

# SPSO NEWS

21 June 2017

This e-newsletter outlines our evolving approach to the way we make recommendations. It also highlights two of the 37 reports we are laying before parliament today and features updates from our Complaints Standards Authority, Training and Scottish Welfare Fund teams.

## Making recommendations matter

Our new approach to recommendations is the result of our work to increase their impact and effectiveness.

Redress for individual injustice is still at the heart of what we do. However, complaints frequently highlight wider issues from which organisations should be learning, developing and improving, to prevent the same thing happening again. That is why our new approach also focuses on better outcomes in relation to services as well as for individuals.

We expect organisations to share our findings to enable learning and improvement across the organisation, not just in specific localised settings. Key to this is embedding learning from complaints in governance structures to ensure recommendations are shared with the relevant internal and external decision-makers, for example elected members, board members, audit or quality assurance committees or clinical governance teams.

We are grateful to the organisations and members of our customer sounding board and customer forum who gave us feedback before we made this change. We expect this approach to evolve, so we would encourage organisations and complainants to continue to give us your feedback. Specifically:

**Organisations:** what were the challenges to implementation and how could we help overcome them?

**Complainants:** did the recommendations result in the outcomes you were expecting, in the timescales you were expecting?

Our Learning and Improvement team can be contacted at [liu@spsso.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:liu@spsso.gsi.gov.uk) and would be pleased to receive feedback on the new approach from anyone who has received recommendations in the past few months.

## Key points from today's reports

Our two full reports illustrate our new approach to recommendations. One complaint ([201601952](#)) was from the parents of a baby who died after a period of neurosurgical care. We found multiple failings in his care and treatment, and that communication between specialists and with the family should have been better. The other complaint ([201603725](#)) was from the wife of a man who had oesophageal cancer, where we found that there were too many priority streams for grading the urgency of endoscopies.

All of our published reports are available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/our-findings>.

# Complaints Standards Authority (CSA)

## Social work

This month's [CSA update](#) confirms that we have signed off nearly half of all authorities' complaints handling procedures (CHPs) as compliant with the model requirements. We are very encouraged by the positive approach authorities have taken to improving their procedures for social work services.

## Integrated health and social care

To support Integrated Joint Boards (IJBs) in developing their CHPs, we have provided a [template CHP](#), which must be adapted and adopted by 3 July 2017. We have been in touch with IJBs about these requirements, and are pleased with the progress towards adoption in time for the deadline.

If you have any queries about either the social work or IJB CHPs, please get in touch with us at [csa@spsso.org.uk](mailto:csa@spsso.org.uk).

## NHS

We have received positive feedback on the new model CHP, with several health boards telling us that the focus on early resolution and person-centred approach is working well. The Scottish Government have asked boards to confirm to them that they are meeting the requirements of the new procedure, and we are supporting this by ensuring that boards' procedures are fully compliant.

## Complaints Handling Networks

The [CSA update](#) details the recent meetings of the **local government** and **college** sector networks, and dates of the next meeting of the **higher education** network.

For all previous updates, and for more information about the networks and the CSA, visit our [Valuing Complaints website](#) or email [csa@spsso.org.uk](mailto:csa@spsso.org.uk).

## Training

We are holding open courses in complaint investigation skills in Edinburgh on 5 September and 28 November 2017. Please see our Valuing Complaints website for [further details and booking information](#).

## Scottish Welfare Fund

We will publish our first annual report on this area on 29 June. It will be available on [our website](#), along with statistics for 2016-17.

In May, we responded to 73 enquiries and made 55 decisions (35 crisis grants and 20 community care grants). Crisis grants represented 64% of the total caseload during the month, which is considerably higher than average (47% during 2016-17). We will monitor this to establish if this becomes a common theme. There are [examples of recent reviews](#) on our SWF website. This month we highlight cases where councils had not appropriately assessed applications from parents who care for their children for part of the week.

Next week, we will host meetings of our two sounding boards, for local authority and third sector stakeholders. We recently spoke at the Scottish Social Security Consortium. We would be happy to deliver similar presentations to relevant forums and organisations, so if you would like to discuss a visit from one of our team, [please get in touch](#).

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