

2018/19 Staff Survey Feedback Report

Survey background and purpose



- We are committed to running a staff survey **annually** and this will be the fifth consecutive survey. This allows us to regularly monitor engagement levels, benchmark against internal and external comparators and work towards continuous improvement of our people management practices.
- The staff survey provides a regular, formal opportunity for people to **express their views anonymously**, on a range of working and HR practices over and above other established methods of feedback that are part of our everyday work such as one to ones, team meetings, performance reviews and through working groups and consultations.
- The staff survey sits alongside our commitment to maintaining **our Investors In People (IIP) status**, and the questions asked in the survey have been chosen to mirror those asked through the formal IIP questionnaire process. We also ask some questions on staff engagement related particular areas of our work, culture and environment.
- Both our survey and the IIP accreditation process provide us with key information on **engagement and satisfaction** in the office and we use the feedback to drive continuous improvement and form the basis of an **action plan to target areas for improvement**.
- This report sets out the findings of the 2018/19 survey along with a benchmark against our last survey and publicly available surveys from other relevant organisations.



Setting the scene – Approach and methodology

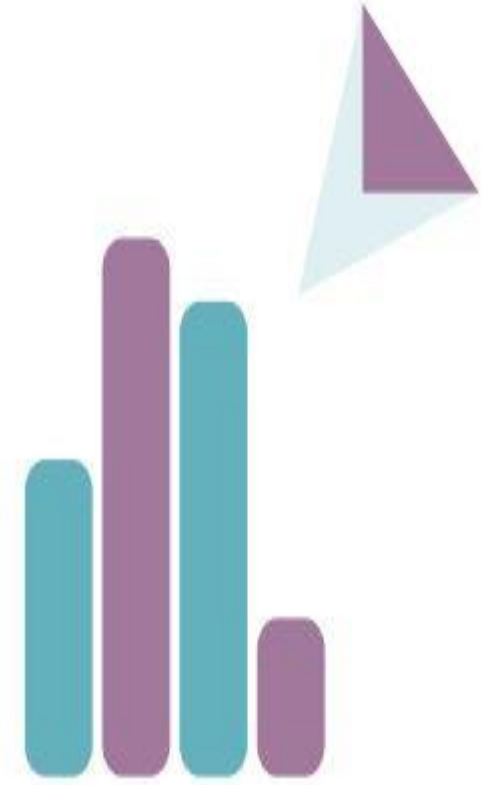


- As with previous surveys, an **online questionnaire approach** was used, **using the same questions** as asked previously in order to be able to benchmark response.
- We made some changes to the questions this year, including:
 - a new question about internal communications (Your job);
 - several new questions recommended by IIP to explore staff engagement around health and wellbeing (Work-life balance);
 - several new questions recommended by IIP to consider staff engagement in SPSO's values (Perceptions of SPSO); and
 - a new section of questions to evaluate engagement around Corporate Social Responsibility at SPSO.
- The 2018-19 survey was conducted over a **three week period** from 1 April 2019, during which time reminder emails were sent at weekly intervals.
- There were **10 survey themes** consisting of 81 statements on which people are asked to rate their level of agreement (Likert scale) with open comments available under each theme.
- We continued to include **six different response options** (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable) based upon feedback in previous years that indicated that people had selected neither agree nor disagree because there was no 'not applicable' option when staff felt a question didn't apply to their area of work.

Setting the scene – Survey analysis



- As for previous surveys, the nominal cut off has been applied to any **scores below 70%** positive as areas to consider for improvement. Any **scores below 50%** positive identify high priority issues. As with previous surveys, these nominal cut off points are setting a high standard for improvements.
- Again, as in previous years, **additional comments** have been analysed and summarised in order to identify key themes as well as maintain privacy and ensure that comments could not be attributed to specific individuals.
- The results have been analysed and **presented against the 2017/18 and 2016/17 results** to identify significant shifts in scores, in particular for those categories falling below the 70% positive benchmark.
- Results have also been **externally benchmarked** against the Scottish Government People Survey 2018, that covers all SG staff and Non Departmental Government Body organisations for a Scottish comparator as well as against 2 other ombudsman surveys who have publically available survey data.
- The full breakdown of survey responses accompany this report (Annex1).

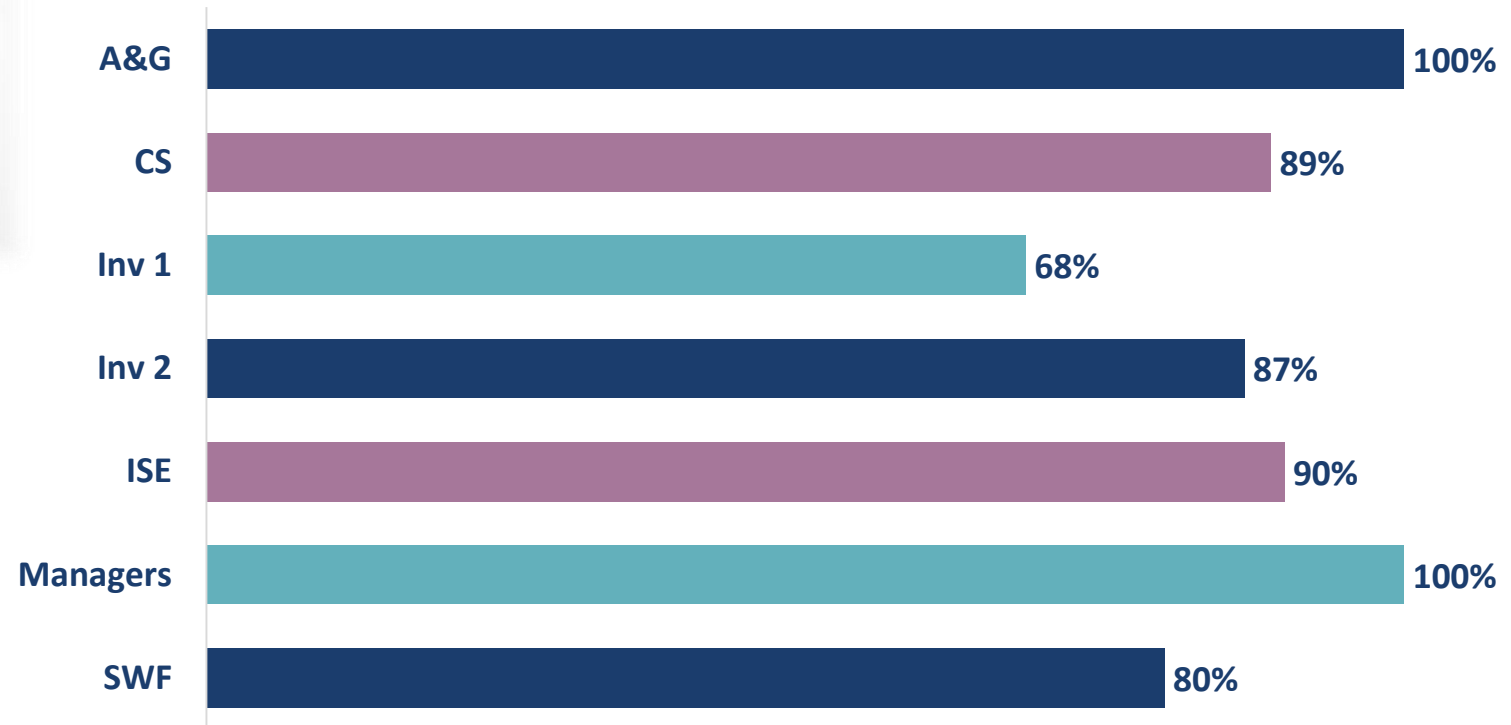


Setting the scene – Response rates



- 84% of staff responded to the survey. This includes 77% who fully completed and 7% who partially completed the survey.
- This is similar to previous response rates in 2015-16 (77%) 2016-17 (81%) but less than in 2017-18 when the response rate was 93%.

Response Rate by Team
(Full and Partial Completion)



Note: The survey was sent to all SPSO staff (including those on parental leave) apart from those involved in survey design, analysis and action planning (Leadership Team, HR).

Setting the scene – Headline results



	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Your Job	76%	82%	83%
Internal Relations	72%	79%	75%
External Customers	74%	87%	83%
Management	86%	84%	87%
Leadership	54%	77%	70%
Learning and Development	75%	81%	78%
Equal Opportunities and Diversity	81%	88%	82%
Work-Life Balance	77%	N/A	N/A
Perceptions of SPSO	70%	N/A	N/A
Corporate Social Responsibility	76%	N/A	N/A

Note: This table shows the average levels of engagement for each survey theme. Average scores for Work-life balance and Perceptions of SPSO couldn't be compared because there have been too many changes to the questions and CSR is a new theme.

- On average, we have scored over 70% positive in all but one area (Leadership) of the survey this year. This was also the theme that had the highest average of neutral responses which represented 20% of responses.
- While the results aren't as high as last year's survey (which was overwhelmingly positive), the scores are broadly similar to 2016/17.
- Some of the changes in the survey can be directly attributed to an increase in the number of negative responses but we have also seen increases to the number of neutral responses (an average 5% increase on last year)
- We have seen a drop in the level of engagement in some areas of the survey and this was to be expected given the number of changes that people have been responding to in the last year, including team restructures, changes to process and an office move.
- These changes have impacted some more than others and we have seen significant variations in the responses of the complaints and investigations teams against other teams across the organisation.

Headline Results – Areas where we scored well



A note on the figures shown in this chart
For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.

	2018/19	2017/18	2017/18 to 2018/19 Trend	2016/17	2016/17 to 2018/19 Trend	SG 2018	How we compare to SG in 2018
My line manager encourages teamwork	95%	88%	↑ 7%	89%	↑ 6%	N/A	N/A
People help and support each other at SPSO	94%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working	93%	92%	↑ 1%	89%	↑ 4%	N/A	N/A
Working for an organisation with similar ethical views to my own is important to me	92%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
My performance is reviewed regularly	91%	93%	↓ 2%	89%	↑ 2%	71%	↑ 20%
My manager supports me in my health and wellbeing	91%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	78%	↑ 13%
I share the SPSO's values	91%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I have good working relationships with my colleagues	90%	95%	↓ 5%	93%	↓ 4%	N/A	N/A
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	89%	86%	↑ 3%	91%	↓ 2%	N/A	N/A
I am supported in balancing my work and personal life	89%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	73%	↑ 16%



Questions relating to line management and colleague relationships score within the top 10 areas of satisfaction this year. This suggests that increased engagement efforts in these areas have been effective. We also score significantly higher than the comparator organisations which include the SG and other ombudsman schemes.

Headline Results – Areas where we didn't score as well



A note on the figures shown in this chart

For ease of reading, results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As such, in some instances, trend figures presented in this report do not match the rounded figures of the scores that are being compared.

	2018/19	2017/18	2017/18 to 2018/19 Trend	2016/17	2016/17 to 2018/19 Trend	SG 2018	How we compare to SG in 2018
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	19%	38%	↓ 19%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	47%	59%	↓ 11%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	48%	78%	↓ 30%	74%	↓ 26%	N/A	N/A
I feel motivated by our leadership team	48%	66%	↓ 18%	60%	↓ 12%	N/A	N/A
The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership	50%	76%	↓ 26%	74%	↓ 24%	N/A	N/A
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO's CSR initiatives	51%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	53%	45%	↑ 8%	57%	↓ 3%	N/A	N/A
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	54%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	54%	66%	↓ 12%	63%	↓ 9%	62%	↓ 8%
My targets are ambitious but realistic	55%	58%	↓ 3%	74%	↓ 19%	N/A	N/A

While the drop in engagement related from last year can partly be attributed to an increase in negative responses (resources, workload, consistent and effective leadership and progress and direction of SPSO), **we saw a high number of neutral responses in all of these areas**. Despite scoring below 70%, we have made an improvement this year to the question about how the structure of roles enable collaboration.

Headline Results – Most improved



Survey Theme	Question	2018/19	Increase since last year	2017/18	2016/17
Management	My line manager encourages collaboration with other teams	86%	↑ 13%	73%	78%
Management	I feel motivated by my line manager	88%	↑ 10%	78%	89%
Internal Relations	Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	53%	↑ 8%	45%	57%
Management	My line manager encourages teamwork	95%	↑ 7%	88%	89%
Management	My line manager communicates effectively with me	88%	↑ 5%	83%	91%
Management	My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	89%	↑ 3%	86%	91%
Management	I/my team are consistently recognised when we exceed expectations	75%	↑ 3%	73%	69%
Your Job	I feel my job is secure	72%	↑ 2%	70%	67%
Management	My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working	93%	↑ 1%	92%	89%
Learning and Development	I receive regular, timely feedback on my performance	86%	↑ 1%	85%	86%

Consistent with the overall feedback and comments, **questions under the theme of management show the most improvement on last year.** We can see that improvements have been made to how we work together and collaborate and manager support for this, as well as improvements to how managers communicate, feedback and recognise individuals.

Headline Results – Insight from comments



“Although I am kept informed about decisions that affect me and I am able to express my views about these, I think that extending periods of consultation and consideration of views before making significant decisions would be beneficial to the organisation.”



Internal relations

“Although we do have clear plans for the future (business plan etc.), in practice, it is not clear to me that these plans will ensure our continued success, particularly where operational and policy decisions are being made which increase workload and decrease productivity and staff morale. I think the way in which recent decisions have been made is with very little, if any, consultation with those directly impacted. I do not feel that we have been kept informed of decisions and progress by the LT - for example, the change to provisional decisions and the forthcoming changes to the proportionality guidance. I do not feel that the LT have been open and responsive to concerns raised by staff and our managers. I find myself losing trust and respect in the LT as a result.”



Leadership

“I would say as a whole we are open to change and attempt to embrace it, although in practice, this has not happened as smoothly as we would like to think it would. Recent change has been difficult and as an organisation, I think we are struggling to embrace it.”



Perceptions of SPSO

“Support is good between colleagues and from my manager. We are extremely/too tolerant of the often challenging behaviour of complainants.”



External customers

120 comments were made in the survey. Of these, the two most commented on themes were your job and leadership

“There are a lot of opportunities for learning but due to the pressures of casework, I often do not feel I have time to attend.”



Learning and development

“I do feel we do a lot in relation to CSR but I think a lot of this is initiated/seen through by individual staff members as opposed to being a ‘top down’ organisational approach.”



Corporate social responsibility

“My manager is very supportive, I have monthly one to ones, but I am also able to meet if I want to discuss or raise anything...I feel my Manager encourages team work and is open to suggestions and feedback.”



Management

“Notwithstanding that staff are working hard, current case loads are extremely difficult to manage and are creating stress for a number of staff. Personally, the level of satisfaction with my job has declined.”



My job

“On the one hand my direct manager has been excellent and I know I can approach members of the LT if I am in difficulty (and I have done so). The office also invests time and resources to support staff health and well being. On the other hand the recent changes to the CI process, and how the changes have been implemented and communicated, have caused enormous pressure and distress for already struggling CI teams. There is a serious disconnect here. We cannot take the opportunity or time to make use of what's available if we are constantly fire fighting re our caseloads cos we are trying to avoid going under.”



Work-life balance

A closer look at each theme – Your job

76%



- Scores suggest that overall, people feel engaged in their jobs, the level of autonomy they have and what is expected of them. Perceptions of job security has also improved which is encouraging given the high volume of recruitment, internal moves and changes within the organisation over the last year.
- Engagement in targets and accessibility of information scored below 70%. Almost half of the comments in this section relate to setting and achieving targets and almost a quarter of the comments also consider the difficulties people experience in sharing and finding information. There is also some reference (about 30% of the comments) to changes to process which has caused dissatisfaction.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	83%	92%	87%
My work is interesting and makes the best use of my skills and capabilities	88%	88%	96%
I feel empowered to make decisions and act on them	79%	83%	89%
I am encouraged to take initiative in my role	84%	87%	91%
I understand the performance standards and what I am expected to achieve in my job	79%	90%	91%
SPSO's success is reliant on all of us achieving our individual objectives	86%	90%	85%
I feel that my contribution to the success of the SPSO is valued	74%	83%	65%
I am able to find information when I need it	* 57%	N/A	N/A
My targets are ambitious but realistic	* 55%	58%	74%
I feel my job is secure	72%	70%	67%

“The targets are a big factor in feeling stressed at work as they feel unrealistic. I feel my job is secure from a redundancy point of view but not from a personal one (this relates to how stressed I feel).”



“I find it difficult to find information - I find sharePoint difficult to navigate and information about previous similar cases is difficult to find...”



“There is currently a lack of clear targets due to recent changes...”



- Engagement levels under this theme are broadly in line with SG and other ombudsman schemes and in directly comparable questions, SPSO's scores are higher (interesting work, valued contribution, personal accomplishment).
- This theme had a high proportion of neutral responses (on average around 11% of responses were neutral) which has increased compared to last year and can explain the drop in positive scores because negative responses have also fallen in this section.

↓ 6% difference from 2017/18

↓ 7% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Internal relations

72%



- Overall we scored well in this section, although we have seen a drop in results compared to 2017/18, however the results this year are still broadly in line with those from our 2016/17 survey.
- There were four areas where engagement levels fell below 70% (being kept informed, consultation, communication methods and structure of roles to enable collaboration). However we have made improvements to how we collaborate with engagement levels for this question rising 8% from last year. Comments in other parts of the survey refer to the continuing need to focus on ways in which we collaborate.
- Over the last year the SPSO has undergone substantial change and this is reflected in all of the comments which relate to both the office move and several process changes that have taken place over the year. There is one comment that refers to the need for people at all levels to be more open to and supportive of improvements and changes.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
I am kept well informed about what the organisation is doing	* 60%	78%	65%
I can express my views and question any decisions that affect my work	76%	85%	80%
I have the opportunity to contribute to how things are done at the SPSO	* 69%	82%	76%
I feel comfortable communicating information to colleagues across the organisation	88%	92%	85%
I have good working relationships with my colleagues	90%	95%	94%
There is a good balance of verbal, written and email communication used in the SPSO	* 67%	75%	72%
Our roles are structured to enable us to work well together	* 53%	45%	57%
Our physical environment is structured to enable us to work well together	72%	N/A	N/A

“There have been a number of fairly major changes made to the way we operate recently, with relatively little consultation with or input from relevant staff.”



“The balance of communication tends to rely a lot on email.”



“There is a divide between the 2 floors since the move to the new office which would be good to bridge.”



- Despite a drop in engagement levels for this theme this year, we have still scored significantly higher than SG and other ombudsman schemes in directly comparable questions (consultation, physical environment that enables team-working).
- This theme also had a high proportion of neutral responses (on average around 12% of responses were neutral) although there was a slight increase to the number of negative responses.

↓ 7% difference from 2017/18

↓ 3% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – External customers

74%



- In this theme our average score dropped by 13% which was the second biggest change in the survey results compared to last year's scores. However this area has seen an increase in the number of people indicating that these questions are not applicable to their roles (an average of around 11%).
- Generally people have a strong sense of customer focus and they feel that there is support from managers and colleagues when people have to have difficult conversations. However, there were mixed views on how difficult behaviours are managed.
- There were two areas where engagement levels fell below 70% (acting on feedback from stakeholders and effective support mechanisms for dealing with difficult customers). Two thirds of the comments under this theme relate to the application of the Unacceptable Actions Policy while others refer positively to the support that people receive from managers and colleagues when handling difficult and sensitive issues.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
We listen to our customers rather than just telling them what they need	76%	90%	89%
We act on the feedback we receive from external stakeholders	* 67%	88%	85%
I feel there are effective support mechanisms in place for me to deal with difficult customers	* 69%	N/A	N/A
I have the opportunity to debrief following difficult conversations	81%	83%	83%
I feel well supported when I am communicating difficult or sensitive issues	76%	85%	76%

- There are no questions in this theme that are directly comparable to the SG or the two other ombudsman schemes.

"I feel well supported by my team Manager in dealing with difficult customers and I am also encouraged to suggest change and act on feedback..."



"I feel we tolerate abusive behaviour from customers...It is stressful, particularly on top of such a challenging workload. Due to the pressures of the workload, I do not always feel I have the time to debrief. Largely we work independently so there is not usually support for communicating difficult or sensitive issues, but I think that is the nature of the work rather than a criticism."



"I do not feel that we take proactive action soon enough with persistent and unreasonable behaviour...I feel my manager does support me with this but as an organisation we need to improve on this."



↓ 13% difference from 2017/18

↓ 9% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Management

86%



- This was our highest scoring theme and an area that we have most improved on since the last survey. Generally, the scores show us that people have confidence in their line management and feel supported in their roles. Neutral responses accounted for most of the other responses to this section (an average of 9%).
- There was only 1 area that scored below 70% and this related to how performance is managed but this is another area where there are a high proportion of neutral responses. A small number of comments suggest that it's either inappropriate to know how others' performance is managed but also that there should be more consistency in how poor performance is managed.
- Wider comments under this theme are related to support and performance management and are largely positive (only two references to unsupportive behaviour). Comments also consider reward and recognition but there is mixed feedback with some people expressing satisfaction and others that feel that contributions could be more consistently recognised and acknowledged by the wider organisation.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
I feel motivated by my line manager	88%	78%	89%
My line manager behaves consistently with integrity	89%	86%	91%
My line manager encourages teamwork	95%	88%	89%
My line manager encourages collaboration with other teams	86%	73%	78%
My line manager strives to support and deliver better ways of working	93%	92%	89%
My line manager communicates effectively with me	88%	83%	91%
Performance is managed in my team	* 67%	78%	91%
I set my objectives with my line manager	88%	92%	91%
My performance is reviewed regularly	91%	93%	89%
I am encouraged to achieve high performance	84%	88%	93%
I/my team are consistently recognised when we exceed expectations	75%	73%	69%

“Very supportive and 'hands on' manager. I can speak to my manager about any issue and know this will be dealt with sensitively and with integrity. I have a good working relationship with my manager.”



“I do not feel it is my manager's place to do all of the above. I do not feel my manager encourages collaboration but also, does not dissuade it. It is open for me to collaborate, where I feel it would be helpful. It would not be appropriate for me to know how colleagues' performances are managed...”



“While I don't come to work every day to be praised I cannot remember a time when my individual performance or a personal contribution was praised, particularly at 121 or management meetings. I have found this at times disheartening.”



- We have also scored higher than the SG and the two other ombudsman schemes in comparable questions under this theme, apart from one question (recognition), however this continues to be an area where we are consistently improving against our internal benchmark.

↑ 2% difference from 2017/18

↓ 1% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Leadership

54%



- This was our lowest scoring theme and the area that had the biggest drop in engagement (23%) since last year. While this can be directly attributed to an increase in the number of negative responses (an average of 26% of responses were negative), this theme continues to have the highest neutral ratings (an average of 20% neutral responses).
- All questions in this theme scored below 70%, with 2 questions (strategic direction and motivation) scoring below 50% and identified as high priority areas. Most notable was the difference between responses between the complaints and investigations teams and the rest of the organisation where there was an average score of 30% and 76% respectively.
- The comments in this section were some of the most detailed and largely (almost three quarters) referred to concerns about a lack of consultation and changes to the complaints process and the impact on workloads in complaints teams, particularly in the complaints and investigations group. A third of comments referred positively to the improvements that have been made by the LT in regularly communicating and sharing information.

* Indicates an area of focus for improvements

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
SPSO has a clear plan for the future to ensure our continued success	* 57%	78%	67%
The leadership team communicates the organisation's vision and objectives clearly	* 55%	78%	70%
I feel comfortable with the progress and direction of the organisation at the present time	* 48%	78%	74%
The leadership team communicate effectively, keeping me informed about decisions and progress	* 54%	N/A	N/A
The leadership team provide consistent and effective leadership	* 50%	76%	74%
The leadership team are open and responsive	* 61%	76%	65%
I trust and respect the leadership team at the SPSO	* 59%	83%	79%
I feel motivated by our leadership team	* 48%	66%	61%

"I think the LT have over the past year made changes to improve communication, being more 'visible' and open."



"Feel there has been some major 'own goals' this year with the introduction of major changes without sufficient explanation, communication or consultation. The staff are a great resource when such change occurs and we have been severely underutilised. I think this has eroded some of the trust and confidence in the Leadership team."



"The leadership team have appeared remote and unresponsive to staff concerns about high workloads and changes in process particularly in the last year. There has been a lack of visibility and contact with CRs."



- It was difficult to find comparator questions in the SG survey and the other ombudsman schemes but we were able to gain some additional insight which suggests that SPSO's LT is viewed as leading more consistently and effectively but mirroring our internal benchmark, we have scored lower in communication and consultation this year.

↓ 23% difference from 2017/18

↓ 16% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Learning and development



- Scores under this theme, while slightly lower than last year are broadly consistent with 2016/17 and people continue to feel content with learning and development activities. The number of neutral responses in this section remained high (on average 17% of responses were neutral).
- There were 2 areas scoring slightly below 70% and these related to the relevance of L&D opportunities to individual roles and a sense of how committed people felt that the SPSO is in developing our people. The comments offer further insight and suggest that people mostly find opportunities for L&D useful but that it is difficult to take up opportunities due to the pressures of workloads.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
The learning and development I receive is appropriate and relevant to my job	* 70%	83%	74%
There are sufficient opportunities for me to receive learning and development to improve my skills	71%	73%	74%
I receive regular, timely feedback on my performance	86%	85%	86%
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	77%	86%	81%
I believe that the SPSO are committed to developing me	* 70%	78%	70%
I am supported to apply any learning to my day to day work	79%	81%	77%
SPSO invests in its people	73%	80%	81%

“I appreciate L&D is each persons responsibility, but this is difficult to focus on when workloads are so high and the pressure to stay at your desk is ever present. However, it would be a positive step for the organisation perhaps to highlight training opportunities / providers / a training budget which is available”



“L&D programme has been fairly full recently and most of the sessions have been useful / interesting.”



“I would be keen to take on extra responsibility although there appears to be limited opportunities for this in such a small organisation.”



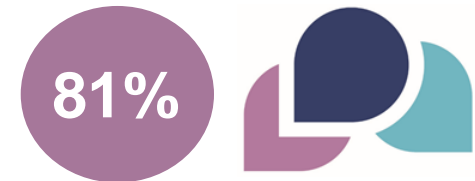
- The information available from comparators, although limited, suggests that our engagement levels in L&D are broadly in line with the SG and other ombudsmen schemes, particularly around the appropriateness of L&D activities and feedback which helps people to improve their performance.

“I don’t feel I have been given many opportunities to take part in courses over the last year, and though I continue to 'develop' by taking part in internal groups etc. I would like more opportunities to take external courses.”



↓ 6% difference from 2017/18 ↓ 3% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Equal opportunities and diversity



- This was our second highest scoring theme and while the scores were slightly lower than last year, they are again broadly consistent with 2016/17. There were a fairly high proportion of neutral responses (average of 14%) in this section and negative responses remained low (on average around 5% of responses were negative).
- Responses suggest that people generally feel that SPSO is an inclusive and respectful workplace with robust policies to deal with any concerns and that the workplace is free from bullying and harassment. 7% of people indicated that they didn't think that the work environment was free from bullying and harassment but they didn't provide any further information about why they felt this way.
- There was only one area scoring below 70% and this related to the fair management of access to opportunities for learning and development. There weren't any comments that clarified this, although a quarter of responses indicate a neutral reaction. There was even a 7% reduction in the number of negative responses so we can only infer that people feel indifferently about how access to opportunities for development are managed or that this relates to the difficulty in taking up L&D activities due to workloads, as identified in the L&D theme.
- Comments in this section were limited but some refer to the need to broaden the diversity of the organisation.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
I think the SPSO respects individual differences (for example, cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas)	84%	92%	84%
I know how to seek support for concerns relating to bullying and harassment	88%	95%	88%
I feel confident that the SPSO would act on any reports of bullying and harassment	79%	88%	84%
Access to opportunities for development and support is fairly managed	* 68%	75%	70%
My work environment is free from bullying and harassment	86%	90%	86%

"I find the working environment very positive and everyone respects each other."

"I think that the SPSO respects differences but I also think we could do more through our recruitment strategy to improve diversity..."

"I personally cannot think of seeing any bullying and harassment. I am confident that most colleagues would not stand for this."

- There was only one directly comparable question (SPSO respects individual differences) and in this area our scores for this are slightly higher than the SG and other ombudsman schemes.

↓ 7% difference from 2017/18
↓ 2% difference from 2016/17

A closer look at each theme – Work-life balance



- Generally, people feel that there is a good work-life balance at SPSO and that they are aware of and supported to take up activities to support their health and wellbeing. There were only 2 questions where we could draw comparisons and we saw a decrease in both of these.
- There were four areas scoring below 70% and these relate to workloads, the promotion of, support and culture for health and wellbeing at SPSO. The majority (86%) of comments relate to the work pressures that people are facing and this is mixed with a feeling that although SPSO is focusing on supporting people with health and wellbeing, this is being undermined by heavy workloads.
- There were again a high number of neutral responses in this section (on average 14% of responses were neutral) but concerns about work volumes were represented by almost 40% of people who responded negatively.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
I believe managers deal with applications for flexible working fairly and consistently	76%	86%	77%
I am supported in balancing my work and personal life	89%	N/A	N/A
I am comfortable with the amount of work I am expected to do	* 54%	66%	63%
Health and wellbeing is effectively promoted	* 69%	N/A	N/A
Health and wellbeing is part of our culture	* 63%	N/A	N/A
The SPSO is committed to supporting my health and wellbeing	* 69%	N/A	N/A
My manager supports me in my health and wellbeing	91%	N/A	N/A
I am aware of the health and wellbeing initiatives available to me	85%	N/A	N/A
People help and support each other at SPSO	94%	N/A	N/A

“Work demands are too high and this has been the case for a significant period of time which means it has a detrimental impact on health and working this way cant be sustained long term. We do have some health and wellbeing initiatives but practical steps and decisions made within the organisation contradict and undermine our commitment to health and wellbeing.”



“I think increased workloads means health and wellbeing is very important and I am pleased the SPSO appears to be focusing on this and making changes to support staff that are dealing with complex and stressful cases.”



- We scored slightly lower than the comparators in the question about workload and SPSO’s commitment to supporting health and wellbeing but we scored much higher in comparable questions about supporting work-life balance and the support that managers offer for health and wellbeing.

The changes to questions in this section mean that we can’t draw any meaningful comparisons to the overall differences for previous years

A closer look at each theme – Perceptions of SPSO



- This was our second lowest scoring theme overall, although we introduced some new questions to this section which we haven't been able to benchmark against previous years. For those questions that we could compare, we have seen a decline in the responses compared to previous years.
- People continue to feel a strong sense of commitment to SPSO and our values but some of the lowest responses were seen in this theme. Six areas scored below 70% (a good place to work, sense of belonging and purpose, challenging behaviours out of line with values, how we respond to change). Two areas have been identified as a priority for improvement (physical and people resources).
- Feedback in the comments is mixed feedback but around 70% refer to workloads and staff resources in light of the impact of recent changes to process. A third of comments also refer to the ineffectiveness of our IT systems, particularly Workpro.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements			
I am proud to work for the SPSO	85%	95%	93%
I would tell people that this is a good place to work	* 68%	90%	93%
I feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose at the SPSO	* 68%	78%	77%
I feel committed to the SPSO's goals	79%	98%	91%
I share the SPSO's values	91%	N/A	N/A
My day-to-day behaviour reflects SPSO's values	89%	N/A	N/A
SPSO's values guide the way we work and make decisions	81%	N/A	N/A
We challenge behaviours that are not in line with our values	* 64%	N/A	N/A
At the SPSO we have the physical resources we need to complete our work effectively	* 47%	59%	N/A
At the SPSO we have the people resources we need to complete our work effectively	* 19%	38%	N/A
At the SPSO we regularly look for ways to improve	85%	88%	N/A
At SPSO we embrace change to create a sustainable future	* 66%	83%	70%

"At present, I do not feel proud to work for SPSO or think it is a good place to work. I feel we are struggling to cope with increased caseloads and staff morale is low. This makes it a difficult environment to work in at the moment."



"I would tell them it is a good place to work but I'd stress that it's not for everybody as the work is relentless. We do not have the resources to work effectively. Additional staff resource would be nice but more importantly we should be reviewing our full process from beginning to end as I believe there are many inefficiencies in the current process which impact on our ability to work effectively. We also need a new system as Workpro cannot do what we need it to and presents and further hindrance to working efficiently."



"Ideally we would have more resources in terms of the database system we use and more staff. However, I appreciate that this is unlikely to happen."



- In comparable questions, we score similarly or higher than the SG and other ombudsman schemes.

The changes to questions in this section mean that we can't draw any meaningful comparisons to the overall differences for previous years

A closer look at each theme – Corporate social responsibility



- This was a new theme which was introduced in response to IIP feedback and the establishment of formal groups to oversee SPSO’s charitable, environmental and social activities. Overall, scores suggest that people feel that SPSO’s CSR activities are important and that we are contributing responsibly to a number of initiatives and that there are opportunities to suggest ways in which SPSO could support activities.
- There were two areas scoring below 70% and these related to dedicated time at work to contribute to CSR initiatives and the opportunity to professionally develop through participating in CSR activities. The comments reinforce this with people not being sure about having dedicated time and that this is offset by high workloads. There were a number of positive comments that suggest that CSR is an important feature of working life but that sometimes this is driven by personal interest.

	2018/19
* Indicates an area of focus for improvements	
Working for an organisation with similar ethical views to my own is important to me	92%
SPSO contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the wellbeing of society	77%
At SPSO we implement initiatives that minimise our impact on the environment	87%
We are encouraged to suggest ways that SPSO could support community causes and/or charities	89%
I have dedicated time at work to contribute to SPSO’s CSR initiatives	* 51%
Participating in CSR activities allows me to grow and develop professionally	* 58%

“I have had to withdraw from one group due to pressure of caseload, which was v disappointing as I believe this is a worthwhile and important aspect of working at SPSO.”

“I develop relationships with employees and customers as part of my role generally but I'm not certain that I would identify that as dedicated time to contribute to CSR initiatives. I have previously received time to contribute to particular groups when I've been a member e.g. the green group but its not something that's built in to my day to day. I'm not aware of the SPSO contributing to campaigns to promote the wellbeing of society, so if we are I think it could be better celebrated internally.”

“I think it is SPSO's responsibility to support/encourage CSR. Although I feel very strongly that for certain initiatives it must remain an individual/personal choice whether to get involved or not.”

- When designing these questions, we were unable to find any similar questions carried out by the SG or other ombudsman schemes.

This was a new section introduced to the survey this year and as a result we have no internal or external benchmarks for comparison

Conclusions and recommendations



- Engagement levels have dropped compared to last year's survey, although the results last year were exceptionally positive and set a high standard to benchmark against.
- As can be seen in this year's results, there have been a number of areas that have caused dissatisfaction, namely changes to complaints processes, high volumes of work, current staffing levels and effectiveness of IT systems, as well as an office move. These issues have impacted some teams more than others and this can be seen in the significant variation in the results of the complaints and investigations teams, compared to the rest of the organisation.
- Nevertheless, we have seen improvements in our survey this year and it is clear that the feedback from the survey is being used at all levels of the organisation to drive improvements.
- There is some feedback that we will continue to improve upon in the coming year, although it is important to note that only 4 questions scored less than 50% and a third of the questions scored between 50% and 70%.



Improvement planning and next steps



- Of those areas identified for improvements, the key areas to address as part of our improvement planning process include:
 - **Work volumes** (which impact on morale, health and wellbeing, ability to participate in CSR), physical and people resources, setting and achievement of targets, how our roles are structured to enable us to collaborate (your job, work-life balance, internal relations; perceptions of SPSO);
 - How we **find and share information, keep people informed and consult on changes, the methods of communication** we use (your job, internal relations, leadership);
 - How we **act on feedback** from our stakeholders and the **support mechanisms for dealing with difficult customers**, particularly how we apply the UAP (external customers);
 - More consistency in how we **manage poor performance** and **recognise good** performance in the wider organisation (management);
 - Wider consultation and engagement in **strategic decisions** and **addressing current concerns around process changes and workloads** particularly in complaints and investigations group (leadership);
 - Continuing to **identify individual skills development needs** through the performance development planning process and ensuring **workloads allow opportunity for take-up of L&D activities** (L&D);
 - Improving **organisational diversity** (Equal opportunities and diversity);
 - Wider promotion of, support and culture for **health and wellbeing** (work-life balance);
 - **Dedicated time to contribute** to CSR initiatives to **support professional development** (CSR).
- This feedback will be combined with feedback and recommendations from the IIP review (in June 2019) to create a detailed improvement plan.
- With this combined feedback, we'd like to invite representatives from each of the teams to help us to design our improvement plans.

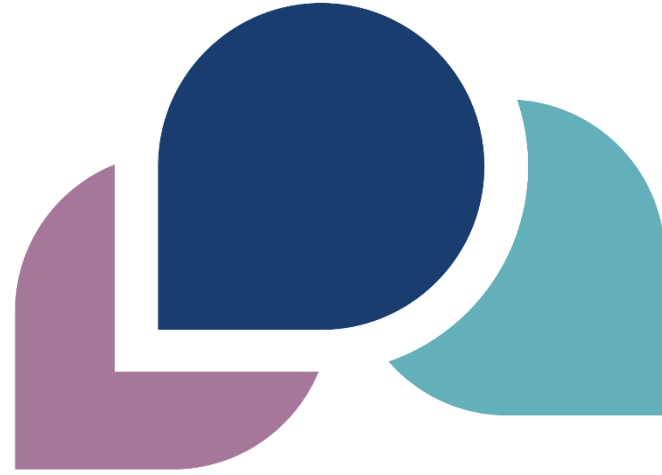
Technical Guidance



Please bear in mind when reading this report:

- **Rounding** | Results are presented as whole numbers for ease of reading, with rounding performed at the last stage of calculation for maximum accuracy. Therefore, in some instances, the differences presented in this report will not match the rounded figures of the scores being compared. For example, where a figure of 69.64% has been returned in the raw data, in this report it will appear as 70% and this will be identified as an area for improvement.
- **Theme scores** | Scores for each individual theme are arrived at by calculating the average percentage of positive responses to the theme's constituent questions.
- **Comparison to historical results** | This year we have amended and created 22 questions which are no longer comparable to previous survey results. For tables that include data for historical survey results, 'N/A' indicates that a comparable question was not included in the survey.
- **Percentages** | Unless otherwise stated, question score percentages shown in this report relate to the proportion of employees providing a positive response.
- **Anonymity** | We have maintained anonymity of the feedback by removing any references to individuals and teams due to the small numbers in some teams which could identify individuals.

S SCOTTISH
P PUBLIC
S SERVICES
O OMBUDSMAN



People Centred | Improvement Focused