

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201907782, Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and Devolved Administration  
**Subject:** Handling of application  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the way that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) handled their application for criminal injuries compensation. We were not critical of the length of time taken to progress C's application. However, we found that C's expectations were not appropriately managed regarding how often they could expect updates on the progress of their application and regarding when or if they could expect to receive acknowledgements of correspondence. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

C also complained about how the CICA had handled their complaint. We found that the CICA complaints procedure does not comply with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure. In particular:

- the customer-facing complaint handling procedure does not explain the three stage process that they follow or set out the timescales for each stage of the process.
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority did not provide a thorough and robust response to C's Stage 2 complaint.
- the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority incorrectly signposted C to complain to the SPSO via an MP (which is not a requirement for bringing a complaint to the SPSO).

We upheld C's complaint about the way their complaint was handled.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for failing to manage C's expectations regarding how often they could expect updates on the progress of their application; failing to manage C's expectations regarding when or if they could expect to receive acknowledgements of their correspondence; failing to handle C's complaints in a way that complied with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure; failing to provide a thorough and robust response to C's stage 2 complaint; and incorrectly signposting them to complain to the SPSO via an MP. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Applicants should be informed regarding how often they can expect updates on the progress of their application.
- Applicants should be informed regarding when or if they can expect to receive acknowledgements of their correspondence.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- The organisation's complaints procedures should comply with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure <https://www.spsa.org.uk/the-model-complaints-handling-procedures>.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.