

News | November 2025

SPSO Shortlisted for Policy into Practice Award

We are delighted to announce that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has been shortlisted for the Policy into Practice Award at the Scottish Public Service Awards 2025!

This award celebrates projects that turn public policy into real impact for citizens.

Our Spotlight Report on the Scottish Welfare Fund's High Most Compelling (HMC) Priority Rating found fundamental inconsistencies with the way the fund was being delivered locally, negatively affecting some of the most vulnerable people in society.

By sharing these findings and real-life case studies, we brought the human impact to policymakers' attention. Following publication, the Scottish Government awarded £20 million in additional funding to local authorities.

Huge congratulations to our SWF team!

[Read our Spotlight Report on the Scottish Welfare Fund's HMC Priority Rating](#)

SPSO Conference: Last chance to buy tickets!

Our SPSO Conference is just two days away - Wednesday 19 November 2025. Don't miss your chance to join us!

This year's theme, 'From Complaint to Impact' explores the journey of how complaints can drive better outcomes and meaningful change for service users and service providers.

💡 Here is what to expect:

- Keynote from CEO of Citizens Advice Edinburgh, on service user perspectives
- Honest conversations about public sector pressures and their impact
- Focus on staff wellbeing and support for front line complaints teams

- Practical workshops for managing challenging conversations and tools for respectful engagement
- Future-focused session on using data insights and AI to improve services

We would love to see you there.

[Read the agenda](#)

[Book your conference ticket](#)

Our findings

Public service complaints

This month, the Ombudsman published nine decision reports and made 23 recommendations to public bodies. All nine cases were either fully or partially upheld.

[Read more about our findings](#)

In response to a recent increase in enquiries from complainants who feel their complaint has stalled or they are not being kept up to date, we have produced new guidance: [Difficulties and delays in the complaints process guidance](#).

This guide provides clear, practical steps members of the public can take to stay informed and navigate the process effectively.

Scottish Welfare Fund reviews

Last month, we made 45 decisions, 5 on community care grants and 40 on crisis grants.

We also launched a new project to explore how insights from SWF data can support learning and drive improvement.

[Read more in our Scottish Welfare Fund update and case studies](#)

SPSO training

Complaints Investigation Skills

Do you handle complaints in your organisation? Want to improve your investigation skills and ensure fair, thorough outcomes?

Book a spot on our Complaints Investigation Skills course

This interactive SPSO trainer-led course equips you with the knowledge to conduct robust investigations, ask the right questions, assess evidence, and make informed decisions.

The course costs £100 pp and lasts around 5 hours.

Next training slots:

- Monday 1 December 2025 - **SOLD OUT**
- Tuesday 2 December 2025 - **limited spaces – book now!**
- Tuesday 3 March 2025
- Wednesday 4 March 2025

[Book now](#)

Good Complaints Handling

Our Good Complaints Handling training has been refreshed following the publication of our updated [Statement of Complaints Handling Principles](#).

This training is a self-guided course aimed at staff handling complaints at stage 1 of the [Model Complaints Handling Procedure \(MCHP\)](#) but would be useful for anyone involved in complaints handling looking to develop their knowledge.

The course costs £50 pp and takes around 45 minutes to complete.

[Book now](#)