

# Customer and public bodies surveys report 2019–20



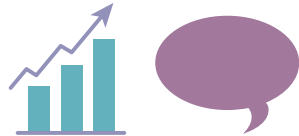
## Executive summary

We analysed feedback from...



complainants and public bodies

Using both...



quantitative and qualitative data

We identified two key areas for improvement...



offer a clearer explanation for our decisions and for the recommendations that we make to address the impact of any failings

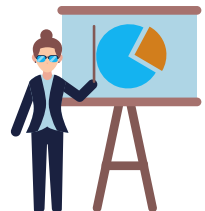


how and when we communicate the likely timescales of our assessment and investigation of complaints and how and when we provide updates on progress

## Expertise

# 45%

of public bodies selected 'neither agree nor disagree' when asked about the standard of professional advice and knowledge of complaints reviewers



# Clarity | Timeliness | Keeping you informed | Transparency

Main source of dissatisfaction across these service standards relates to the length of investigations and how we communicate expected timescales



Early phone contact is key, as we can explain our service and update on estimated timescales



Some public bodies highlighted the difference in SPSO timescales to the ones set out in the CHP

## Recommendations

- Provide public bodies with more detailed information about our process and what to expect when we receive a complaint about them
- Investigate and make improvements to how information is shared electronically with public bodies
- Pending allocations working group to consider/improve communication of delay
- QA of casework to check that regular updates are given, in particular to public bodies
- Standards team to consider how to communicate the difference in SPSO consideration times and public body CHP timescales

## Handling of information

We recently invested in software to improve the secure/bulk transfer of information



No significant concerns were raised about how we handle and share information



# Explaining our scope | Impartiality and independence

## 72%

of complainant responses felt that SPSO staff explained the role of the Ombudsman to them

Significant decrease in satisfaction from public bodies in relation to impartiality and independence, but the reasons for this were unclear



## Recommendations

- Improve links with advocacy agencies to better promote their services and explain their role vs. our role
- Develop SPSO staff understanding on the difference between advocacy and advice
- Improve our communication with authorities to emphasise that it is for SPSO staff, acting with the delegated authority of the Ombudsman, to make decisions on complaints, not advisers

# Fairness | Reaching sound outcomes

The majority of complainants believe we reach sound outcomes however there was a decline in satisfaction levels from last year

Provisional decisions were a significant and welcome change in process aimed at improving fairness



## Recommendations

- QA casework to ensure decisions are explained clearly, are evidence-based, and recommendations are appropriate
- Complaints Reviewers to be reminded to inform public bodies when recommendations have been met



# Understanding

We continue to be driven by our values of learning and improvement. This has included:

- Holding an information event for advocates and advisors
- Developing a specific page for advocates on our website
- Developing the web complaint form



Satisfaction levels remain higher than three years ago

## Recommendations

Continue to trial improvements to the wording and formatting of our web complaint form to perfect this and subsequently make changes to our paper complaint form

# Accessibility | Respect and dignity

General decrease in satisfaction levels



Our Inclusion Diversity Equality and Accessibility group have produced vulnerabilities guidance and updated communication materials



## Recommendations

- Produce a list of support organisations that staff can signpost to
- Remind Complaint Reviewers of importance of early phone contact and QA of compliance
- Develop SPSO Inclusion Diversity Equality and Accessibility Strategy
- Review impact of new vulnerabilities guidance and share best practice