

SPSO NEWS

September 2018

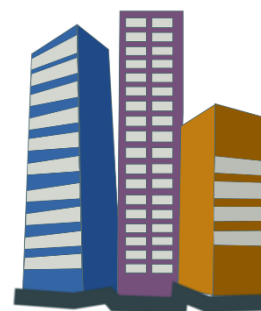
In this month's e-newsletter:

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We are moving!

From the winter of 2018 SPSO's new home will be Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS. Visitors are still welcome, and our Freepost address won't change. [You can find our new address on Google Maps.](#)

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



2017-18 Annual Report

Today we are publishing our Annual Report for the year 2017-18. The Ombudsman, Rosemary Agnew, is delighted to report a strong performance and the office's many significant achievements over the year. These included: clearing our backlog of cases, laying our new strategic plan before Parliament, issuing our report "Making Complaints Work for Everyone" and positive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. 2017-18 also saw us achieve a major milestone, with the NHS being the final sector to implement model complaint handling procedures. This means all Scottish public services now take the same, two-stage approach to complaints handling.

You can find the full [Annual Report on our website.](#)

Casework Decisions

This month we are publishing 69 reports of our casework decisions. [These are available on our website.](#)

55 of these are about the health sector; 14 about a range of organisations and subjects.

We upheld 38 complaints in full or part, and made a total of 113 recommendations.

We are publishing one full investigation report this month. In case [201702337](#) we identified serious failings in the care and treatment provided to a man whilst he was in the Enhanced Recovery Area at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, as well as issues around communication with the man's family. We made a number of recommendations, including:

- Patients in the Enhanced Recovery Area should receive appropriately regular senior review to ensure proactive care. This should be documented appropriately.
- Communication with patients and/or families should be proactive and when a consultation with the medical team is requested, this should be facilitated at a senior level.
- Monitoring and observation of patients should be carried out in line with the relevant guidance.

Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO)

update

We continue to gather feedback on the draft Whistleblowing Standards, and our proposed approach, to better understand how we can support Boards and other NHS service providers with implementation over the coming months.

Our consultation on the draft National Whistleblowing Standards should be going live in the next few weeks. We will be posting all the relevant information on the SPSO website, and welcome responses from anyone with an interest.

You can find further details on our recent INWO work on [our website.](#)

Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) news

Since the end of August we met with the Universities, Local Government and College networks. A date for the next Housing network meeting will be confirmed in due course.

Over the coming months, we will begin to review the model Complaint Handling Procedures (CHPs) to ensure that they all reflect good practice and consistency in approach, while maintaining necessary sector specific differences. The first stage of this process will be to seek comments from all sectors around areas of the model CHPs that they feel require updating and/or further clarification. We look forward to working with our colleagues from public bodies on this and will provide regular updates.

You will find further information on the CSA's work on [our website.](#)

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) updates

August 2018 was the busiest month for our SWF team since the service began in April 2016. In August we:

- responded to 82 enquiries
- made 72 decisions (27 community care grants and 45 crisis grants).

We signposted 49 people to other sources of assistance, which in all cases was their local council. While many applicants told us that they simply called us in error; some told us they were calling because they had no credit and their local council didn't have a Freephone number.

We recorded two examples of applicants who had tried to make a new application to their local council but were instead advised to apply for an independent review of a previous application. It is important that applicants are not prevented from making a new application, even if there is limited chance of success based on previous applications. This is because if no application is taken, the applicant will not receive a decision and so cannot ask for a review of the decision. A true representation of the number of crisis situations faced will also not be captured.

SWF Communications and engagement

In August we held our local authority sounding board where we discussed our recent findings and gathered feedback from attendees. We also talked through some examples of cases where it was necessary for us to consider whether the assistance sought was excluded from SWF, on the basis of fulfilling a medical function.

Following a successful pilot at the start of the year, we shared our new approach to gathering user feedback. This involves contacting applicants by telephone at three points during the review process. Our aim is to gather more meaningful feedback, which is less likely to be influenced by the outcome of the review.

SWF Casework outcomes

In recent weeks we determined a number of cases where applicants had made a new application within 28 days of a previous application. In such cases, it is necessary to consider whether there has been a relevant change in circumstances since the previous application because if not, councils do not need to assess the application beyond stage one of the decision making process. [For full details of these cases, please see our SWF website.](#)

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