

**South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Head of Legal and Regulatory Services  
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel  
of 13 June 2023**

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**Subject: Complaints – Scrutiny Update**  
**Period: 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023 and compares performance to the same reporting period in 2021/22. 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 2023 to 30 September 2023.**

**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://www.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 2022 – 31 March 2023 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 2021/22 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 2022 – 31 March 2023 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2021/22.
- 3.9 [Appendix 2](#) provides a breakdown of the reasons why complaints were raised against the Council, for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2021/22.
- 3.10 [Appendix 3](#) provides analysis of our complaints data measured against the four non-mandatory reporting indicators, for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023 and compares our performance for the same reporting period in 2021/22.
- 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.

#### **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 2023.

#### **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 7](#).

## **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: 1 June 2023**

## 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 2022 – 31 March 2023 with comparison to the same reporting period in 2021/22.

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***

		<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>Stage 1</i></b>	<b><i>Stage 2</i></b>	<b><i>Escalated</i></b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>174</b>	<b>144 (83%)</b>	<b>18 (10%)</b>	<b>12 (7%)</b>
<b>2023/34</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>233 ▲</b>	<b>187 (80%) ▼</b>	<b>28 (12%) ▲</b>	<b>18 (8%) ▲</b>

The number of complaints received by the Council has increased by 34%, i.e., 233 being 59 more complaints in reporting period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, compared to the 174 received in same reporting period in 2021/22.

There has been an *increase* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2021/22 for the following service area:

- **Neighbourhood Services** – 285% percentage increase in complaints, from 14 in 2021/22 to 40 in the same reporting period in 2022/23. The following service areas have shown the greatest increase:
  - *Recycling facilities* – increased from 2 complaints in 2021/22 to 9 in 2022/23. Most of these complaints related to the booking system.
  - *Missed Bins* - increased from 0 complaints in 2021/22 to 9 in 2022/23, including complaints relating to missed assisted collections, the collection of communal bins and delays in collecting bins which were reported as being missed. Of the 9 complaints, 8 were upheld or partially upheld and apologies were given.
  - *Litter* - increased from 0 complaints in 2021/22 to 6 in 2022/23. The majority of these complaints related to litter on trunk roads, the clearing of which takes place every March/April when visibility improves, to ensure the operation is safer for operatives to carry out.

Panel is asked to note that there is no specific trend in the complaints received to indicate a pattern of poor service delivery that requires further consideration for improvements. Complaints relating to Neighbourhood Services have been registered for a variety of different areas including tree and grass maintenance, parks, play areas, recycling facilities, staff attitude and behaviour, waste collection and recycling. Of the 14 complaints, 6 were upheld with apologies and explanations issued as appropriate.

- **Leisure** – 210% increase in complaints from 10 in 2021/22 to 21 in 2022/23. While complaints relating to the Citadel and other leisure facilities have remained relatively constant, complaints relating to the Golf service have increased from 3 complaints in 2021/22 to 13 in 2022/23. Most of these complaints relate to booking issues and the availability of preferred tee times following the introduction of a more equitable booking system last year.
- **Scottish Welfare Fund** – there has been an increase in complaints received with regards to applications through the Scottish Welfare Fund procedure from 1 complaint in 2021/22 to 7 complaints in 2022/23. Generally, complaints arise where we are unable to approve an application as it does not comply with the qualifying criteria, which results in dissatisfaction particularly where the applicant may be experiencing financial difficulties. It should also be noted that as well as an increase in complaints, the number of applications for funding has increased by 17%.

The following services have shown a significant *decrease* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2021/22:

- **Facilities Management** – 75% decrease from 8 complaints in 2021/22 down to 2 complaints in 2022/23. Most complaints received in 2021/22 related to the introduction of contactless payment systems in Council public conveniences. Following an initial surge in complaints with the introduction of this scheme, the number of complaints received by facilities management has fallen to 2, only one of which related to contactless payments.

- **Primary Schools** – 46% decrease in complaints relating to primary/nursery schools from 13 in 2021/22 to 6 in 2022/23. In both reporting periods, complaints were received relating to a range of different matters across different schools. There was no specific trend reported at the time. However, it is noted there has been a significant decrease in complaints between 2021/22 and 2022/23 relating to bullying interventions across South Ayrshire from 6 in 2021/22 to 0 in 2022/23.
- **Revenues** – there has been a decrease in complaints from 12 complaints relating to Revenues in 2021/22 to 7 in 2022/23. There is no specific identifiable trend which can be attributed to the decrease. The Revenues service continues to have high volumes of customer contact in relation to Council Tax where Annual Bills are issued to over 56,000 households.

***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***

		<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Escalated</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	(94) 65%	(12) 67%	(9) 75%
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>(187) 73% ▲</b>	<b>(17) 61% ▼</b>	<b>(14) 78% ▲</b>

There has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints closed within 20 working days at Stage 2, and an improvement in timescales in Stage 1 complaints which have risen 8% and Escalated complaints, which have risen 3%, compared with the same reporting period in 2021/22.

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

		<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Escalated</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	6	22	16
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>5 ▼</b>	<b>22 ◀▶</b>	<b>17 ▲</b>

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 5 working days which is an improvement on the same reporting period from 2021/22 and brings the Stage 1 average response within SPSO requirements.

The SPSO time scale for responding to both Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is 20 working days. The average response time for Escalated complaints has gone up from 16 to 17 days across the reporting period. However, this remains within SPSO requirements.

The average response time for Stage 2 complaints has remained consistent with the previous reporting period. While it is recognised that Stage 2 complaints on average took 22 days to complete, investigating officers are also asked to ensure that a complaint is investigated thoroughly, and due to the complex nature of some Stage 2 complaints this cannot always be achieved within 20 working days.



## **SPSO Indicator Four: the outcome of complaints at each stage**

### **Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 1**

		<b><i>Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Partially Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Not Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Resolved</i></b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>29 (20%)</b>	<b>20 (14%)</b>	<b>64 (44%)</b>	<b>31 (22%)</b>
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>61 (33%) ▲</b>	<b>23 (12%) ▼</b>	<b>73 (39%) ▼</b>	<b>30 (16%) ▼</b>

A total of 187 complaints were closed at stage 1 in 2022/23. 45% of these were either upheld or partially upheld, an increase of 11% percentage points from the same reporting period in 2021/22. This indicates that that almost half of the stage one investigations it was established that the customer had raised legitimate concerns about a service delivery.

16% 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 5% decrease from the same reporting period in 2021/22. Further information on this new SPSO outcome is available on Pages 3 and 4 at: [LAMCHPart3.pdf \(spsos.org.uk\)](https://www.spsos.org.uk/LAMCHPart3.pdf)

### **Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 2**

		<b><i>Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Partially Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Not Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Resolved</i></b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>1 (5.5%)</b>	<b>4 (22%)</b>	<b>12 (67%)</b>	<b>1 (5.5%)</b>
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>5 (18%) ▲</b>	<b>9 (32%) ▲</b>	<b>14 (50%) ▼</b>	<b>0 (0%) ▼</b>

28 complaints were closed at Stage 2, an increase of 10 complaints in comparison to the 18 complaints closed at Stage 2, for the same period in 2021/22. Of these 28 complaints, 50% were not upheld indicating that in half of the Stage 2 investigations it was found our service was meeting expected standards.

### **Outcome of Escalated Complaints**

		<b><i>Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Partially Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Not Upheld</i></b>	<b><i>Resolved</i></b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>3 (25%)</b>	<b>8 (67%)</b>	<b>1 (8%)</b>
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>1 (6%) ▲</b>	<b>6 (33%) ▲</b>	<b>11 (61%) ▼</b>	<b>0 ▼</b>

18 complaints were escalated by the customer from a Stage 1 to a Stage 2 investigation, an increase of 6 complaints (i.e., 50%) from the 12 escalated complaints in the same reporting period in 2021/22. This indicates that fewer customers were satisfied by the outcome of their complaint at Stage one.

Of these 18 escalated complaints 39% 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:

		01/10 – 31/03 (2021/22)		01/10 – 31/03 (2022/23)
<b>Stage 1</b>	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision
	2	Employee Behaviour	2	Employee Behaviour
	3	Damage to Property/Personal Injury	3	Waiting Times/Missed Appointments
<b>Stage 2</b>	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision
	2	Policy and Procedure	2	Employee Behaviour
	3	Employee Behaviour	3	Policy and Procedure

These reasons have remained consistent, with the exception of Waiting Times/Missed appointments being the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

	2021/22	2022/23	
<b>Additional Support Needs</b>	1	-	▼
<b>Archives</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Asset Management</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Benefits</b>	3	2	▼
<b>Bereavement Services</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Building Standards</b>	1	-	▼
<b>Children and Families</b>	10	6	▼
<b>Committee Services</b>	1	-	▼
<b>Communication</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Community Care</b>	19	24	▲
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Customer Services</b>	-	2	▲
<b>Early Years</b>	-	1	▲
<b>Education Central</b>	1	3	▲
<b>Enterprise</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Environmental Health</b>	2	-	▼
<b>Facilities</b>	8	2	▼
<b>Fleet Management</b>	-	1	▲
<b>Finance</b>	2	-	▼
<b>Housing</b>	20	33	▲
<b>Housing Policy</b>	2	1	▼
<b>ICT</b>	1	1	◀▶
<b>Insurance</b>	-	1	▲
<b>Legal</b>	2	-	▼
<b>Leisure</b>	10	21	▲
<b>Libraries</b>	-	2	▲
<b>Licensing</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Museums</b>	-	2	▲

	2021/22	2022/23	
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>	14	40	▲
<b>Planning</b>	1	12	▲
<b>Projects and Design</b>	-	2	▲
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	43	46	▲
<b>Registration</b>	-	-	◀▶
<b>Revenues</b>	12	7	▼
<b>Primary Schools</b>	13	6	▼
<b>Secondary Schools</b>	7	6	▼
<b>Scottish Welfare Fund</b>	1	7	▲
<b>Social Care Finance</b>	-	4	▲
<b>Trading Standards</b>	-	1	▲

*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 2022 to 31 March 2023, in comparison to figures in the same reporting period in 2021/22. 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**

<b>Category</b>	<b>2021/22</b>		<b>2022/23</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 1</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 1</b>	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	92	64%	119	64%	◀▶
Other	12	8%	8	4%	▼
Employee Behaviour	11	8%	21	11%	▲
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury	11	8%	11	6%	▼
Policy Procedure	5	3%	9	5%	▲
Lack of Information	6	4%	3	2%	▼
Waiting Times/ Missed App	7	5%	16	8%	▲
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Service Cuts	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Employee Behaviour Complaints

The number of employee behaviour complaints has increased from 11 in 2021/22 to 21 in 2022/23. This is still however 11% of complaints closed at stage 1, which is consistent with 11% reported for 2021/22. Of these complaints:

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

The complaints received were across various Council services, including Scottish Welfare Fund, Property Maintenance, Housing and Neighbourhood Services, 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.

### Waiting Times/Missed Appointments

16 complaints were received in 2022/23 in comparison to 7 in 2021/22, which were mainly dealt with by our Property Maintenance team (11 Out of 16). Of these, 6 were upheld or partially upheld, 2 were not upheld and 3 were resolved between the Council and the customer.

Property maintenance dealt with over 13,500 repairs during this reporting period, which equates to 0.08% of repairs receiving a complaint due to waiting times or missed appointments.

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:

<b><u>Service</u></b>	<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>
<b>Children and Families</b>	Ayr North Locality Team	2	-
	Ayr South Locality Team	2	1
	Children and Families Disability Team	1	1
	Children's Houses	-	-
	Family Placement/Adoption Team	1	-
	Girvan and Maybole Locality Team	-	2
	Management Team	-	1
	Prestwick/Troon Locality Team	1	-
	<b>Community Care</b>	Arrol Park	-
Arran View		-	-
In House Homecare		3	2
Mental Health Team		-	1
Older People Team Ayr North		-	-
Older People Team Maybole Girvan		1	1
Older People Team Prestwick		1	-
Older People Team Troon		-	3
Older People Ayr Hospital		-	-
Older People Ayr South		2	3
Older People Maybole & Girvan		-	1
Older People Prestwick		-	1
Occupational Therapy		2	-
Overmills		2	-

<b><u>Service</u></b>	<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>
	Re-enablement	-	-
	South Lodge	-	-
	Telecare	-	-
<b>Customer Services</b>	Accuracy of Information	-	-
	Customer Journey	-	-
	Quality of Customer Service	-	-
	Waiting Times	-	2
<b>Facilities</b>	Catering	-	1
	Public Convenience	7	1
	School crossing patrol	-	-
<b>Housing</b>	Housing Policy	-	1
	Access to Housing Support	2	2
	Customer Landlord Relations	-	6
	Neighbourhood and Community	1	1
	Quality Maintenance	10	9
	Housing Service Value	1	-
	Travellers	-	-
<b>Leisure</b>	Citadel	3	1
	Golf	1	12
	Swimming Pools	1	3
	Other Leisure Facilities	2	1
	Lets	-	1
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>	Missed Bin	-	9
	Cemeteries	-	-
	Fouling	-	-
	Grass Cutting	-	-
	Litter	-	5
	Other	-	3
	Parks	1	2
	Play Areas	2	-
	Recycling Facilities	2	8
	Special Uplifts	-	-
	Staff	1	-
	Street Sweeping	-	3
	Waste Collection	2	4
<b>Planning</b>	Planning Application	1	1
	Planning Enforcement	-	2
	Other	-	2
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	Quality Maintenance	-	-
	Staff	1	2
	Communication	4	1
	Dissatisfied with Repair	21	25
	Private Owner	4	2
	External Contractor	-	2
	Other	2	1
<b>Schools</b>	Ayr Academy	1	1

<b>Service</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	Ayr Grammar	-	-
	Annbank Primary	2	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Carrick Academy	-	1
	Coylton Primary	1	-
	Dailly Primary	-	-
	Doonfoot Primary	1	2
	Dalmilling Primary	-	-
	Forehill Primary	1	-
	Gardenrose Primary	1	-
	Girvan Academy	-	-
	Girvan Primary	2	-
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	1
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Kyle Academy	1	1
	Marr College	2	1
	Muirhead Primary	-	1
	Monkton Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Prestwick Academy	1	1
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-
	Sacred Heart Primary	-	-
	Symington Primary	1	1
	St Johns Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	1	-
	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 2022 and 31 March 2023 compared to the same reporting period in 2020/21. These categories reflect the high-level categories stipulated by the SPSO.

**Table 2 - Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints**

<b>Category</b>	<b>2021/22</b>		<b>2022/23</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	9	50%	22	78%	▲
Policy and Procedure	2	11%	1	4%	▼

<b>Category</b>	<b>2021/22</b>		<b>2022/23</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	
Employee Behaviour	1	5.5%	1	4%	▼
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury	2	11%	0	0%	▼
Waiting Times/ Missed App	0	0%	1	4%	▲
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Lack of Information	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Other	1	5.5%	3	10%	▼
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Quality of Service/Service Provision

There is an increase of 13 Stage 2 complaints being categorised under Quality of Service (9 in 2021/22 in comparison to 22 in 2022/23). This category equates to 78% of Stage 2 complaints. There were no specific trends identified in these complaints, which were received across multiple front-facing services including Housing, Planning, and property maintenance. 10 of these complaints were either upheld, or partially upheld indicating that in almost half of these cases the customer had raised concerns that were addressed by the service.

### Employee Behaviour Complaints

The Stage 2 complaint above was investigated by Housing Services. Upon investigation, this complaint was not upheld 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:*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Children and Families</b>	Girvan/Maybole Team	-	-
	Disability Team	-	-
<b>Community Care</b>	Older People Ayr South	-	-
	Older People Ayr Troon	-	-
	Arrol Park	-	-
	Private Home Care	-	-
	Maybole/Girvan Team	-	-
<b>Housing</b>	Quality Maintenance	1	3



<b>Service</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	Customer Landlord Relations	-	2
	Value	-	1
	Access to Housing/Support	-	1
	Neighbourhood and Community	-	2
<b>Leisure</b>	Golf	5	-
	Swimming Pools	-	-
<b>Planning</b>	Planning Applications	-	3
	Planning Objection	-	-
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	Employee Behaviour	-	1
	Dissatisfied with Repair	1	1
	Private Owners	1	2
	Other	-	2
<b>Schools</b>	Ayr Academy	1	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	1	-
	Dundonald Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Troon Primary	-	-
	Carrick Academy	-	-
	Kyle Academy	-	1
	Belmont Academy	1	-
	Prestwick Academy	-	-
	Queen Margaret Academy	1	-

**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:

<b>Category</b>	<b>2021/22</b>				
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	6	50%	14	78%	▲
Employee Behaviour	2	16.6%	2	11%	▼
Case Unresolved	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Damage to Property/Personal Injury	0	0%	1	5.5%	▲

<b>Category</b>	<b>2021/22</b>				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% Of Total Stage 2</b>	
Policy and Procedure	2	16.6%	1	5.5%	▼
Lack of Information	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Discrimination	0	0%	0	0%	◀▶
Other	2	16.6%	0	0%	◀▶
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 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 – 21% (1 not upheld, 2 partially upheld)
- Housing – 14% (1 not upheld, 1 upheld)
- Planning – 14% (1 not upheld, 1 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:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Community Care</b>	Arran View	-	2
	Arrol Park		-
	In House Home Care	-	-
	Telecare	-	-
	Older People Ayr South	-	-
	Older People Maybole/Girvan	-	-
	Older People Prestwick	1	-
	Older People Troon	-	-
<b>Housing</b>	Customer Landlord Relations	-	1
	Quality Maintenance	-	2
	Access	-	1
	Neighbourhood and Community	-	1
<b>Leisure</b>	Citadel	-	1
	Golf	-	1
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>	Open Spaces	-	-
	Recycling Facilities	-	1
	Grass Cutting	-	-
	Bin Return	-	-
	Other	-	-

<b>Service</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	Dissatisfied with Repair	1	1
	Staff	1	-
<b>Schools</b>	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	1	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	-
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	-	-
	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	-
	Dalmilling 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***

<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	2 per 1,000
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	2 per 1,000

The number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population has remained consistent between the two reporting periods. This statistic has very little fluctuation when being reported.

### ***Additional Information – Number of Cases where an Extension is Authorised***

		<b><i>Stage 1</i></b>	<b><i>Stage 2</i></b>	<b><i>Escalated</i></b>
<b>2021/22</b>	01/10 – 31/03	31	2	3
<b>2022/23</b>	01/10 – 31/03	<b>36 ▲</b>	<b>6 ▲</b>	<b>5 ▲</b>

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 47 complaints were subject to an authorised extension in comparison to 36 for the same reporting period in 2021/221, i.e., a 31% 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.

The SPSO have recently updated the questions they require Local Authorities to use for customer satisfaction. Following this, the Information Governance team created a new Customer Satisfaction survey and therefore there is no comparative data for this reporting period.

Between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, 60 requests were issued to members of the public inviting them to participate in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. 16 customer satisfaction surveys were completed which constitutes a 27% return.

Feedback received from the 27% who responded indicates that:

	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Information about the complaint's procedure was easily accessible	50%	12%	38%
I found it easy to make my complaint	56%	6%	38%
I was happy that the Investigating Officer fully understood my complaint	50%	-	50%
I was given the opportunity to fully explain my complaint	63%	6%	31%
The points of my complaint were identified and responded to	56%	6%	38%
The response to my complaint was easy to understand	56%	6%	38%
Overall, I was satisfied with the handling of my complaint	43%	6%	50%
I was told if the response was going to take longer than the set timescales (five working days at stage 1 and 20 working days at stage 2)	31%	31%	38%
I was clearly told what the next stage of the complaints process was for me	43%	12%	43%

A few respondents indicated their dissatisfaction in:

- Ease of access in making a complaint and information on the complaints handling procedure
- Being satisfied the investigation identified 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).

While 31% of applicants responded to indicate they weren't notified of an extension, only 8% of complaints required an extension. As our complaints survey is anonymous it is

reasonable to assume that the customers who responded were likely not to have received an extension notification as no extension was added to their case.

***Additional Information – Learning from Complaints***

Please see Appendix 4 for further information on learning from complaints.

## Service Improvement Case Studies

### **Libraries**

A customer complained that there was poor communication regarding library opening hours over the festive season; though opening hours were displayed within the library, an apology was offered to the complainant for the delay in updating the website with the festive opening hours. As a result of this complaint measures have been put in place to ensure up-to-date hours are issued on the website for any planned closures.

### **Primary Schools**

A parent complained that they had not received appropriate communication from their child's school following an injury sustained in the playground. Following an investigation, the school found that this was in part due to a change in staff. As a result of this and to ensure no reoccurrence, the school implemented further training for playground staff and reviewed their communication and recording procedures for all staff including supply and temporary positions, to develop a more robust system.



## **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 2022 – 31 March 2023.

## **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 2022 to 31 March 2023 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.



## 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)
<b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation</b>	Low
<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b> between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
<b>Foster good relations</b> 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

<b>Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?</b> (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as <b>Medium and/or High</b> )	<del>YES</del> <b>NO</b>
<b>Rationale for decision:</b>  <b>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</b>	
<b>Signed:</b> Catriona Caves	<b>Head of Service</b>
<b>Date:</b> 5 May 2023	