

# SPSO NEWS

## April 2018

In this month's e-newsletter:

- learning from a public investigation report about a health board's failure to properly monitor and manage a man's diabetes following a leg amputation
- recommendations for learning and improvement from this month's casework decisions
- Putting People at the Heart of Public Services – SPSO's new strategic plan
- British Sign Language Plan – Open Event
- a Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) update
- news from our Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) team.

This month we are publishing 61 reports of complaints we investigated about a range of sectors. [These are available on our website](#).

### Casework decisions

Of the 61 cases we are publishing this month:

- 38 are about the health sector
- 14 are about local authorities
- we upheld, in full or part, 37 complaints
- we made recommendations in 34 cases

This month we are publishing one full investigation report ([201607746](#)) about a health board's treatment of a man with diabetes. We found a number of serious failings in the care and treatment provided to the complainant. The board has agreed to take a number of actions in order to improve services in the future, including:

- ensuring that patients who are deteriorating are not discharged from the high dependency unit without a clear plan in place
- making sure that staff have the appropriate level of skill and access to training and support regarding sepsis, diabetes management, respiratory rate and other topics.

## Learning and Improvement

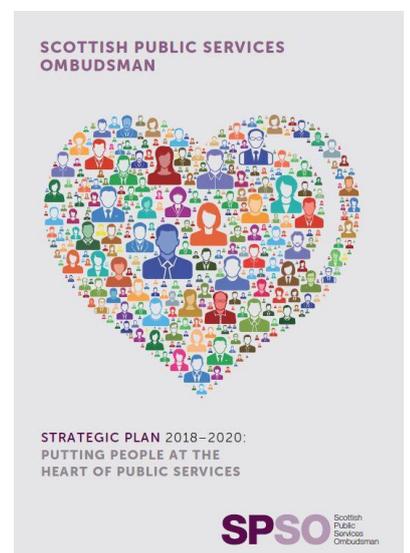
We recognise that complaints can be a valuable source of learning for Scottish public services. In addition to making recommendations about putting things right for people, we identify opportunities for learning and improvement and make recommendations about them. These are outcome focussed and aim to improve the provision of public services in Scotland. We made 41 such recommendations in the cases we are publishing this month. A theme running through these cases is the need for further training and support in organisations. Examples include:

- [Case 201606959](#) - staff should be aware of the importance of communication with patients and their families. Newly appointed staff should be supported and mentored in this regard and provided with appropriate training.
- [Case 201609128](#) - the GP involved should refer themselves to NHS Grampian's clinical support group for review of their knowledge and practice in relation to clinical assessment, prescribing and referral guidelines.
- [Case 201607263](#) – the board should identify any training needs to ensure staff fully understand the legislation and guidance around the treatment time guarantee, and its application.

## Putting People at the Heart of Public Services

SPSO recently laid a revised strategic plan for 2018-2020 before the Scottish Parliament. The plan is called 'Putting People at the Heart of Public Services' and it sets out the Ombudsman's vision for the delivery of her functions, focusing on people and public sector improvement. SPSO is innovative and world-leading in our approach to complaints, reviews and standards, and this revised strategic plan lays out the values of the organisation and strategic goals for the next two years.

[The plan is now available to read in full on our website.](#)



## British Sign Language Plan – Open Event

This year, SPSO is required to write and publish a British Sign Language action plan setting out how we will make our service more accessible to BSL users. We will be attending an open event for BSL users at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on Saturday 19 May from 10am – 1pm. This will be a drop in event, and representatives from the Scottish Information Commissioner, the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, the Standards Commission, the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission will also be there. On the day you can find out more about our BSL plan, give us your views on what should be included in the plan and find out more about what each of the officeholders does. BSL interpreting will be provided, and BSL tours of the Parliament will be arranged. For further information, please contact the Scottish Parliament on 0800 092 7500 (calls are welcome through Text Relay or in BSL through [ContactScotland-BSL](#)) or [via email](#).

## Complaints Standards Authority

[The latest CSA update includes:](#)

- an update on stakeholder engagement activity
- information about complaints handling resources
- progress in our work to develop Whistleblowing Standards for the NHS in Scotland
- details of recent and future complaint handlers' network meetings.

## Scottish Welfare Fund

### Communications and engagement

We have recently piloted a new approach to gathering feedback from applicants, which involved carrying out telephone surveys within the review process. We plan to analyse the information we gather to help us review and improve our service.

This month we are also due to hold our local authority sounding board where we will discuss key findings, share learning and offer an opportunity for councils to provide feedback.

## Statistics and reporting

During March 2018 the SWF team:

- responded to 62 enquiries
- made 53 decisions (26 community care grants and 27 crisis grants).

The highest number of enquiries were made from applicants living in Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway and Aberdeenshire councils.

## Casework outcomes

In recent weeks and months, we have determined a number of cases where councils have refused crisis grant applications because they have assessed applicants' circumstances are on-going; and crisis grants are intended to provide one off or occasional assistance. [Full information about these can be found on our Scottish Welfare Fund website.](#)

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