



Meeting	Complaints & Conduct Committee
Date	14 November 2024
Location	Webex
Title of Paper	SPA Quarterly Report (Q2 – 24/25)
Presented By	Darren Paterson, Head of Workforce Governance
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes – Appendix A - SPA Complaints Overview Appendix B - SPA Complaints Performance Report Q2 – 24/25

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update the Committee on complaints and conduct matters including key statistics reflecting the position at the end of Q2, 2024/25.

The paper is presented in line with:

- *Scottish Police Authority Committee Terms of Reference*

The paper is submitted:

- *For Discussion*

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This is a regular agenda item, containing updates on complaints and conduct matters within the SPA.

2 FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1. SPA Complaints Performance

- 2.1.1. Appendix A provides an overview of the complaint handling responsibilities of the SPA with explanatory text on reporting terminology.
- 2.1.2. The SPA Complaints Quarterly Performance Report, including key statistics reflecting the position at the end of Q2 2024/25, is attached as Appendix B to this report and provides comparison to the previous 7 quarters.

2.2. Workload Management

- 2.2.1. Detail on ongoing workload is presented as a separate agenda item at the private session of this meeting.
- 2.2.2. As previously reported, SPA dip-sampling of Police Scotland closed complaints is temporarily paused due to capacity challenges within the team. However, it is hoped that this will resume in early 2025.
- 2.2.3. Following reporting of annual data to the Committee in June 2024, the team have drafted a fourth annual Committee-specific report, covering the business of the Committee during 2023-24. The report, which is being presented at Item 9, provides long-term trend analysis in respect of data considered by the Committee, and – this year – is expanded beyond a focus on complaints, to cover wider matters, including officer misconduct.

2.3. Stakeholder Meetings

- 2.3.1. The National Complaint Handling Development Group (NCHDG) met again on 26 September 2024, chaired by Superintendent Kate Stephen. As part of ongoing benchmarking to ensure continuous improvement, the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) attended the meeting where positive discussion took place regarding their complaint handling model. In addition, the following was discussed:

- Status update on recommendations from joint PIRC/SPA audit on triage of Police Scotland complaints
- Opportunities to highlight current complaint handling timescales in communications and on public websites
- Review of the Police Scotland Complaints about the Police Standard Operating Procedure (including updates cognisant of the United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child). The procedure will be subject to full internal and external consultation and shared with the Committee in due course
- Bi-annual complaints handling training plans

2.4. Organisational Learning

2.4.1. The SPA is committed to promoting a culture of organisational learning. Opportunities are identified through a variety of sources including the handling of complaints within the remit of the SPA and PIRC Complaint Handling Reviews (CHRs) if applicable.

2.4.2. As previously reported, during Quarter 1, the PIRC reported back on its review of a complaint handled by the SPA. This complaint did not relate to a Police Scotland senior officer, and did not require reconsideration of the original decision made. It related to a case dealt with via Early Stage Resolution by way of explanation and apology, but which (due to the nature of the complaint and timescales involved) should have been subject to formal determination.

2.4.3. The report made one recommendation – that the SPA record an appropriate determination on the applicant's complaint.

2.4.4. It also identified a number of specific organisational learning opportunities, as follows:

- Record keeping – email correspondence should be saved and titled correctly within complaint files
- Complaint determination – final response letters should state clearly whether a complaint is upheld or not
- Sharing learning – any learning identified during a complaint investigation should be appropriately detailed in final response letters to complainers
- Notification of PIRC's review function – final response letters should appropriately notify complainers of their entitlement to seek a review by the PIRC

- 2.5.1. The SPA have since implemented the recommendation and learning points, and have received confirmation from the PIRC that they are satisfied that they have been addressed.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no personnel implications in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are reputational implications associated with this paper. The report (alongside corresponding reports from Police Scotland and the PIRC) serves to highlight trends in respect of complaints received and performance in respect of complaints handling, enabling the Committee to seek assurance in this important area, recognising its key link to public confidence in policing in Scotland.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 8.1. There are no community implications in this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no equality implications in this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.



Appendix A

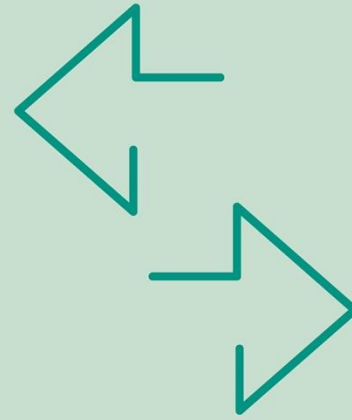
SPA Complaints Overview

SPA Complaints Overview

- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and the SPA is responsible for handling complaints about: the SPA itself (including Forensic Services); members of SPA Corporate/Forensic Services staff; and senior officers of Police Scotland (i.e. Assistant Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and Chief Constable).
- As at 10 October 2024, there are 14 officers of senior rank in Police Scotland and 631 staff working across SPA Corporate and Forensic Services functions.
- On receipt of a complaint, the SPA will complete an initial evaluation to determine who the complaint is about and if it is within its remit. For cases within the SPA remit, the initial assessment will ensure they are categorised and dealt with in the most appropriate manner (i.e. relevant complaint; grievance; whistleblowing concern; criminal allegation; misconduct allegation; or a miscellaneous case (which refers to enquiries or other correspondence received by the SPA)).
- A 'relevant complaint' is defined in legislation and is essentially a non-criminal complaint made by a member of the public. The SPA Complaints Performance Report mainly provides statistical information on relevant complaints within the remit of the SPA.
- A single complaint may consist of a number of component parts that can be determined separately. For the purposes of this report, these are referred to as 'allegations' and each complaint may include multiple allegations.
- The handling of relevant complaints are subject to the oversight of the PIRC, who have an expectation that such complaints should be completed within 40 working days.

SPA Complaints Performance Report

Quarterly Report
Q2 2024/25

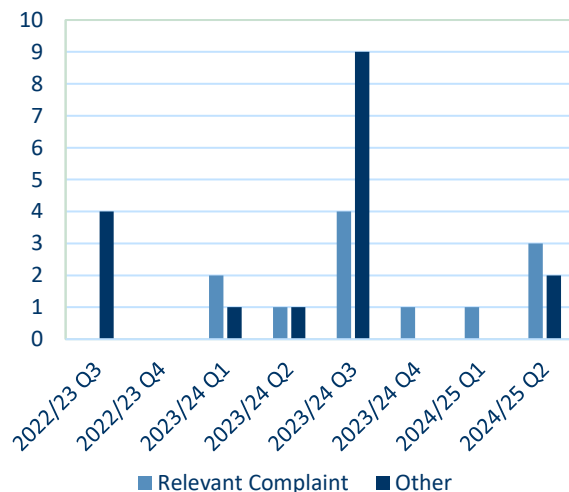


SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Highlights (8 quarter view)

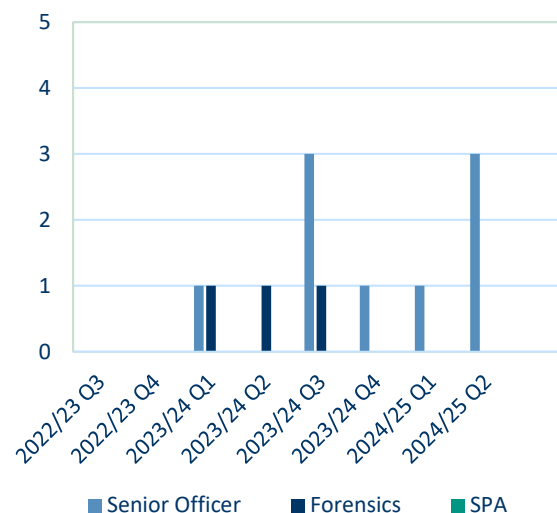
- In context of generally low volume or relevant complaints (and allegations), numbers remain largely consistent
- Majority of relevant complaints, and allegations, relate to senior officers
- 86% of allegations relate to On Duty complaints and the remaining 14% relate to complainers' dissatisfaction with the Quality of Service received
- Early Stage Resolution continues to be an effective means of addressing complaints of a less serious nature (44% of allegations closed during period)
- Of the 6 complaints closed over the reporting period, 2 were out with the target completion time of 40 working days
- At the end of Q2, 5 complaints were ongoing (3 since closed)
- Data excludes complaints received that are outside the SPA's mandate

Cases received



- Across the 8 quarter period, 41% of cases received (within SPA remit) classed as relevant complaints
- 'Other' cases include grievances, whistleblowing, misconduct allegations, criminal allegations etc
- Most cases received outside of SPA remit related to matters that have since been brought to the attention of Police Scotland's Professional Standards Department

Subject of complaints

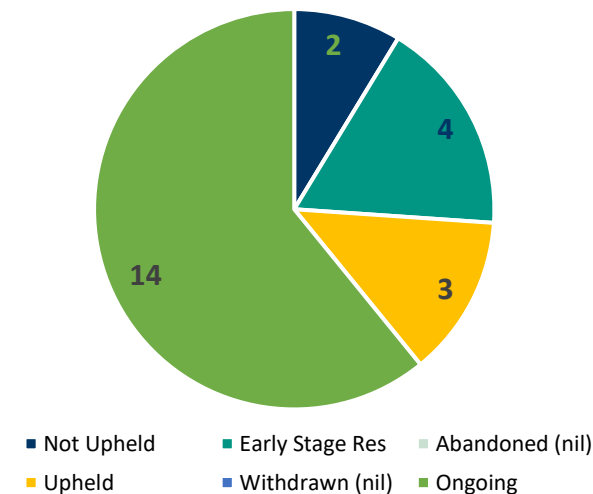


- The majority of relevant complaints (75%) relate to senior officers, although absolute volumes remain low
- Within these complaints, 21 individual allegations were made, with 86% relating to senior officers.

Beyond the first chart (Cases received) all other charts in this report refer to relevant complaints only

Determination

8 quarter view of allegations

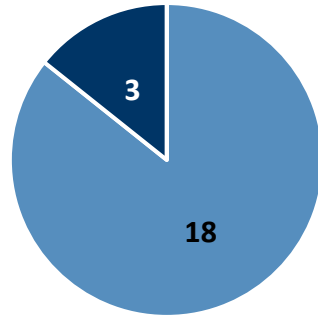
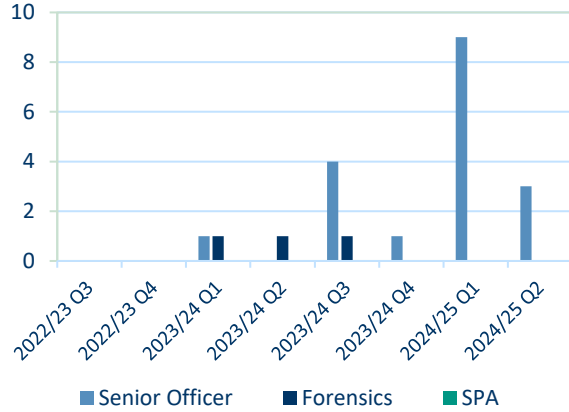


- Of the cases closed during the reporting period, 4 allegations were resolved by Early Stage Resolution (ESR) via explanation, assurance or apology.
- Allegations related to 2 cases previously categorised as ESR since amended to Upheld.

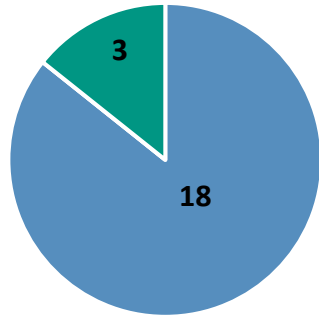
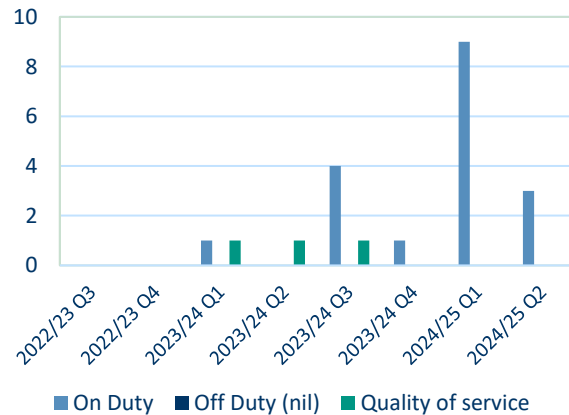


Allegations by subject

Drill down from 'Subject of complaints' on previous page



Allegations by category



Timescales to close

	2022/23		2023/24			2024/25		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Closed	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1
Ave. working days to close	0	0	27	0	2	13	81	207
Cases closed beyond 40 working days								
Closed	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Days to close							81	207

While the SPA aims to deal with relevant complaints within 40 working days, each complaint is unique, and a number of factors (such as complexity and seriousness) can impact timescales. The cases closed over 40 working days above can be attributed to:

- Requirement for case reviews by Forensic Services
- Delay in obtaining evidence out with the control of the Authority.