



Biodiversity Report 2015 - 2017

1. Introduction

1.1. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has a wide remit, covering a variety of functions and services. Her powers and duties come from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 which gives her three distinct areas of statutory functions:

- The final stage for complaints about most devolved public services in Scotland including councils, the health service, prisons, water and sewerage providers, Scottish Government, universities and colleges.
- Specific powers and responsibilities to publish complaints handling procedures, and to monitor and support best practice in complaints handling.
- Independent Review Service for the Scottish Welfare Fund with the power to overturn and substitute decisions made by councils on Community Care and Crisis Grant applications.

1.2. All of the SPSO's services are free and independent.

1.3. The Ombudsman is committed to supporting the Scottish Government's policies on environmental and sustainable development and understands her obligation to publish a biodiversity report. As an office-based organisation, the SPSO's main contribution to the conservation of biodiversity is through the efficient use of resources and a sustainable approach to procurement.

2. Actions taken and mainstreaming

2.1. The main functions of the SPSO are carried out from a single location in central Edinburgh. Each department within the office is supplied with recycling outlets and encouraged to use them. We run a 'wash it and squash it' campaign to reduce waste volume and have 'switch it off' labels on light switches and monitors, along with censored lighting installed where possible within the building. An annual energy efficiency audit is carried out (along with ad hoc checks) to effectively remind staff to switch off computers and monitors.

- 2.2. A climate change working group was introduced during 2016/17, made up of staff representatives across the organisation. The group aims to share best practice, think creatively about sustainability opportunities and lead on new green initiatives. Notably, with encouragement from colleagues in the climate change working group, staff made a variety of pledges to support Climate Week during 2017. Pledges included individual commitments to cut down on food packaging, take food waste home to compost and to upgrade all lightbulbs at home to energy saving versions.
- 2.3. Our Travel and Expenses Policy encourages staff to travel on public transport wherever possible for work related business. In order to encourage bike travel, the SPSO also offer a bicycle and safety equipment loan, alongside shower facilities and secure bike storage.

3. Working in partnership and communications

- 3.1. The SPSO works with a stationery supplier who is accredited to the ISO14001 international standard for environmental management systems. The paper we use in the office is recycled. We also work with Changeworks Recycling who have won awards for environmental best practice.
- 3.2. During the reporting period we hosted a session for staff with the Energy Savings Trust, who presented on the benefits and practicalities of owning an electric vehicle and brought an electric car in to offer demonstrations.
- 3.3. The Ombudsman publishes a Climate Change Duties Report on an annual basis that provides specific detail on her office's wider environmental sustainability efforts. These can be found on the SPSO website here: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/sustainability-reports>

4. Aims for the future

- 4.1. The SPSO will be moving offices during 2018. This presents a significant opportunity for us to introduce new initiatives to further improve the sustainability of the organisation. This will be a significant focus for the coming year.