

## End-Year complaints 2024/2025





All Scottish councils are required to record and report on a suite of complaints performance indicators to meet Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) requirements. During 2024/25 we received 999 complaints; this was a 5% decrease on the previous year where 1,061 complaints were received. Most complaints are received by the Environment Department, 58.3% of the councils' complaints. The data shows that, both the 5-day target and the 20-day target to respond to frontline (stage 1) and investigation (stage) complaints, was achieved. There was an average time of 4.7 days taken to respond to frontline complaints and an average of 19.2 days taken to respond to investigation complaints. The most common issue for a complaint continues to be the "standard or quality of service", making up 34% of the complaints received. Note data reported was the position as at 14 April 2025.

### Data tables <sup>1,2</sup>

Description	2023/24	2024/25
Complaints Received	1061	999
Number complaints closed at stage one as % of all complaints	90.8%	85.8%
Number complaints closed at stage two as % of all complaints	5.1%	8.0%
Number complaints closed at stage two after escalation as % of all complaints	4.1%	6.2%
Not Upheld	2023/24	2024/25
Number complaints not upheld at stage one as % of complaints closed at stage one	44.7%	36.2%
Number complaints not upheld at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two	56.6%	57.0%
Number escalated complaints not upheld at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	53.5%	59.0%
Partially upheld	2023/24	2024/25
Number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as % of complaints closed at stage one	12.4%	11.1%
Number complaints partially upheld at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two	26.4%	20.3%
Number escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	23.3%	27.9%
Upheld	2023/24	2024/25
Number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one	21.4%	19.4%
Number complaints upheld at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two	1.9%	12.7%
Number escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	18.6%	11.5%
Resolved	2023/24	2024/25
Number of complaints resolved at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one	20.6%	33.0%
Number complaints resolved at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two	9.4%	10.1%
Number escalated complaints resolved at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	2.3%	1.6%
Outcome Not Recorded	2023/24	2024/25
Number of complaints where the outcome was not recorded at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one	0.8%	0.4%
Number complaints where the outcome was not recorded at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two	5.7%	0%
Number escalated complaints where the outcome was not recorded at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	2.3%	0%

1 - Data notes: Definitions: Stage 1 - complaints closed at stage 1 Frontline Resolution; Stage 2 (direct) - complaints that bypassed stage 1 and went directly to stage 2 Investigation (e.g. complex complaints); Escalated - complaints which were dealt with at stage 1 and subsequently escalated to stage 2 (e.g. because the customer remained dissatisfied); Investigation - stage 2 and escalated complaints combined

2 - All previous year's data has been updated at the time of writing this report (14/04/25), meaning some of the figures shown for previous years may not match with other reports due to records being updated.

Description	2023/24	2024/25	SPSO Target	Status
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one (frontline resolution)	5.66	4.72	5	
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two (investigation)	20.15	22.33	20	
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation (investigation)	22.51	15.03	20	
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at investigation (stage 2 and esc combined)	21.81	19.15	20	

Description	2023/24	2024/25
Number complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as % of stage one complaints	64.6%	82.6%
Number complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of stage two complaints	47.9%	59.5%
Number escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as % of escalated stage two complaints	36.2%	82.0%
Number investigation complaints closed within 20 working days as % of investigation complaints (stage 2 and esc combined)	42.1%	69.3%

Description	2023/24	2024/25
% of complaints at stage one where extension was authorised	2.3% (22)	4.4% (37)
% of complaints at stage two where an extension was authorised	43.8% (21)	39.2% (31)
% of escalated complaints where extension was authorised	21.3% (10)	27.9% (17)

## Learning from complaints

The Council is committed to learning from complaints to improve the quality of services and customers' experiences and our complaints handling. In 2024/25 the following actions were carried out to improve complaints handling and customer service.

- The Data team developed an interactive complaints' dashboard for Council, HSCP and ERCLT complaints monitoring. The dashboard is automatically updated daily, giving managers and employees a visualisation of open complaints, response times and trend analysis.
- The Customer Services team in the Business Operations and Partnerships Department are trialling a call back facility on phone lines, in response to complaints about call waiting times. This facility gives customers the option to select a call back, their call will be held in the queue and the system will call them back as soon as Customer Service Officer is available. Early customer feedback from the trial on our general enquiry line has been positive with customers commenting 'great service'.
- The Education Department has been working with the complaint handlers' group to improve the approach to recording and monitoring of complaints. This has included work to improve the recording dates, ensuring a more accurate understanding of response times and reducing those considered 'late'. The Department is working to improve the categorisation of all complaints. This will result in a greater understanding of the nature of complaints, enabling further analysis to be undertaken and subsequently lead to further improvement activity. The Department has reviewed existing processes, and this has resulted in changing internal deadlines and sign-off processes, supporting quality assurance and the completion of responses on time.
- In the Environment Department, the Neighbourhood Services team have increased on-site meetings with both Councillors and residents, for example, regarding litter complaints, general maintenance of open spaces and concerns around road safety. Improved communication through social media, mail drops and ward updates and giving advanced notice of upcoming changes such as refuse collection and street cleansing changes, aim to reduce complaints.