

# Complaints performance Q2 2017-18

October 2017



## Our values

- Integrity
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Pride in what we do
- Listening and engaging
- Creativity and learning

## **Introduction**

This report covers July 2017 to September 2017 inclusive ('Q2').

SPSO recommend reporting on key performance statistics. We include this in the form of a summary table at the beginning of each section. More detail is in the relevant section.

We responded to 74 complaints in Q2 2017-18.

Eight complaints originally came in at stage one before progressing to stage two – one of these did not receive a response in Q2 and therefore is not included in this report.

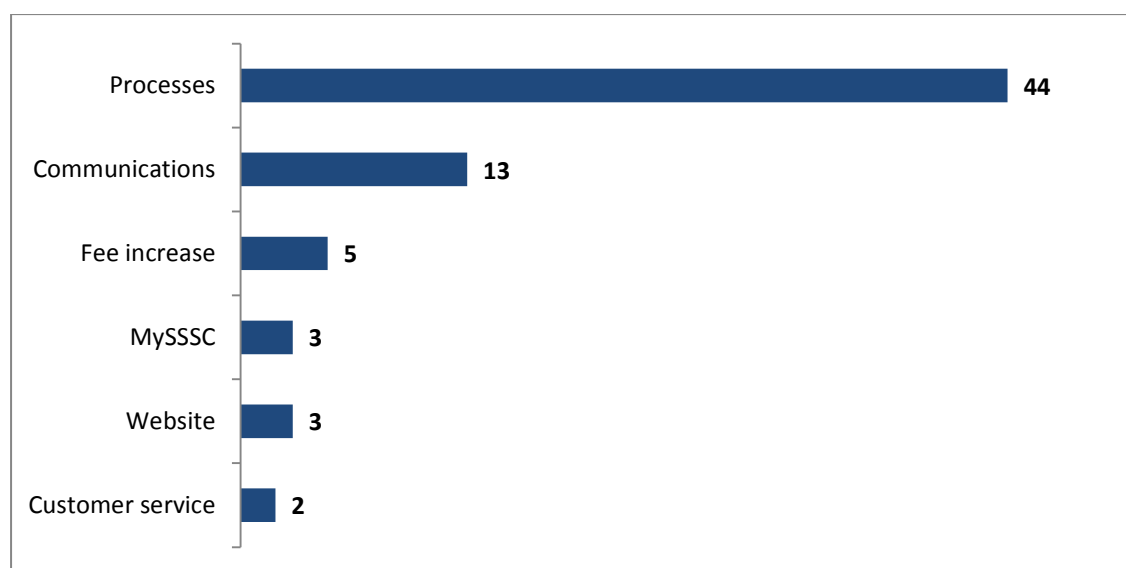
This compares to 86 complaints recorded in Q2 2016-17 (a decrease of just under 14%).

## Stage one complaints

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Number/percentage of complaints</b>                                      | 70 (94.6%) |
| <b>Number/percentage of complaints closed within 5 working days</b>         | 66 (94.3%) |
| <b>Number/percentage of stage one complaints with extension to deadline</b> | 3 (4.1%)   |
| <b>Average time (working days) to close complaint</b>                       | 3          |

We did not receive any stage one complaints from MSPs or MPs.

We dealt with the following categories of complaint at stage one:



Most of the complaints we received related to our processes. With the new reporting system in place we can easily subdivide these categories as detailed below.

| Category       | Subcategory                               | Number |
|----------------|---|--------|
| Processes      | Qualification requirements                | 9      |
|                | FTP processes                             | 7      |
|                | Processing timescales                     | 6      |
|                | Fees process                              | 4      |
|                | Removal process                           | 4      |
|                | FTP timescales                            | 3      |
|                | Conditions not met                        | 2      |
|                | Endorsement process                       | 2      |
|                | Further information process               | 2      |
|                | Verification process                      | 2      |
|                | Data security                             | 1      |
|                | Processing error                          | 1      |
|                | PRTL process                              | 1      |
| MySSSC         | Did not know how to use MySSSC            | 2      |
|                | MySSSC did not work as expected           | 1      |
| Communications | Did not like the tone of letter/email/SMS | 5      |
|                | Did not understand letter/email/SMS       | 4      |

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
|                  | Did not receive our communication       | 1 |
|                  | Did not receive their communication     | 1 |
|                  | Does not want our communications        | 1 |
|                  | E-communications                        | 1 |
| Customer service | Inaccurate information provided         | 1 |
|                  | Poor level of customer service received | 1 |
| Fee increase     |   | 5 |
| Website          | Unclear information                     | 2 |
|                  | Inaccurate information                  | 1 |

Qualifications process, fitness to practise process and processing timescales were the most frequently complained about areas.

Some examples of the actual complaint relating to these areas include:

- general issues relating to the type of qualifications we accept and that we don't take experience/length of service into account
- a registrant was not made aware that their PRTL did not meet requirements, and also needed some guidance about what to include in self-reflection
- issues regarding the length of time FTP cases take

We agreed an extension to the five-day deadline three times. We missed the deadline once (not including those three extensions).

The way we receive a complaint may have an impact on the time taken to respond.

| How did we receive the complaint? | Number of complaints | Time to respond (average working days)         |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Phone                             | 39                   | 2  |
| Email                             | 29                   | 4 (this includes the three extended deadlines) |
| Letter                            | 1                    | 10   |
| Complaint form                    | 1                    | 5  |

## Stage two complaints

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Number/percentage of complaints*</b>                              | 11 (14.9%) |
| <b>Number/percentage of complaints closed within 20 working days</b> | 10 (90.9%) |
| <b>Number/percentage of complaints with extension to deadline</b>    | 0          |
| <b>Average time (working days) to acknowledge complaint</b>          | 1.3        |
| <b>Average time (working days) to close complaint</b>                | 12.5       |

\* Eight complaints were escalated from stage one to stage two in Q2 but only seven received a response in that time period

We did not receive any stage two complaints from MSPs or MPs.

Stage two complaints focussed on:

|                | <b>Number of complaints</b> |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Processes      | 9                           |
| Communications | 2                           |

Seven complaints were about the FTP process including timescales. These complaints included concerns that we did not open an investigation, or being unhappy with decisions we have made. Time taken to conclude investigations is again a recurring issue.

One complaint related to a decision made not to accept a qualification.

One complaint related to dissatisfaction with the time taken to respond to a subject access request.

One of the two complaints relating to communications involved the complainant not wanting letters sent to their spouse and the other involved a witness who was not happy at the treatment they received during the hearing process.

One complaint received a response after 24 days. Unfortunately the complaint handler is no longer with the SSSC and a full explanation of the reason for this delay is not available. It appears that it was in part delayed due to other workload held by the member of staff involved. We apologised to the complainant for this delay.

| <b>How did we receive the complaint?</b> | <b>Number of complaints</b> | <b>Time to acknowledge (average working days)</b> | <b>Time to respond (average working days)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Email                                    | 5                           | 1.2   | 15.6  |
| Phone                                    | 3                           | 1   | 10.7  |
| Complaint form                           | 2                           | 2   | 2   |
| Letter                                   | 1                           | 1   | 24  |

## SPSO notifications

Whenever we receive a notification of an upheld complaint from the SPSO, we get specific actions we must complete (for example, providing a written apology to the complainant). These have deadlines and we must respond to the SPSO to advise whether we have carried out any actions or not.

| Detail of complaint  | SPSO decision    | Recommendations | Response |
|--|------------------|-----------------|----------|
| "Is that SSSC have not been able to tell you how you can obtain the 50 days assessed practice that you need in order to register to practice as a social worker. You think that SSSC should implement a proper coherent process that would enable people to achieve registration." | Not investigated | n/a             | n/a      |

## Learning points and improvements

- Staff understanding

One complaint was received in mid-September but not correctly reallocated to a different department in Sequence – the department concerned was then not aware of an outstanding complaint and at time of writing (10/10/17) has yet to respond. The complainant incidentally contacted us for an update not long after this issue had been identified.

We reminded staff to ensure they allocate complaints to individuals and not departments in Sequence. We can theoretically remove the link to stop staff being able to link complaints to a team but due to the freeze on development this may have to wait.

- Inappropriate mailing

A registrant working for the Care Inspectorate raised a complaint as they had received a reminder to undertake training as part of their registration – however, the training is not currently available and so will impact on a number of inspectors. We apologised and arranged to exclude care inspectors from the emails.

- Management awareness

The monthly operational performance report now includes a section on complaints. This report is discussed at OMT and EMT. This allows for a more regular summarised report on our performance and any emerging

issues and is in addition to this quarterly report and the annual report to Council.