
News | October 2025

A word from the new Ombudsman

It is a real privilege to introduce myself as the new Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

In my first few days, I've been getting to know the dedicated team here at the SPSO. I am joining at a time of significant challenge and opportunity for public services in Scotland.

I am committed to delivering a service that is independent, accessible, and impactful, which helps ensure high standards across our public services.

With record numbers of people seeking our help and a shifting public sector landscape, my priorities are:

- identifying innovative ways to develop our service and meet accelerating demand
- maximising our impact using the insights we hold, as public services seek to change, develop and improve their delivery
- ensuring we continue to deliver fair and timely outcomes for all

In the short term, I am focused on listening to stakeholders and to those who use or rely on our service, to understand their expectations. Effective, collaborative, and constructive relationships will be key.

Finally, for those attending our conference in November – I look forward to saying hello in person.

Paul McFadden, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Last chance to be part of the SPSO Conference!

From Complaint to Impact: The journey of improving outcomes for service users.

Join us on Wednesday 19 November 2025 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre!

We are thrilled to welcome a fantastic speaker line-up:

- **Benjamin Napier** (Citizens Advice Edinburgh) opens with a powerful keynote understanding service user experiences and hearing the voice of the complainant
- **Nikki Bridle** (Clackmannanshire Council) joins our own **Dorothy Armstrong** to explore the ripple effects of public sector cuts on complainant behaviour, complaints themselves, and the people who handle them.
- **Jeremy Darot** (Scottish Government) chairs our afternoon panel on how insights from complaints are shaping service improvements, opportunities for using AI and driving cultural change. He is joined by **Amy Walker** (NHS Forth Valley) and **Kevin Roy** (Scottish Water).

The conference also marks the first major public engagement of our new Ombudsman, **Paul McFadden**. Hear directly from Paul about his perspective on the public sector landscape and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Tickets - £195 – final chance to book!

[Read the agenda](#)

[Book your ticket](#)

Public service complaint findings

This month, the Ombudsman published 11 decision reports and made 34 recommendations to public bodies. Ten of these cases were either fully or partially upheld.

[Read more about our findings](#)

Scottish Welfare Fund reviews

Last month, we made 50 decisions, 12 on community care grants and 38 on crisis grants.

Of these, 67% of community care grants were upheld and 26% of crisis grants were upheld.

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