue to ensure compliance with model CHPs in all sectors, monitored and reported through relevant regulatory or sponsor bodies (Audit Scotland, Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Government (SG) and Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB)), within existing regulatory structures, including through self-assessment • Continue to provide support to public bodies and SPSO complaints handlers on good complaints handling, CHPs and wider CSA good practice through CSA outreach and responding to enquiries for advice, guidance and support.	Meet performance indicator to **support** all sectors in **operating** the implemented model CHPs for the relevant sectors through responding efficiently and effectively to BUJ contacts, through providing CSA outreach sessions and supporting networks **Project:** Develop, publish and support implementation of model CHPs and associated products for both NHS Scotland the social work Scotland Monitor compliance with model CHPs and feedback where improvements or failures are identified	**PI-3.1 BUJ contacts**: % responded to efficiently and effectively; including CSA outreach provided on request and assessment of CHP operation on basis of feedback obtained through networks *Target 100%*
	3b Support consistent and robust reporting of complaints handling performance across the public sector • Support sectors to co-ordinate, report and benchmark BUJ complaints handling performance information within existing network and regulatory structures, including through self-assessment • Work with network and regulatory bodies where failure to comply is identified	Meet performance indicator to support BUJs in all sectors, including through networks and key sector bodies, in **reporting and publishing** complaints information in line with CHP requirements, including the SPSO Performance Indicators for all sectors	**PI-3.2 CSA reporting: %** of each sector where SPSO **reporting requirements** are in place, including Performance Indicators *Target 100%*

	3c Engage effectively to ensure SPSO influence proposed legislative changes relating to complaints • Prepare the SPSO for changes to its remit on social work complaints and GIRFEC • Continue to proactively engage with SG and stakeholders on any further proposed arrangements for complaints around integration of health and social care to ensure clarity and simplification of complaints processes from user perspective • On the proposed addition of new SPSO jurisdictions or new areas of complaints handling, proactively engage with the Scottish Government, SPCB, and other stakeholders to influence the parliamentary process, legislation, regulations etc. to ensure the best outcome for users and to prepare the SPSO for the changes	Meet performance indicator to **engage with the SG, SPCB and relevant stakeholders** on potential new jurisdictions and play an active role in helping to develop new arrangements where appropriate, ensuring consistency with CSA principles, model CHPs and best practice arrangements In particular, prepare SPSO for further changes to its remit on social work complaints and GIRFEC	**PI-3.3 New jurisdictions:** % assurance that they are at the forefront of all decisions reached and changes relating to new jurisdictions or complaints handling arrangements

Strategic Objective	Business Objectives	Goals	Measure
Strategic objective 4: 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. **Risk appetite: HUNGRY** We will encourage new thinking and ideas that could enable us to help service providers to improve their complaints handling. **Measuring Performance through:** • With key partners, building networks of complaints handlers for all sectors • Developing key guidance and best practice documents • Developing the Valuing Complaints website as a platform for sharing best practice • Effectiveness of training provision	**4a Support public services to achieve best practice through supporting and encouraging sector ownership of networks** With key bodies in each sector support networks of complaints handlers that will develop and share best practice, support complaints handling practitioners and provide a forum for complaints benchmarking.	Continue to support networks as required to provide **benchmarking fora** for BUJs, i.e. key contributions from networks on SPSO performance measures, developing standardised categories of recording and sharing complaints handling best practice.	**PI-4.1 CH Networks: %** actively supported by Complaints Standards Authority in conjunction with key sector partners *Target 95%*
	4b Promote good complaints handling by public service providers through the sharing of good practice • 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	**Project**: Develop and share, in consultation with key selected stakeholder's, including networks; and publish **CSA self-assessment complaints improvement framework**	**PI-4.2 CH Framework:** developed and published on VC website Framework shared with key BUJs and regulators. *Target 95%*
	4c Promote good complaints handling by public service providers by developing and delivering training in complaints handling 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	Develop and provide further training unit courses as demand requires and resources permit.	**PI-4.3 New training courses** developed and available for delivery *Target 95%*

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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. **Risk appetite: 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. **Measuring Performance through:** • Audit findings • Financial performance measures • Staff satisfaction • The Investors in People Standard (IIP) • Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) • Workforce statistics • ICT performance information • Environmental impact assessments	**5a Manage resources effectively to meet business needs** • 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	Continue to plan and manage **efficiency savings** in line with SPCB and legislator requirements	**PI-5.1 Finance** % Budget to Actual Spend variance *Target 5%*
		Maintain **resourcing** levels in terms of the casework numbers per CR FTE	**PI-5.2 Work In Progress** Number of cases carried forward at year-end *Target Year-end* **WIP = xxx**
	5b Improve operational efficiency through high quality business support services • 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, for example, paperless office • Ensure quality and value for money for all services received	Continue to ensure realistic **strategic and operational plans and performance targets** are produced on a timely basis and monitored closely; in line with Public Service Improvement Framework, Best Value and Efficient Government Principles	**PI-5.3 Planning** **Plans produced**, self-assessment completed; targets agreed, for reporting against quarterly *Target 95%*
	5c Promote improvements in organisational performance and staff professional development through implementation of the learning and development plan	Meet performance indicator to conduct a **health and well-being** review and maintain employee health and well-being through good management practices	**PI-5.4 Staff absence** Measured by % lost days against public sector average *Target <PS average*
	5d Continue to meet obligations and statutory duties in relation to risk, governance, health and safety, FOI/DPA requirements, equalities and diversity etc.	Meet performance indicator to review and update the **climate change duties report** and strive to reduce carbon footprint, as measured by amount of CO2 Annual primary energy supply.	**PI-5.5 Primary Energy** Reduction in the use of Annual Primary Energy Supply *Target < 85.3 (2009)*

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Strategic objective 6: To support public service improvement - by continuing to raise informed awareness of SPSO's role; by supporting public service providers to improve outcomes for the public through their learning from SPSO enquiries, decisions and recommendations; and by working in partnership with public service providers, policy makers, scrutiny bodies and regulators to further those improvements. **Risk appetite: HUNGRY** We will seek and implement innovative and pioneering approaches to support learning and improvement by Scottish public services **Measuring Performance through:** • Meeting our stated commitments to raise awareness of our role and publicise learning from complaints • Ensuring strategic lessons are shared • Providing information about equalities in complaints we handle.	**6a Inform and engage effectively with SPSO's key stakeholders, in line with stakeholder engagement strategy:** • Promote key messages about SPSO's roles through monthly commentaries; the Annual Report; other communications tools such as websites; • Inform public bodies about their complaints with SPSO, emphasising their reporting and learning requirements under the CHPs, through Annual Letters and other tools • Establish effective forums for listening to and gathering consistent feedback from key stakeholders	Meet commitments for publishing written materials Use the findings of SPSO forums for listening to stakeholders such as sounding boards, surveys and other feedback mechanisms, to ensure that external information about SPSO takes into account and addresses the perceptions and experience of service users.	**PI-6.1 Timely and accurate publication of comms materials**
	6b Support BUJs to improve outcomes through learning from SPSO enquiries, complaints and recommendations **Improvement** • Analyse, develop and track recommendations for consistency and KM purposes • Identify and publicise good practice in CH; identify and address poor practice in CH; ensure that our recommendations support good CH **Engagement** • Track, monitor and address issues with BUJs in implementing recommendations and in SPSO interaction with them on live cases • Identify and engage with high volume generators of complaints to develop and support improvement initiatives that address identified systemic issues **Impact** • Enhance the effectiveness of BUJs in implementing recommendations so that repeat failings are reduced • Bring about change and assess the impact of these changes on service delivery.	Setup a learning and improvement unit that will: • further the efficiency and consistency of recommendations by developing tracking mechanisms and further internal guidance • reinforce the principles and guidance of model CHPs by identifying and acting on existing CH practice • develop criteria for identifying problematic recommendations, CH issues, and systemic failings, and develop mechanisms for addressing these • develop internal and external guidance and training tools on the different types of recommendations • support and advise BUJs to undertake their own analysis of implementation which demonstrates that they have weighed up relevant factors to make changes that will address the failings identified • conduct impact assessments to assess and improve quality of recommendations	**PI-6.2 LIU** Set-up a learning and improvement unit; three work streams achieve goals; further resourcing of unit secured

	6c Service - deliver an accessible, high quality service to all service users • Successfully integrate or expand any new areas of jurisdiction to ensure a seamless transfer and effective on-going resource with minimal disruption to service • Ensure that SPSO incorporates best practice in making its service accessible to all users and shares learning about equalities and diversity issues • Maintain effective processes for managing expectations and building service users' understanding of our powers	Meet performance indicator for measuring customers' experience of quality of **service delivery** that meets expressed organisational commitments, objectives and aspirations	**PI-6.3 Customer Service**: % customer service complaints not upheld or no decision reached of all customer service complaints closed at **Stages 1 & 2** *Target 70%*