



SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN- ANNUAL STATISTICS 2022/23

Report by Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to advise Members of the terms of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Annual statistics for 2022/23 and to highlight issues of relevance to the Comhairle.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) annual statistics, providing information for each council are available via [spsoscot.nhs.uk/statistics-2022-23](https://www.spsoscot.nhs.uk/statistics-2022-23).
- 2.2 In 2022/23, the SPSO closed eight complaints about Comhairle services; this represents 0.6% of complaints against Scottish local authorities. No complaints were taken to full investigation. The SPSO determined the outcomes as follows:

• SPSO Early Resolution -	Discretion – insufficient benefit from investigating	2
	Discretion – Good complaint handling	4
	Unable to proceed	1
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	1

- 2.4 The Comhairle continues to demonstrate continuous improvement in its approach to complaints through improved communication with complainants and learning from complaints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Annual statistics provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, in respect of complaints to the SPSO about the Comhairle, be noted.

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Background Papers: [spsoscot.nhs.uk/statistics-2022-23](https://www.spsoscot.nhs.uk/statistics-2022-23)

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	There are no financial implications
Legal	There are no legal implications
Staffing	There are no staffing implications
Assets and Property	There are no asset or property implications
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	Reputational risk if the Comhairle does not handle complaints appropriately.
Equalities	The revised Complaints Handling Procedure includes additional equality and accessibility support for people who are vulnerable.
Corporate Strategy	By complying with the Comhairle's Complaints Handling Procedure to deal with all complainants in a manner which is consistent, fair and reasonable the Comhairle is demonstrating commitment to <i>ensuring effective governance of the Comhairle</i> .
Environmental Impact	There is no identified environmental impact within this Report.
Consultation	There is no consultation associated with this Report.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

- 4.1 The number of complaints received by the SPSO about the Comhairle's services has remained relatively low with 6 complaints received in 2022/23, compared to 5 complaints in 2021/22, 8 in 2020/21, and 9 in 2019/20. These complaints were related to Education (2), Finance (1), Planning (2), Social Work (1).
- 4.2 The SPSO determined the outcomes of eight complaints against the Comhairle in 2022/23. All eight complaints were managed by the SPSO through their early resolution stage and no complaint proceeded to a full investigation by the SPSO. In terms of outcomes, the complaints against the Comhairle were judged or determined as follows:

SPSO Early Resolution -	Discretion – insufficient benefit from investigating	2
	Discretion – Good complaint handling	4
	Unable to proceed	1
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	1

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH COMPLAINTS HANDLING

- 5.1 The SPSO annual statistics provide insight into the quality of the Comhairle's complaints handling. It is encouraging to note that no complaints were taken forward to investigation by the SPSO. Work has been undertaken by the Comhairle in recent years to develop skills in handling complaints, to share expertise, and to learn lessons from complaints handling.

CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the terms of the SPSO's annual statistics for 2022/23. While there is never complacency as to complaints, it is pleasing to note that the Comhairle continues to provide a high standard of complaints handling to our customers and the wider community.