

Professional advisers – FAQ's

What does the SPSO do?

The SPSO investigates NHS complaints that have been through the NHS complaints process and remain unresolved. As well as looking at complaints about the service provided by the NHS, we can look into complaints about clinical treatment. Complaints about the NHS often involves other issues; for example the way care was received, a concern about dignity or compassion or lack of information or involvement from patients, relatives and carers.

What is the role of the professional adviser?

Professional Advisers provide verbal and written advice to the Ombudsman and his investigating staff. You will comment on cases being reviewed and ensure findings and conclusions contained in reports are consistent and based on a good and contemporary understanding of clinical issues. You may also be invited to provide support and development to our staff and to represent the Ombudsman's office externally.

What experience and skills are required?

We are seeking healthcare professionals who are in current practice and registered with the appropriate regulatory body. We value people who are able to analyse conflicting information, present information in an easy to understand and logical manner and demonstrate balanced judgement, empathy, fairness and impartiality. In addition we are looking for people who have specific expertise in their area of practice. You would be expected to be working at a senior or national level and be educated to degree level.

What are the advantages to me / my board or employer / public services in Scotland?

This role will provide you with an excellent opportunity for personal and professional development. Your organisation will also benefit from your expertise, knowledge and skills about listening, learning and resolving complaints. You will contribute to the wider learning and improvement of the NHS in Scotland, by influencing national strategy and policy.

What will my workload be?

The number of cases you will be given will depend on your area of practice, your availability and the number of complaints we receive. For some advisers we estimate a regular commitment of between 4 – 8 hours a fortnight and others may be asked for advice on an ad hoc basis.

How long will I have to provide my advice?

Advice should be provided within 20 working days.

Am I expected to be based at the SPSO offices?

For advisers that are contracted to work a set number of sessions we ask you to attend our offices in Edinburgh for meetings with case reviewers and for discussions. Our case

reviewers value the opportunity for informal discussion about case work. In particular, the early resolution team often seek early informal advice via face to face dialogue.

However, advisers can choose to work elsewhere and files can be couriered. There may be times when you are asked to discuss a complaint via telephone too.

Will I receive a contract?

Yes all advisers will be asked to agree a contract for services and this will normally be for a 6 month term.

How will I be prepared for the role?

We pride ourselves on providing a flexible and supportive induction and on-going development programme. At induction, you will have the opportunity to meet the teams, and be familiarised with the SPSO roles and functions including advice, early resolution, investigations, review and quality assurance. In addition, we will invite you to participate in early quality assurance when you will receive feedback about your advice.

What on-going support will I receive?

As well as regular feedback about your advice, we organise adviser seminars where specific topics in relation to professional development and learning are discussed in an informal and supportive setting.

What are the terms and conditions?

The terms and conditions will be specified in the contract.

What else happens in the recruitment process?

Once we receive your documents, we will review your application and shortlist. We will then invite you for interview. This may be phased from early February to April 2017. Interviews will be informal and competency based. We are hoping to have the first phase of advisers in post by March 2017.

If you have any further queries please contact

Dr Dorothy Armstrong at darmstrong@spsso.org.uk or Stacy Forsyth at Stacy.Forsyth@gsi.gov.uk