

SPSO NEWS

August 2018

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- Training opportunities
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We are moving!

From the winter of 2018 SPSO's new home will be Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh. We wave a fond farewell to our offices in Melville Street, where we have been since we first opened our doors.

Walk-in visitors will still be welcome, and our Freepost address will remain the same.

We will be in touch with stakeholders, including organisations under our jurisdiction, over the coming weeks to discuss signposting to us. If you have any questions about this, please contact communications@spsso.org.uk.

Casework Decisions

This month we are publishing 55 reports about a range of sectors. [These are available on our website.](#)

36 of these cases are about the health sector; the rest being about a range of organisations and subjects.

We upheld 30 complaints in full or part, and made a total of 105 recommendations.

We are publishing two full investigation reports this month, both about the health sector. In case [201605960](#), we found that the Board delayed in providing treatment to a man for a fistula in his brain. We also identified failings around communication. In case [201701226](#), we found

that the medical and nursing care provided by the Board to a man following a hip replacement surgery was unreasonable.

In both cases we identified issues in properly maintaining documentation and recording decisions. Our recommendations about these included:

- Decisions should be clearly documented and communicated promptly to all parties involved. (201605960)
- Multi-disciplinary team process documentation and out-patient clinic discussions, including between a consultant and a patient, should be of a standard that provides a reasonable record of the discussion. Clinic discussions should include discussion of risks of procedures. (201605960)
- Theatre notes and prescription forms should be adequately completed. (201701226)
- Patient observations should be appropriately taken and charted. (201701226)

Positive Feedback

We recognise that valuable learning can come from sharing, and reflecting on, what goes well. This month we've seen some great examples of good practice (well done if you recognise it was you, or if you take the same approach!):

- An organisation who demonstrated good complaints handling by offering to meet with the complainant during our investigation and discuss their concerns, if the complainant wished to do so. This shows a positive approach to trying to resolve matters.
- A complaints team who progressed the complaint appropriately, arranged a meeting with the complainant and kept them updated on what was happening with their complaint. Communication is vital, and this shows a real commitment to keeping the complainant involved.
- Multiple instances where we fed-back to organisations that they had responded promptly to our enquiries and requests for information.

We give this feedback to organisations when we issue the decisions on their cases.

SPSO's Draft British Sign Language Plan

Our draft British Sign Language Plan is available [on our website](#) and we welcome any comments or feedback on it. The plan sets out the actions which the SPSO will take over the period 2018-2023 to improve access to information and services for BSL users.

The draft plan is available in both BSL and English, and we welcome feedback in any format until 14 September 2018.

Training

Our next open training course for the public sector is:

Complaint Investigation Skills on Wednesday 19 September at the Edinburgh Training and Conference Venue. [To find out more and book a place, please visit our website.](#)

Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) and new Independent National Whistleblowing Officer role news

We have been making final adjustments to the draft National Whistleblowing Standards, as we prepare to consult about them in September. We will be posting links to the draft Standards and the consultation documents on the SPSO website in early September, so keep a look out for these if you have an interest in that area.

For further information about the INWO function, and other news from the CSA, please [visit our website](#).

Scottish Welfare Fund

Communications and engagement

On 26 July 2018 we published our second annual report about the Scottish Welfare Fund Independent Review Service. The report highlighted the work of the SPSO's SWF team, and looked at councils' performance over 2017-18. Key points included:

- SPSO's SWF Independent Review Service exceeded all performance targets for timeliness and quality of service.
- We saw a 38.7% increase in the number of reviews coming to us in year – the 606 reviews we decided was the highest since the SWF began in 2013.

The full report is available to [read on our website](#).

As part of our on-going learning and improvement work we met recently with three councils to discuss their approach to quality assurance with respect to their decision-making. It is through work like this that we promote wider improvement in the delivery of the Scottish Welfare Fund. We are also in the initial stages of planning regional workshops for decision-makers towards the end of the calendar year.

SWF Statistics and reporting

During July 2018, the SWF team:

- responded to 59 enquiries
- made 58 decisions (29 community care grants and 29 crisis grants)
- signposted 38 people to other sources of assistance (which in all cases was their local council)
- recorded 101 findings, 21 of which caused us to disagree with the council's overall decision
- found the most common suggestion for improvement concerned councils' written communication with applicants.

As with last month, applicants told us they had difficulties getting through to their local council due to busy lines; or because they had no phone credit, and their local council did not have a Freephone number.

SWF Casework outcomes

In recent weeks we have observed some examples of applicants being signposted incorrectly. [Full case studies can be found on our Scottish Welfare Fund website.](#)

For further information contact:

Communications team

Tel: 0131 240 2990

Email: communications@spsso.org.uk

SPSO Advice

Tel: 0800 377 7330

Email: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk