

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Governance Officer
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 11 June 2024**

Subject: Complaints – Scrutiny Update
Period: 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 and compares performance to the same reporting period in 2022/23. It reflects the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), as well as information on how we improve our services following Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report.

2.1.2 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council’s complaints performance during the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

3. Background

- 3.1 Our complaints procedure Listening to You, has 2 stages. We expect most complaints received to be resolved at Stage 1. If a customer remains dissatisfied after Stage 1, they can escalate their complaint to Stage 2. If an initial complaint is complex enough to require detailed investigation, it will be handled at Stage 2 from the outset. If the complainant is not satisfied with their response at Stage 2, the next stage in the Complaints Handling Procedure is for the complainant to approach the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and ask that they carry out an independent review into how the Council have investigated their complaint.
- 3.2 In April 2022 the SPSO amended their key performance indicators (KPIs) for Complaints Performance. The SPSO has indicated that the consistent application and reporting of performance against these KPIs can be used to compare, contrast and benchmark complaints handling with other organisations and will help share learning and improve standards of complaints handling performance.

- 3.3 The number of mandatory KPIs has been reduced by the SPSO from eight to four. The four mandatory SPSO KPIs formed part of the previous eight mandatory SPSO KPIs. These are:
- **Indicator One: The Total Number of Complaints Received**
 - **Indicator Two: The Number and Percentage of Complaints at Each Stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days**
 - **Indicator Three: the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage**
 - **Indicator Four: The Outcome of Complaints at Each Stage**
- 3.4 Further information on the changes made by the SPSO to Complaints KPIs for Model Complaints Handling Procedures can be found at: [Complaints KPIs for MCHPs \(spsso.org.uk\)](https://spsso.org.uk). Further detail on the mandatory reporting of Key Performance Indicators, information is included in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.5 The following Report provides performance data on all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed from 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 and is based on updated SPSO reporting indicators, which are applicable to complaints from April 2022.
- 3.6 The Panel is asked to note that the following SPSO KPIs are no longer mandatory in terms of reporting Council complaints performance:
- **Complaints Received per 1,000 of the population**
 - **Numbers of Complaints Where an Extension is Authorised**
 - **Customer Satisfaction**
 - **Learning from Complaints**
- 3.7 Performance information is provided within this Report to members for these non-mandatory performance indicators, with comparison against the same reporting period in 2022/23 as agreed at the Service and Performance Panel on 22 November 2022.
- 3.8 [Appendix 1](#) provides an analysis of our complaints data measured against the SPSO's mandatory reporting KPIs for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2022/23.
- 3.9 [Appendix 2](#) provides a breakdown of the reasons why complaints were raised against the Council, for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2022/23.
- 3.10 [Appendix 3](#) provides analysis of our complaints data measured against the four non-mandatory reporting indicators, for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 and compares our performance for the same reporting period in 2022/23.
- 3.11 [Appendix 4](#) outlines service improvement case studies relating to Stage 2 complaints that were upheld or partially upheld where a service improvement outcome was identified and implemented.

- 3.12 [Appendix 5](#) outlines details of complaints that have progressed to the SPSO during this reporting period, which have had recommendations made by the SPSO for the Council to improve service provision.
- 3.13 [Appendix 6](#) provides further information on Investigation complaints received by the Council that have been noted during the reporting period.
- 3.14 [Appendix 7](#) provides information regarding complaints received following the International Ayr Show, during the reporting period.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel:

- 4.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report and identifies any performance concerns or required improvement actions.
- 4.1.2 decides if future reporting should focus only on the four SPSO mandatory KPIs, or continue to include the four non-mandatory KPIs included in this report; and
- 4.1.3 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April to 30 September 2024.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an

Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 8](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy, or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers: None

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Date: 31 May 2024

Complaints Data Analysis Against SPSO Reporting Indicators

Please find below analysis of our complaints data measured against mandatory Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) reporting indicators for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024 with comparison to the same reporting period in 2022/23.

Following on from changes to the Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in 2021, new reporting requirements were introduced by the SPSO which were applicable to complaints data from 1 April 2022 onwards. The SPSO's requirements for reporting and publicising complaints information requires all 32 local authorities in Scotland to use a standardised set of complaints key performance indicators (KPIs). There are now four mandatory KPIs which will be used in this and future reports. They are as follows:

- **Indicator One: The total number of complaints received**
The sum of the number of complaints received at Stage 1 (including escalated complaints as they were first received at Stage 1), and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2.
- **Indicator Two: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days**
The number of complaints closed in full at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation within complaint timescales as % of all stage 1, stage 2 and escalated complaints responded to in full.
- **Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage**
The average (mean) time in working days to respond at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation.
- **Indicator Four: The outcome of complaints at each stage**
The number of complaints upheld, partially upheld, not upheld and resolved at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation as % of all complaints closed at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation.

SPSO Indicator One: the total number of complaints received

		<i>Total</i>	<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Escalated</i>
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	233	187 (80%)	28 (12%)	18 (8%)
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	323 ▲	226 ▲ (70%)	71 ▲ (22%)	26 ▲ (8%)

The number of complaints received by the Council has increased by 39%, i.e., 323 being 90 more complaints in reporting period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to the 233 received in same reporting period in 2021/22.

There has been an *increase* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2022/23 for the following service area:

- **Culture and Events** – 2350% percentage increase in complaints, from 2 in 2022/23 to 49 in the same reporting period in 2023/24. This is as a result of complaints relating to The Scottish Ayr Show.
- **Leisure** – 195% increase in complaints from 21 in 2022/23 to 62 in 2023/24. A number of complaints were received during this reporting period which related to course works at Belleisle and Seafield Golf Course. There were also a number of complaints which related to changes to opening hours and the removal of a Dance Fit class at the Citadel.
- **Community Care** – 92% increase in complaints from 24 in 2022/23 to 46 in 2023/24. While no specific trend has been identified, it should be noted that a decrease in complaints was noted over the period 2020-22 as a result of the pandemic. There has also been an increase in reporting of complaints as a result of work within Community Care to raise awareness of the complaints handling procedure and ensure all complaints are logged appropriately and a complaint response provided.

The following services have shown a significant *decrease* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2022/23:

- **Planning** - 66% decrease in complaints from 12 complaints in 2022/23 to 4 complaints in 2023/24. No trend has been identified with regards to this decrease.
- **Scottish Welfare Fund** – 57% decrease in complaints from 7 complaints in 2022/23 to 3 complaints in 2023/24. It should be noted that during 2022/23 the Scottish Welfare Fund Team were still processing with Self Isolation Support Grants (Covid Grant) which will have impacted on processing times which in turn may have led to complaints about delays in dealing with applications.
- **Property Maintenance** – 28% decrease in complaints from 46 complaints in 2022/23 to 33 complaints in 2023/24. There has been a push within Property Maintenance to meet all arranged appointments, and to contact the tenant if any appointments cannot be met, as well as trying to resolve all works within the first visit, as return appointments can lead to frustration on part of the tenant. As well as this, there has been an increased effort to ensure proper cleaning after an appointment, as well as shoe covers and dust sheets being provided to workers to protect all tenant homes when work is being undertaken.

SPSO Indicator Two: the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full 5 within the set timescales of five and 20 working days

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	73%	61%	78%
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	65% ▼	90% ▲	96% ▲

There has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints closed within 5 working days at Stage 1, however when taking into account extensions this rises to 85% of timescales met at Stage 1. There has been an improvement in timescales in Stage 2 and escalated

complaints which have risen 29% and 18% respectively, compared with the same reporting period in 2022/23.

SPSO Indicator Three: the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	5	22	17
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	6▲	15▼	11▼

The SPSO timescale for responding to a Stage 1 complaint is 5 working days. The average time taken to investigate and respond to a Stage 1 complaint during this reporting period was 6 working days which is an increase on the same reporting period from 2022/23 and brings the Stage 1 average response outwith SPSO requirements.

The SPSO time scale for responding to both Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is 20 working days. The average response time for Stage 2 and Escalated complaints has gone down from 22 to 15 and 17 to 11 days across the reporting period, which is within SPSO requirements.

SPSO Indicator Four: the outcome of complaints at each stage

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 1

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Resolved
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	61 (33%)	23 (12%)	73 (39%)	30 (16%)
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	64 (28%)▼	24 (11%)▼	106 (47%)▲	32 (14%)▼

A total of 226 complaints were closed at stage 1 in 2023/24. 39% of these were either upheld or partially upheld, a decrease of 6% percentage points from the same reporting period in 2022/23. This indicates that in 2/5 of stage one investigations it was established that the customer had raised legitimate concerns about a service delivery.

14% of cases were closed as “resolved” – this outcome was introduced by the SPSO in 2021. A complaint is resolved when both the investigating officer and the complainant agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the complainant, without deciding about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. This is a 2% decrease from the same reporting period in 2022/23. Further information on this new SPSO outcome is available on Pages 3 and 4 at: [LAMCHPPart3.pdf \(spsos.org.uk\)](https://www.spsos.org.uk/LAMCHPPart3.pdf)

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 2

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Resolved
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	5 (18%)	9 (32%)	14 (50%)	0 (0%)
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	9 (13%)▼	8 (11%)▼	53 (75%)▲	1 (1%)▲

71 complaints were closed at Stage 2, an increase of 43 complaints in comparison to the 28 complaints closed at Stage 2, for the same period in 2022/23. Of these 71 complaints, 40 related to parking issues at the International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight, many of which, due to the requirement to liaise with external contractors, could not be resolved within 5 working days. Of the 71 Stage 2 complaints, 75% were not upheld indicating that in three quarters of the Stage 2 investigations it was found our service was meeting expected standards.

Outcome of Escalated Complaints

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Resolved
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	1 (6%)	6 (33%)	11 (61%)	0 (0%)
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	4 (15%)▲	6 (23%)▼	15 (58%)▼	1 (4%)▲

26 complaints were escalated by the customer from a Stage 1 to a Stage 2 investigation, an increase of 6 complaints from the 18 escalated complaints in the same reporting period in 2022/23. This indicates that fewer customers were satisfied by the outcome of their complaint at Stage one.

Of these 26 escalated complaints 38% were either upheld or partially upheld, indicating that in over one-third of escalated complaint investigations it was established customer concerns were further considered and accepted by Council services.

Further detailed analysis of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is outlined in Appendix 2.

The top 3 reasons for complaints received by the Council (as categorised within the Complaints Handling system) are:

		<i>01/10 – 31/03 (2022/23)</i>		<i>01/10 – 31/03 (2023/24)</i>
Stage 1	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision
	2	Employee Behaviour	2	Employee Behaviour
	3	Waiting Times/Missed Appointments	3	Policy and Procedure
Stage 2	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision
	2	Employee Behaviour	2	Policy and Procedure
	3	Policy and Procedure	3	Employee Behaviour

These reasons have remained consistent, with the exception of Policy and Procedure appointments being the 3rd main category for Stage 1 complaints.

Breakdown of Complaints by Service:

Information relating to the services which have had the biggest increase and decrease in complaints is outlined above, on page 6 of this Report.

	2022/23	2023/24	
Additional Support Needs	-	-	◀▶
Archives	-	-	◀▶

	2022/23	2023/24	
Asset Management	-	-	◀▶
Benefits	2	-	▼
Bereavement Services	-	1	▲
Building Standards	-	1	▲
Children and Families	6	12	▲
Committee Services	-	-	◀▶
Communication	-	-	◀▶
Community Care	24	46	▲
Criminal Justice	-	-	◀▶
Culture and Events	2	47	▲
Customer Services	2	-	▼
Early Years	1	-	▼
Education Central	3	-	▼
Enterprise	-	-	◀▶
Environmental Health	-	1	▲
Facilities	2	3	▲
Fleet Management	1	-	▼
Finance	-	1	▲
Housing	33	27	▼
Housing Policy	1	-	▼
ICT	1	1	◀▶
Insurance	1	-	▼
Justice Services	-	1	▲
Legal	-	-	◀▶
Leisure	21	62	▲
Licensing	-	1	▲
Neighbourhood Services	40	40	◀▶
Planning	12	4	▼
Projects and Design	2	1	▼
Property Maintenance	46	33	▼
Registration	-	-	◀▶
Revenues	7	9	▲
Primary Schools	6	14	▲
Secondary Schools	6	10	▲
Scottish Welfare Fund	7	3	▼
Social Care Finance	4	3	▼
Trading Standards	1	-	▼
Ukrainian Support Team	-	2	▲

Further detailed analysis of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is outlined in Appendix 2

Reasons for Complaints

The undernoted Table 1 provides a breakdown of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 1, between 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024, in comparison to figures in the same reporting period in 2022/23. The categories allocated are based on pre-defined categories that can be allocated to a case within the Council's corporate complaints system, GOSS.

The categories reflect the high-level categories stipulated by the SPSO.

Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints

Category	2022/23		2023/24		
	Number	% Of Total Stage 1	Number	% Of Total Stage 1	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	119	64%	164	73%	▲
Other	8	4%	7	3%	▼
Employee Behaviour	21	11%	20	9%	▼
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury	11	6%	6	2%	▼
Policy Procedure	9	5%	15	7%	▲
Lack of Information	3	2%	0	0%	▼
Waiting Times/ Missed App	16	8%	14	6%	▼
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Service Cuts	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Total	187	100%	226	100%	

Employee Behaviour Complaints

The number of employee behaviour complaints has decreased from 21 in 2022/23 to 20 in 2023/24. This is still 9% of complaints closed at stage 1, which is a 2% decrease from the 11% reported for 2022/23. Of these complaints:

- 4 were upheld, with an apology issued to the customer
- 13 were partially or not upheld, with an explanation provided as appropriate
- 3 were resolved, with an explanation provided

The complaints received were across various Council services, including Community Care, Housing, Leisure, Neighbourhood Services and Property Maintenance, with there being no specific trend or thread of concern noted. Limited information is recorded centrally regarding these complaints in compliance with data protection legislation, but as with all employee complaints Service Leads and line managers would apply the relevant Council policies to any employee behaviours having been found to fail meeting Council standards.

The undernoted has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by our Services showing which Council Services received the complaints referred to in Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints, above.

Providing this level of information on the GOSS system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints in Table 1, although services are encouraged to provide this data:

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
Children and Families	Ayr North Locality Team	-	3
	Ayr South Locality Team	1	-
	Children and Families Disability Team	1	-
	Children's Houses	-	2
	Family Placement/Adoption Team	-	1
	Girvan and Maybole Locality Team	2	1
	Management Team	1	1
	Prestwick/Troon Locality Team	-	1
	Community Care	Arrol Park	-
	Arran View	-	10
	In House Homecare	2	5
	Mental Health Team	1	1
	Older People Team Ayr North	-	1
	Older People Team Maybole Girvan	1	3
	Older People Team Prestwick	-	-
	Older People Team Troon	3	-
	Older People Ayr Hospital	-	-
	Older People Ayr South	3	-
	Older People Maybole & Girvan	1	-
	Older People Prestwick	1	-
	Occupational Therapy	-	4
	Overmills	-	-
	Re-enablement	-	-
	South Lodge	-	1
	Telecare	-	-
Customer Services	Accuracy of Information	-	-
	Customer Journey	-	-
	Quality of Customer Service	-	-
	Waiting Times	2	-
Facilities	Catering	1	-
	Public Convenience	1	3

Service	Subject	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
	School crossing patrol	-	-
Housing	Housing Policy	1	5
	Access to Housing Support	2	5
	Customer Landlord Relations	6	3
	Neighbourhood and Community	1	-
	Quality Maintenance	9	7
	Housing Service Value	-	1
	Travellers	-	-
Leisure	Citadel	1	14
	Golf	12	25
	Swimming Pools	3	8
	Other Leisure Facilities	1	1
	Lets	1	-
Neighbourhood Services	Missed Bin	9	4
	Litter Bin	-	5
	Fouling	-	-
	Grass Cutting	-	-
	Litter	5	1
	Other	3	-
	Parks	2	-
	Play Areas	-	-
	Recycling Facilities	8	7
	Special Uplifts	-	1
	Staff	-	4
	Street Sweeping	3	-
	Waste Collection	4	4
Planning	Planning Application	1	-
	Planning Enforcement	2	-
	Planning Objection	-	3
	Other	2	1
Property Maintenance	Quality Maintenance	-	-
	Staff	2	-
	Communication	1	2
	Dissatisfied with Repair	25	21
	Private Owner	2	-
	External Contractor	2	2
	Other	1	3
Schools	Ayr Academy	1	-
	Ayr Grammar	-	-
	Annbank Primary	-	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	1
	Belmont Academy	-	3
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Carrick Campus	1	4
	Coylton Primary	-	-

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
	Dailly Primary	-	1
	Doonfoot Primary	2	1
	Dalmilling Primary	-	-
	Forehill Primary	-	-
	Gardenrose Primary	-	-
	Girvan Academy	-	-
	Girvan Primary	-	1
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	1	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	1
	Kyle Academy	1	-
	Marr College	1	-
	Muirhead Primary	1	-
	Monkton Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Prestwick Academy	1	4
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-
	Sacred Heart Primary	-	-
	Symington Primary	1	-
	St Johns Primary	-	-
	St Patrick's	-	1
	Tarbolton Primary	-	-
	Troon Primary	-	-
	Wallacetown Nursery	-	-

The undernoted table provides an overview of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 2 between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024 compared to the same reporting period in 2022/23. These categories reflect the high-level categories stipulated by the SPSO.

Table 2 - Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints

Category	2022/23		2023/24		
	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	22	78%	55	77%	▼
Policy and Procedure	1	4%	11	16%	▲
Employee Behaviour	1	4%	3	4%	◀▶
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Waiting Times/ Missed App	1	4%	2	3%	▼
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶

Category	2022/23		2023/24		
Subject	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Lack of Information	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Other	3	10%	0	0%	▼
Total	28	100%	71	100%	

Policy and Procedure

There is an increase of 10 Stage 2 complaints being categorised under Policy and Procedure (1 in 2022/23 in comparison to 11 in 2023/24). Of these 11 complaints, 8 (73%) related to the decision to introduce a charge for Brown Bin collections, all of which were not upheld.

Employee Behaviour Complaints

Of the three employee behaviour complaints logged at Stage 2 complaint, one above was investigated by Justice Services and two by Housing Services. One of the Housing Services complaints was partially upheld, while both other complaints were not and an explanation as to why was provided to the customer.

The undernoted has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by our Services showing which Council Services received the complaints referred to in Table 2 – Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints, above.

Providing this level of information on the GOSS system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints in Table 2, although services are encouraged to provide this data:

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
Children and Families	Ayr North Team	-	1
	Girvan/Maybole Team	-	-
	Disability Team	-	-
Community Care	Older People Ayr South	-	-
	Older People Ayr Troon	-	-
	Arrol Park	-	-
	Arran View	-	1
	In-House Home Care	-	2
	Private Home Care	-	-
	Maybole/Girvan Team	-	-
Culture & Events	Ayr Show - Festival of Flight	-	40
Housing	Quality Maintenance	3	2
	Customer Landlord Relations	2	3
	Value	1	-
	Access to Housing/Support	1	-
	Neighbourhood and Community	2	-

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
Leisure	Golf	-	-
	Swimming Pools	-	-
Planning	Planning Applications	3	-
	Planning Objection	-	-
Property Maintenance	Employee Behaviour	1	-
	Dissatisfied with Repair	1	2
	Private Owners	2	-
	Other	2	-
Schools	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Doonfoot Primary	=	1
	Dundonald Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Troon Primary	-	-
	Carrick Campus	-	-
	Kincaidston Primary	-	1
	Kyle Academy	1	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Prestwick Academy	-	1
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-

Table 3 - Reasons for Escalated Complaints

The following table provides a breakdown of the reasons for a complaint being escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. A customer can ask for their complaint to be escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 when they remain dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1:

Category	2022/23		2023/24		
	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	14	78%	20	77%	▼
Employee Behaviour	2	11%	0	0%	▼
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Damage to Property/Personal Injury	1	5.5%	1	4%	▼
Waiting Times/ Missed App	0	0%	1	4%	▲

Category	2022/23		2023/24		
Subject	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	Number	% Of Total Stage 2	
Policy and Procedure	1	5.5%	4	15%	▲
Lack of Information	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Other	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Total	18	100%	26	100%	

Quality of Service Complaints

The following front-line services received the highest proportion of complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 to categorised as quality of service

- Children and Families – 10% (2 partially upheld)
- Leisure – 30% (6 not upheld)
- Community Care – 25% (2 upheld, 1 not upheld, 2 partially upheld)

The following has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. It is not a mandatory requirement for services to input this information when completing cases on our GOSS system - but they are encouraged to complete these fields. As a result, the number of complaints detailed below may not equate to the total number of Escalated complaints reported:

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
Community Care	Arran View	2	3
	Arrol Park	-	-
	In House Home Care	-	-
	Telecare	-	-
	Older People Ayr North	-	1
	Older People Ayr South	-	1
	Older People Maybole/Girvan	-	-
	Older People Prestwick	-	-
	Older People Troon	-	-
Culture & Events	Ayr Show - Festival of Flight	-	1
Housing	Customer Landlord Relations	1	-
	Quality Maintenance	2	1
	Access	1	-
	Neighbourhood and Community	1	-
Leisure	Citadel	1	1
	Golf	1	8
Neighbourhood Services	Missed Bin	-	1
	Recycling Facilities	1	-
	Trees	-	1

Service	Subject	2022/23	2023/24
	Bin Return	-	-
	Other	-	-
Property Maintenance	Dissatisfied with Repair	1	-
	Private Owners	-	1
Schools	Alloway Primary	-	
	Annbank Primary	-	1
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	-
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	-	-
	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	-
	Dalmling Primary	-	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Struthers Primary	-	-
	Symington Primary	1	-
	Kyle Academy	-	-
	Carrick Academy	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-

Additional Information - Complaints Data Analysis Against Non-Mandatory Reporting Indicators

The undernoted no longer forms part of the mandatory KPI reporting to the SPSO, however this information has been included to Members in this report as additional information:

Additional Information - Complaints Received per 1,000 of the population

2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	2 per 1,000
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	3 per 1,000

The number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population has increased between the two reporting periods.

Additional Information – Number of Cases where an Extension is Authorised

		<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Escalated</i>
2022/23	01/10 – 31/03	36	6	5
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	44 ▲	4 ▼	0 ▼

An extension, when required, can be applied to a complaint investigation, in consultation with the complainant, when it is established, the complaint is complex and requires time to fully investigate.

Extensions are encouraged when complaints will take longer than the required time scale, to ensure that complainants are kept up to date when the status of their case. For this reporting period 48 complaints were subject to an authorised extension in comparison to 47 for the same reporting period in 2022/23, i.e., a 2% increase. This indicates that our complaints investigators work to providing a thorough and full investigation of complaints and will seek extensions to timescales to ensure the response is of the standards expected by the SPSO.

Additional Information – Customer Satisfaction

To gauge Customer Satisfaction in our complaints process we actively encourage members of the public to provide us with their feedback on their experience. This feedback allows us to establish where our process can be strengthened to meet customer needs.

Completion of this survey is not a compulsory part of the complaints process, and it is challenging to elicit feedback from the public in how we can continuously improve our actual complaints process. A survey is available online for anyone using our service to complete, and Information Governance also invites a sample of customers to provide us with this helpful feedback.

Between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024, 60 requests were issued to members of the public inviting them to participate in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. 12 customer satisfaction surveys were completed which constitutes a 20% return.

Feedback received from the 20% who responded indicates that:

	2022/23			2023/24		
	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Information about the complaints procedure was easily accessible	50%	12%	38%	63%	0%	36%
I found it easy to make my complaint	56%	6%	38%	55%	18%	27%
I was happy that the Investigating Officer fully understood my complaint	50%	-	50%	36%	18%	45%
I was given the opportunity to fully explain my complaint	63%	6%	31%	55%	27%	18%
The points of my complaint were identified and responded to	56%	6%	38%	36%	27%	36%
The response to my complaint was easy to understand	56%	6%	38%	55%	36%	8%
Overall, I was satisfied with the handling of my complaint	43%	6%	50%	36%	18%	45%
I was told if the response was going to take longer than the set timescales	31%	31%	38%	18%	55%	27%
I was clearly told what the next stage of the complaints process was for me	43%	12%	43%	45%	18%	36%

Overall, complaint respondents were less likely to report that they disagree or strongly disagree with all 9 statements of our survey. A few respondents indicated their dissatisfaction in:

- Being satisfied the investigation understood and address their concerns
- The overall handling of complaints

The negative responses received were from customers who felt the Council did not provide the outcome to their complaint they hoped for or expected (i.e., was not upheld).

Learning from Complaints - Service Improvement Case Studies

Leisure

A complaint was lodged regarding equipment and reduced hours at the Citadel and the failure to notify members of this change. An investigation was undertaken and while it was found that notifications of the change were displayed in the centre, an apology was issued that further steps were not taken to notify customers. As a result of this complaint, staff worked on and implemented a new operational model where openings hours could revert to those previously advertised, whilst retaining additional cleaning time throughout the day for staff, as well as working on an Action Plan to ensure that any improvements are maintained and monitored and so that all outstanding maintenance could be addressed.

Culture & Events

A number of complaints were received regarding parking at the Ayr Show, many of which related to issues surrounding parking at the event. While investigations into the complaints found extensive traffic management was in place across Ayr ahead of, during and following the event, and that the issues with parking was due to the surrounding road network having a significant increase in traffic, areas of improvement have been identified for the 2024 event which will address many of the issues raised. For example, engagement with a event car park company to manage the car parks, as well as changes to our traffic management plan and an increase in the enforcement of parking restrictions in residential areas.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Improvement Cases

No Decision Notices were published by the Ombudsman relating to South Ayrshire Council during the reporting period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024.

Stage 2 Complaints Monitoring

All Stage 2 complaints investigated by the Council are monitored, and each quarter any considered to be serious or high risk are reported to the Integrity Group.

Most Stage 2 complaints were undertaken at the Stage 2 level because they involved either a response from more than one service or were too complex to resolve within 5 working days at Stage 1.

In reporting period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 no Stage 2 complaints were identified as being serious or high risk, i.e., those that would have a serious impact on the Council's ability to provide services to the public.

The International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight Complaints

The Council received a significant number of complaints in relation to The International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight, 47 of which were responded to within this reporting period. This is further to the 16 complaints which were closed during the previous reporting period.

Information relating to the 47 complaints closed during this reporting period is outlined below.

	Stage	Reason	Action Taken	Outcome
1	Stage 1	Dog friendly event	Explanation	Not Upheld
2	Stage 1	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
3	Stage 1	Parking	Apology	Upheld
4	Stage 1	Parking	Apology	Upheld
5	Stage 1	Parking	Apology	Upheld
6	Stage 1	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
7	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
8	Stage 2	Parking	Apology	Upheld
9	Stage 2	Parking	Apology	Upheld
10	Stage 2	Parking	Apology	Upheld
11	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Partially Upheld
12	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Partially Upheld
13	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Partially Upheld
14	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Partially Upheld
15	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
16	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
17	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
18	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
19	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
20	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
21	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
22	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
23	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
24	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
25	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
26	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
27	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
28	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
29	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
30	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
31	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
32	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
33	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
34	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
35	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
36	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
37	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
38	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld

	Stage	Reason	Action Taken	Outcome
39	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
40	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
41	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
42	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
43	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
44	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
45	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
46	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld
47	Stage 2	Parking	Explanation	Not Upheld

As part of a significant high-profile complaint, which attracted tens of thousands of members of the public to visit and participate, it is noted that improvements to service delivery can always be made, and lessons are being learnt from the feedback provided by the public for the event in 2024.



South Ayrshire Council Equality Impact Assessment Scoping Template

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. [FSD Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

1. Policy details

Policy Title	Complaints – Scrutiny Update
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Wynne Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance – wynne.carlaw@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	-	-
Disability	-	-
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	-	-
Marriage or Civil Partnership	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	-	-
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	-	-
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	-	-
Sexual Orientation – person's sexual orientation i.e., LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	-	-

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children's Rights	-	-

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	-	-
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	-	-
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	-	-
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	-	-
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e., parent's education, employment, and income	-	-

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the 'Three Key Needs' of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium, or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation	Low
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES NO
Rationale for decision: This report is an analysis of performance that allows scrutiny. There are no proposals at this stage to alter the way we provide services or Council policies	
Signed: Catriona Caves	Head of Service
Date: 5 May 2023	