

2018-19 Q1 Customer Service Complaints Report

From: **John Stevenson, Head of Improvement Standards and Engagement**
 To: **SPSO Leadership Team**
 Date: **July 2018 (Presented October 2018)**

Purpose

1. This report has been prepared to provide a summary of Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) received and responded to by the SPSO during Quarter 1 (Q1) of the year 2018-19. Where appropriate the report seeks to provide a summary of outcomes, trends and actions taken as a result of these complaints including key learning points for SPSO in relation to service improvement.
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Reporting customer service complaints

2. Details of all CSCs are recorded (on WorkPro) and we publish on a quarterly basis the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. The CSCs we received are analysed for trend information to ensure that, where possible, we identify areas where our service could improve and take appropriate action.
 3. We publish this report on a quarterly basis to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. This includes statistics showing the volumes and types of complaints and key performance details, including the time taken and the stage at which complaints were resolved.
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Q1 statistics for customer service complaints

Received & closed

4. Table 1 provides a breakdown of complaints received and closed

Summary	<i>Received</i>	<i>Closed</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	10	11
Stage 2 - Investigation	2	3
Escalated Complaints (escalated from stage 1 to stage 2)	2	2
Total	14	16

5. Where a difference exists in the number of cases received in the quarter and the number of cases closed in the quarter, this is due to cases received in an earlier quarter being closed in Q1.

Upheld/Not upheld

6. Table 2 provides a breakdown of complaints upheld and not upheld

Summary	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% upheld</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	1	10	11	10%
Stage 2 - Investigation	1	2	3	33%
Escalated Complaints	1	1	2	50%
Total	3	13	16	

Timescales

7. The timescales to close complaints are:

- 5 working days at stage 1
- 20 working days at stage 2
- 20 working days for 'escalated complaints.

Table 3 provides illustrates our performance in relation to timescales.

Timescales	<i>Met timescale (cases)</i>	<i>Did not meet timescale (cases)</i>	<i>Total number of working days</i>	<i>Average time in working days to close</i>
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	8	3	59	5.4
Stage 2 - Investigation	2	1	74	24.7
Escalated Complaints	1	1	51	25.5
Total	11	5		

8. Performance in handling Stage 2 and escalated complaints has been impacted as a result of a resource shortfall during the quarter.

Summary of complaints outcomes and service failures

9. In Q1 we (partially) upheld heads of complaint in 3 cases. For clarity, some, but not all of the service issues that were investigated, were upheld.

Case 1 - 201700130

10. We upheld a complaint in relation to the Customer Service Standard of 'Understanding' as we did not properly or adequately demonstrate that we understand the complaint. While our initial advice on the complaint was appropriate, and we attempted to manage the customer's

expectations of our investigations scope, following the investigation it was agreed that, from the customer's perspective, we could have better demonstrated that we understood the complaint. We could also have been clear about the extent to which our legislation allowed us to look at the issues the complainant wanted us to.

11. We also upheld a complaint in case 1 in relation to the Customer Service Standard of 'Timeliness'. We did not deal with the complaint in a timely manner as it took almost four months for us to begin active consideration of the complaint and this was considered to be not acceptable. This was as a result of the 'holding bay' that was in place at the time, but was no longer an issue as the holding bay had been eliminated at the time the decision on the service complaint was reached.
12. An apology was provided to the customer, and appropriate staff were advised of the outcome with a view to learning and improvement.

Case 2 - 201708583

13. We upheld a complaint in relation to the Customer Service Standard of 'Keeping you informed'. The customer complained about the acknowledgement of correspondence. While the investigation found that we responded to correspondence promptly, we did not explain to the customer why their letters had been treated as service complaints and we failed to provide more details about our process for considering service complaints. We apologised to the customer for this omission.

Case 3 - 201708065

14. We upheld a complaint in this case in relation to the Customer Service Standard of Timeliness. There was an avoidable delay in contacting customer to discuss complaint. We apologised for this, and for providing an incorrect 'out of office' response from the complaints reviewer we provided an apology and fed back to appropriate staff.

Independent Customer Complaints Reviewer (ICCR)

15. During Q1 the ICCR closed 3 cases. None were upheld.
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Next steps

16. This report has been prepared to update the Leadership Team, the Casework Performance Meeting and the Service Improvement Group. Its findings are also shared with staff and made available online.