

## March 2023

In this month's e-newsletter:

- Our findings
  - Public service complaints
  - Scottish Welfare Fund reviews
- NHS good complaint handling practice guide
- SPSO training courses

## Our findings

### Public service complaints

This month we

- published 16 decision reports available [here](#)
- upheld seven complaints in full or part
- made 19 recommendations for learning and improvement

### *Decision reports: learning points*

This month we are publishing a number of reports relating to COVID-19:

- [202106072](#) – we found that the GP practice failed to provide a patient with reasonable care and treatment after they presented with haemoptysis (coughing up blood). The practice felt the patient likely had COVID-19 and advised them to self-isolate for 10 days. They were later admitted to hospital and diagnosed with bacterial pneumonia.

During our investigation the practice reflected on the complaint and accepted that haemoptysis merited further clinical consideration and assessment. We asked the practice to apologise to the patient for failing to offer them a face-to-face appointment but did not make any further recommendations given the appropriate action the practice had already taken to learn and improve.

[Further reports can be found on our website.](#)

## Scottish Welfare Fund reviews

### Statistics

During February we

- responded to 94 enquiries
- made 79 decisions
  - 18 community care grants
  - 59 crisis grants
  - 2 self-isolation support grants
- upheld 61% of community care grants, 12% of crisis grants and 50% of self-isolation support grants
- signposted an additional 155 applicants to other sources of assistance. More than 77% of these were calling us instead of their local council in error, with some unable to contact their council as no Freephone number was in place
- received 13 calls from councils seeking advice.

### Stakeholder engagement

On 8 March 2023 we welcomed representatives from local authorities and the Scottish Government to our twice-yearly (SWF) Local Authority Sounding Board. We provided an update on themes arising from casework in recent months; an overview of actions taken as part of our [Support and Intervention Policy](#) and an outline of our training plan for the coming year. Last month, we delivered two bespoke training sessions to a local authority to support enhancing the quality of decision making.



### Case studies

We regularly update the [searchable directory on our website](#) with sample cases to share learning from our findings. Follow the link to find out more!

---



We recently launched a good practice guide for NHS complaints handlers. The guidance takes account of the changes made in the revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for other sectors, which were implemented in April 2021. While this guidance is not statutory, it is intended to support NHS staff to handle complaints in line with current good practice and we encourage you to share this guide with your NHS colleagues across primary and secondary care.

You can view and download the [NHS good practice guide](#) from our website.

---

## SPSO training courses

We recently launched two online training courses: **Good Complaints Handling** and **Complaints Investigation Skills**.

- Our **Good Complaints Handling** course is aimed at frontline staff who handle complaints at **stage 1** of the MCHP but is also useful for anyone looking to develop their complaints handling knowledge. This self-guided course covers
  - what a complaint is and is not, according to the MCHP
  - complaint outcomes, responses and record-keeping
  - good apologies
  - managing difficult behaviour
- Our **Complaints Investigation Skills** course is aimed at staff who investigate complaints at **stage 2** of the MCHP. This course is trainer led and covers
  - preparing to investigate

- the investigation
- making and communicating the decision

More information, including how to book, is available from our [training webpage!](#)

---

For further information contact:

**Communications team**

Tel: 0131 240 2990

Email: [communications@spsso.gov.scot](mailto:communications@spsso.gov.scot)

**Assessment and Guidance team**

Tel: 0800 377 733

Email: [www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)

