

Scottish Borders Council Annual Complaint Performance Report 2021/22

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1. Overview

1.1. Introduction

This is the council’s annual complaints performance report that provides information on customer complaints received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

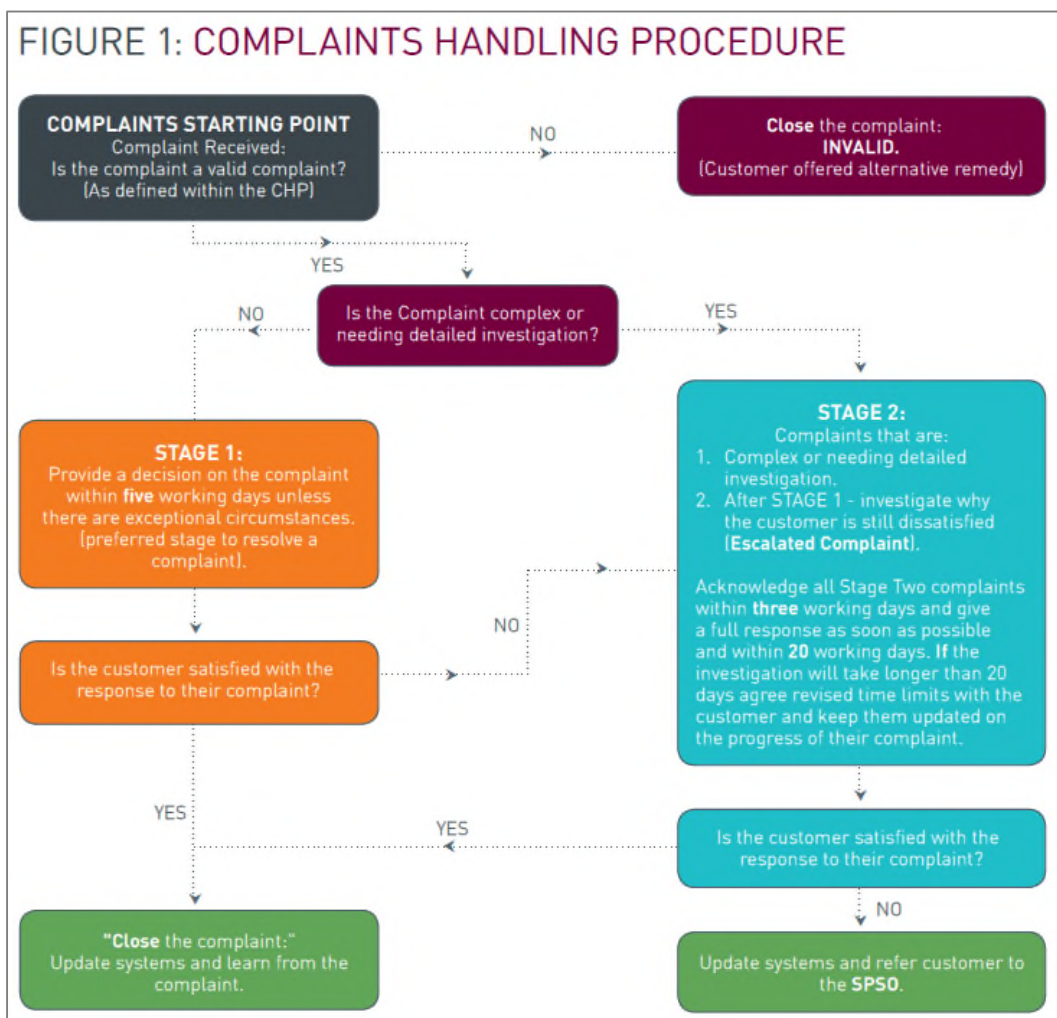
Scottish Borders Council always aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to the residents, business owners and service users within the Scottish Borders. However, there are times when things go wrong and we fail to meet the expectations of our customers.

The council’s complaints procedure provides a clear and structured way to provide feedback on what has gone wrong with a council service. The process to resolution should be straightforward and timely. Listening to our customers helps us to put things right, improve our services and learn from our mistakes.

This report provides us with an opportunity to share how well we are performing.

1.2. Corporate Complaints Procedure

The objective of the Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) is to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close to the point of service delivery and as soon as possible at Stage One in the procedure. Figure 1 is a flow chart of SBC’s CHP. Complaints can be raised online, by email, in person, by telephone or by letter.



Complaints performance is reported on a quarterly basis to both the council’s Senior Leadership Team and the council’s Executive Committee. All complaints performance statistics are reported to the public and are available on the council’s website.

2. Complaint Performance Statistics

This report presents how SBC performs based on eight key performance indicators developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) in conjunction with all 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

The number of complaints closed in 2021-22 was 849. This is an increase on the number closed in the previous year. The council will continue to analyse complaints to help inform service improvement, identify training opportunities for our staff and to help prioritise our activities to meet the changing needs of the residents of the Scottish Borders.

Complaint benchmark data for 2021-22 is accurate at the time of publishing this report. Where applicable, this report has included the Scottish local authority national average and Family Group performance indicators for comparative information. The council’s performance relating to the processing of complaints performs well against the Scottish national averages in many indicators, but performance is poorer in relation to indicators that measure timeliness of responses.

2.1. Indicator 1: Complaints closed per 1,000 population

This indicator records the total number of ‘Valid’ complaints received by SBC during the financial year (April to March) as a rate per 1,000 population. In 2021-22 SBC received **1257** complaints of which **386** were closed as ‘Invalid’. The remaining **849** were handled as ‘Valid’ complaints. This is equivalent to 7.4 received complaints per 1,000 population.

Table 1 provides SBC’s total complaints closed per 1,000 population over the past 5 years along with the Scottish and Family Group Averages for 2021-22. The table shows that there has been an increase in the number of complaints closed by SBC and the complaints closed per 1,000 population in 2021-22.

Table 1: Complaints closed per 1,000 population

Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Population Total	114,530	115,020	115,270	115,510	115,240	916,940	5,292,350
Total number of Valid complaints	670	625	725	780	849	5,651	57,015
Number of complaints per 1,000	5.8	5.4	6.3	6.8	7.4	6.2	10.4

2.2. Indicator 2: Closed complaints

This indicator provides information on the number of complaints closed at Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Two – Escalated complaints as a percentage of all complaints closed. Table 2 provides the performance information for this indicator.

The term ‘closed’ refers to a complaint that has had a response sent to the customer and at the time, no further action was required to respond to the customer.

Stage Two - Escalated complaints are those complaints that have been resolved at Stage One initially, but the customer was not satisfied with the response they received. When the customer requests that the same issue is considered again at Stage Two, of the CHP, these complaints are called 'Stage Two - Escalated' complaints.

Table 2: Closed Complaints

Complaints Closed as a % of all complaints closed	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	75%	78%	75%	85.4%	83.0%	74.4%	88.6%
Stage Two	21%	17%	21%	12.2%	13.6%	19.0%	7.5%
Stage Two - Escalated	4%	4%	5%	2.4%	3.4%	6.3%	3.8%

2.3. Indicator 3: Complaints upheld and not upheld

There is a requirement for a formal outcome to be recorded for each complaint. SBC made the decision not to use a 'Partially Upheld' outcome when the CHP was introduced in 2013. Therefore, for the purposes of this reporting, complaints are recorded as either 'Upheld' or 'Not Upheld'

This indicator measures the percentage of complaints, which were upheld or not upheld, recorded at each stage. The results can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Upheld Complaints

Complaints upheld	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	42%	37%	48%	36.6%	50.5%	38.7%	55.1%
Stage Two	38%	45%	47%	38.5%	37.4%	35.5%	38.9%
Stage Two - Escalated	50%	39%	30%	22.2%	44.8%	42.5%	45.6%

It should be noted that in Table 3 above, the 'Upheld' and 'Partially Upheld' outcomes for the Family Group and Scottish Average have been added together, to allow meaningful comparison with SBC's figures.

Table 4: Not Upheld Complaints

Complaints not upheld	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	58%	63%	52%	63.4%	49.5%	44.7%	42.5%
Stage Two	62%	55%	53%	61.5%	62.6%	70.9%	70.4%
Stage Two - Escalated	50%	61%	70%	77.8%	55.2%	60.4%	67.7%

2.4. Indicator 4: Average times

Indicator 4 represents the average time in working days to close complaints. Indicator 4 performance can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Average times

Average times	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	4.0	4.6	5.3	5.9	7.1	6.4	6.3
Stage Two	17.7	18.2	22.5	23.1	30.5	22.3	20.7
Stage Two - Escalated	18.0	14.9	32.4	41.6	42.2	27.6	18.6

The average time taken to close complaints at Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Two - Escalated continues to worsen. Both the Stage Two and the Stage Two - Escalated complaints figures are particularly poor in 2021/22. For the second year in a row Stage Two – Escalated complaints are taking more than twice the allowed 20 working days. Comparison with the Family Group and Scottish Averages shows that this increasing length of time to close complaints is a national picture, and with the exception of the Scottish Average for Stage Two - Escalated complaints.

2.5. Indicator 5: Performance against timescales

This indicator reports the percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days. These include cases where an extension to the timescale has been authorised. Indicator 5 performance can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Performance against timescales

Performance against timescales	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	86%	81%	77%	80%	80.6%	72.4%	67.1%
Stage Two	67%	74%	60%	66%	49.6%	61.2%	63.4%
Stage Two - Escalated	54%	79%	24%	22%	27.6%	48.0%	61.6%

2.6. Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension is authorised

SBC always aims to respond to complaints as quickly as possible. There are, however, times when a complaint is particularly complex and it is not feasible to fully investigate the issues within the prescribed timescales. In these situations SBC agree with a complainant to extend the timescale for closing the complaint.

This indicator reports the percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the 5 or 20 working day timeline has been authorised. Indicator 6 performance can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Number of cases where an extension is authorised

Percentage of cases where an extension is authorised	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	FG 1 Average 2021-22	Scottish Average 2021-22
Stage One	4%	3%	2%	1%	1.3%	14.7%	6.2%
Stage Two	18%	11%	5%	3%	8.7%	25.0%	18.8%
Stage Two - Escalated	31%	4%	6%	6%	10.3%	8.7%	17.8%

2.7. Indicator 7: Customer Satisfaction

SBC runs a Complaint Handling Customer Satisfaction Survey on an ongoing basis. Customers are contacted approximately one week after their complaint is closed inviting them to provide feedback on their experience. Indicator 7 performance can be seen in Table 8. This indicator provides information on the levels of customer satisfaction with the complaint handling procedure and process.

The survey asks the customer to state how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with:

- Information about the complaints procedure being easy to access
- How easy they found it to make their complaint
- If they were happy that the Investigating Officer fully understood their complaint
- They were given the opportunity to fully explain their complaint
- That the points of their complaint were identified and responded to
- The response to their complaint was easy to understand
- Overall how satisfied they were with the handling of their complaint

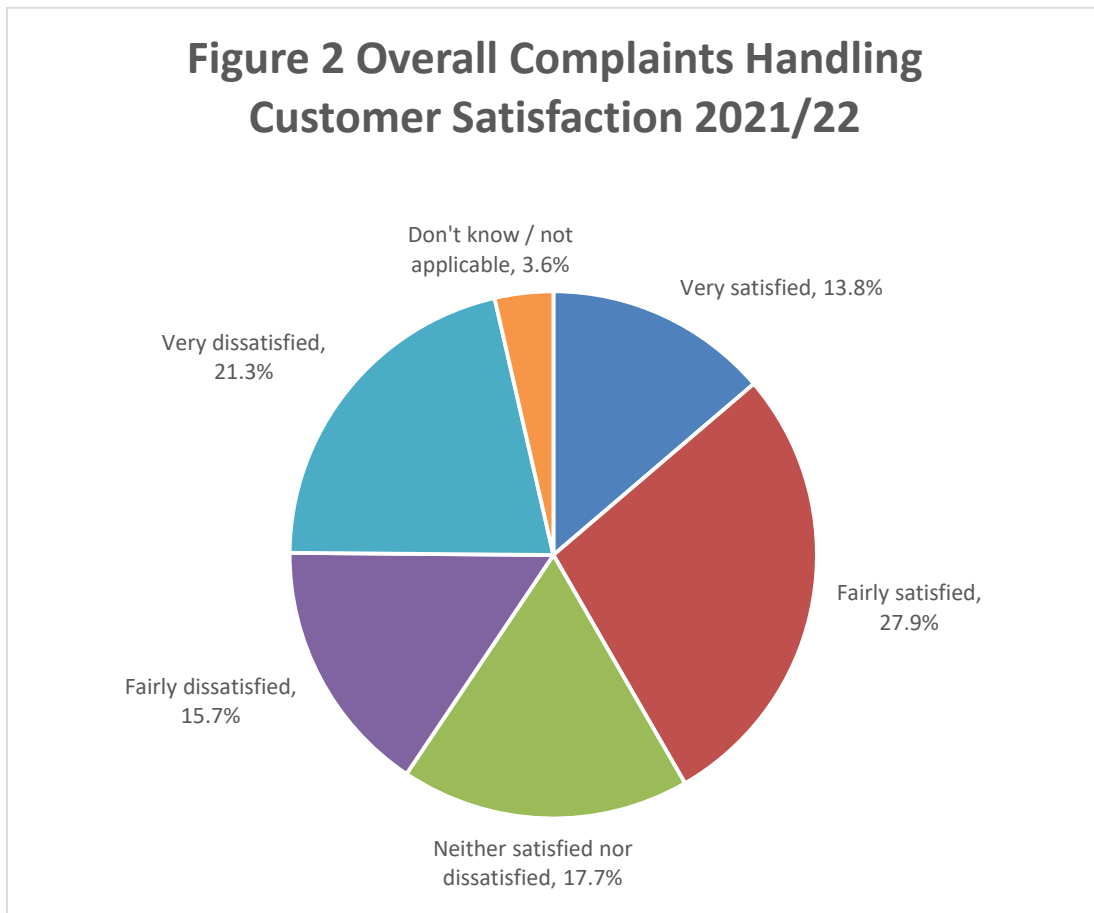
They were also asked:

- If they were 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)
- If they were clearly told what the next stage of the complaints process was for them

Table 8: Customer Satisfaction

Survey Invitations Sent:	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
No. survey Invitations Sent	225	131	57	166	488
No. closed complaints	691	645	725	780	849
% of customers invited to respond to the survey	33%	20%	8%	21%	58%
Return Rate:					
No. Returned	25	33	25	41	84
% Return Rate	11%	25%	44%	25%	17%
Responses:					
Either Fairly or Very Satisfied	60%	49%	43%	58%	42%
Either Fairly or Very Dissatisfied	20%	30%	38%	23%	37%

**Figure 2 Overall Complaints Handling
Customer Satisfaction 2021/22**



In 2021/22, approximately 58% of customers who made a complaint were invited to respond to a survey about their satisfaction with SBC’s handling of their complaint. The survey return rate has dropped from 25% in 2020-21 to 17% in 2021-22. In 2021/22, satisfaction with complaints handling has dropped and returned to pre Covid levels seen in 2019/20.

In addition to recording complaints, SBC also records compliments. These compliments are submitted by customers online, or are received by Customer Advice and Support Services officers over the phone on the 0300 number or in emails sent to the enquiry mailbox. It should be noted that SBC also receives compliments directly to officers but these are not always recorded, and therefore cannot be included in these figures.

In 2021/22, the Council recorded approximately 112 unsolicited comments and compliments for the services provided. This was a decrease from 192 in 2020/21. Of these 68 were compliments. These compliments related to areas such as kerb-side waste and recycling, roads, community recycling centers, health and social care and customer services. Some examples of these compliments are as follows:

“I have just walked the St Cuthbert Way from Melrose to the Holy Island and enjoyed every minute of my time in your area. To my delight the route was very well signed and maintained. There was no litter at all and the villages and towns we passed all looked neat and well maintained. Please pass my thanks to those responsible for the maintenance of the route. I might add that I have recently walked long distance footpaths in Wales and England, and they are not as well maintained as St Cuthbert’s Way”.

“I wish to compliment the Parks Dept. and SBC, on the floral display at Bank Street Gardens Galashiels. It is absolutely outstanding. I had to take a few photos. Thank you so much”.

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"Just wanted to say thank you for the free overnight parking in your town. So nice for those of us with campervans to actually feel wanted in the places we visit. Will be visiting again soon!"

"I just wanted to say a massive thank you for the extremely efficient support the Ask Sara team gave my parents this week. It has improved the way my Dad is able to get about the house, and we only started the process this week! The lady who called my mum initially was lovely and helpful, and even picked up on things to talk to the doctor about. Then, 5 days on and they have grab rails and extra banisters fitted. It's just amazing, thank you so much from us all".

"I am moving to Dundee but I wanted to say a big thank you to all at Borders Council. I think you do a great job on your phone lines, rubbish uplift and care of the people and area. I don't think I'll find better. Well done".

"Please pass on my thanks to X who works at the Selkirk Recycling Centre at weekends. X has been absolutely magnificent to me and my family. We've made a few visits over the last few weeks. X is always so friendly to my children, encouraging them to recycle. It's just wonderful! X is always smiling and always helpful. For example, I dropped some polystyrene on my way to the general waste container and X was straight over with a brush to help and sweep it up. X is kind, conscientious and just fantastic. Please pass on our thanks to X".

"Thank you for providing such an easy to use and painless service. The slick way my blue badge was renewed is impressive, particularly so in view of the present health crisis".

"I wanted to extend my thanks to the Council's bulky collection service. I had ordered a collection for some large items. I was working late the night before and forgot to put the items on the curbside for collection! When I heard the van outside the next morning I rushed down to apologise and ask them to hold on for a few minutes but to my surprise they had collected them from my back garden for me. They were not obligated to do that, but it meant great deal. I wanted to take the time to thank them for going the extra mile and wish I had managed to thank them in person on the day. Little kindnesses like this one really do have a positive impact. Keep up the good work, you are appreciated!"

"I live in Kinross and have been dealing with my late uncle's estate. I have been in contact with many companies and organisations over the last few months and wanted to say that SBC has been far and away the most pleasant organisation to deal with. I have always got through right away and the folk I have spoken to have been efficient, friendly and knowledgeable. I want to pass on my comments as I really appreciate the service I have received".

"Thank you to the roads department for filling in the holes in Darnick so quickly after I had reported them. They were the worst potholes I have ever seen but equally I have never seen such a quick response before. Well done".

"My partner and I recently made a planning application with the assistance of X and his team at the Scottish Borders Planning office. I just wanted to convey our gratitude for all of X's assistance in helping us navigate the process and commend him for his patience and the quality of service that he consistently delivered".

"Just some feedback to say, your Cycling Eyemouth local trails online map and guide is excellent. I've followed the routes, they're well thought out, and well-marked on the road".

"I'd like to shout out to the team working at Galashiels recycling today. They're all really helpful and friendly and not just today - consistently excellent service. Thanks".

2.8. Indicator 8: Learning from Complaints

Formal complaint reports are provided to the Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis and complaints performance information is provided to Elected Members on a quarterly basis through our Corporate Public Performance Report.

We take all complaints seriously, and the information gathered from them is invaluable in helping to continually improve our services. Since the introduction of the Complaints Handling Procedure, many changes and improvements have been made to services as a result of complaints and some examples of case studies are detailed in this section.

Case Study One

Customer A contacted us to complain that their recycling bin was not collected. The collection crew left a label on the bin saying what could and what couldn't go into the bin. The label did not explain why the bin was not collected and Customer A had to try work this out from themselves.

As a result of Customer A's complaint all collection crews have been reminded that when a bin is not collected a notification must be left with the bin explaining why it has not been collected.

Case Study Two

Customer B's partner passed away in October 2020. At that time we wrote to customer B asking that their partners Blue Badge was returned to us. Six months later council officers knocked on Customer B's door to discuss painting a disabled parking bay on the street outside Customer B's home. Understandably Customer B was extremely upset and contacted us to complain about the lack of internal communication and the upset this had caused them.

As a result of Customer B's complaint data sharing arrangements have been put in place, so that where appropriate the road safety team are notified if a customer with a Blue Badge and a disabled parking bay passes away.

Case Study Three

Customer C contacted us to complain about the wording of an email acknowledgement he had received in response to applying to vote by post. The language used was professional language which the customer felt was not user-friendly and is not what people expect from public sector organisations any more. Customer C made some suggestions on how things could be re-worded but officers failed to acknowledge them.

As a result of Customer C's complaint a review of the communications will take place in conjunction with colleagues across Scotland.

Case Study Four

A number of customers made complaints that they had seen council officers using pesticide or weed killer in one of the parks in the Borders. They were concerned about the impact these chemicals have on the environment, on bees and other pollinating insects.

We responded assuring customers that only products which are licenced for use, and compliant with the licencing requirements, observing appropriate protocols in terms of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations are used. In addition weed killing operations are regularly reviewed.

We are also currently in discussions with other Local Authorities about a series of trials being undertaken that consider alternative approaches. The results of these trials will continue to be monitored.

Case Study Five

Customer D forgot to cancel a standing order once they'd set up a direct debit to pay their council tax. This resulted in an overpayment. Customer D contacted us to request the overpayment be refunded. On the call it came to light that there had been other overpayments. As the amount was over a particular threshold, a senior manager would need to authorise the payment.

Unfortunately, the officer handling this transaction forgot to make the senior managers aware that there was a refund to be authorised. Customer D raised a complaint when the refund did not appear in their bank account on the day they were told it would.

All officers in the team were made aware of the impact this omission had on Customer D and they were reminded that senior managers must be made aware when a refund above a certain level requires authorisation.

3. SPSO LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Customers can ask the SPSO to look at their complaint once we’ve fully investigated, if they’re still not satisfied with our decision or the way we handled the complaint.

In 2021/22, the SPSO received 25 and closed 21 complaints about SBC. This is equal to 2.1% of all complaints received by the SPSO in relation to the Local Authority sector, or 1.9% of all complaints closed by the SPSO in relation to the Local Authority sector. The numbers of complaints that go to the SPSO are a very small proportion of all the complaints made about Scottish Local Authorities; this is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 1: Illustration of SPSO complaints of all complaints for 2021/22

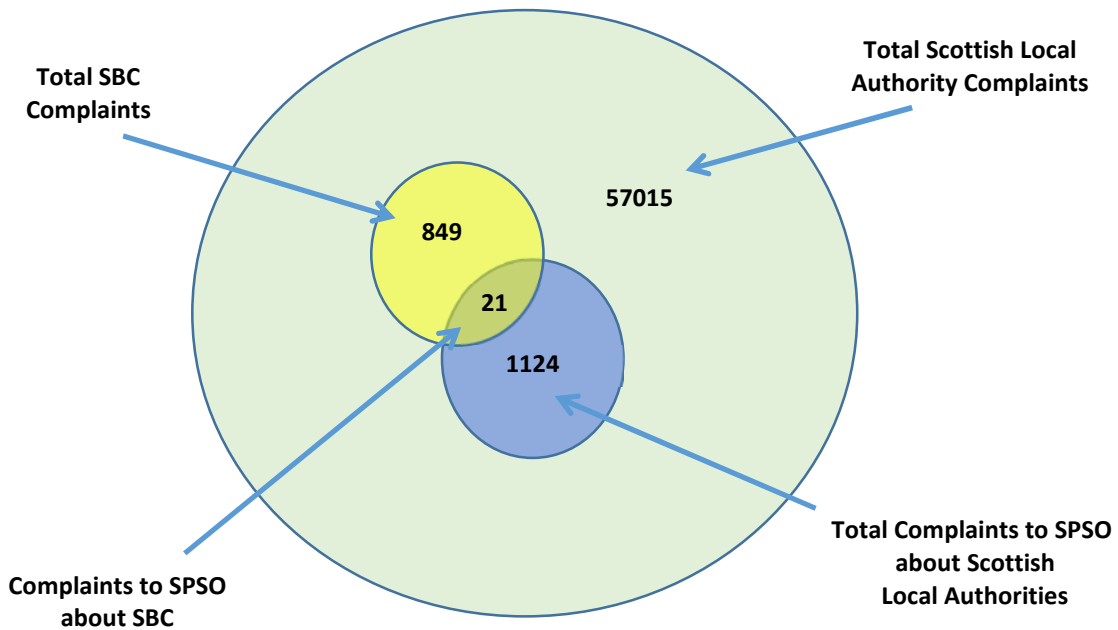


Table 9 below shows the number of complaints about SBC received by the SPSO and this as a percentage of the Local Authority Sector

Table 9: SPSO Complaints Received by Year

SPSO Received Complaints /Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
SPSO Received Complaints about SBC	33	20	27	11	41	15	25
SBC Complaints as % all for Scottish Local Authority sector	1.9%	1.3%	1.8%	0.8%	3.3%	1.6%	2.1%

Table 10 below shows how SBC compares to the Scottish Local Authority Sector in relation to complaints closed by the SPSO.

Table 10: SPSO Closed Complaints for SBC / Year

SPSO Closed Complaints for SBC / Year	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22		
	SBC Count	SBC %	Sector %	SBC Count	SBC %	Sector %	SBC Count	SBC %	Sector %
Closed	38	3.0%	2.2%	17	1.8%	1.7%	21	1.9%	2.0%
Stage SPSO Complaint Closed									
Advice	12	2.4%	39%	6	1.6%	40%	10	2.3%	39.1%
Early Resolution	25	3.7%	54%	10	2.0%	53%	9	1.4%	57.5%
Investigation	1	1.2%	7%	1	1.6%	7%	2	5.3%	3.4%
Premature	5	1.9%	21%	2	0.8%	27%	8	2.7%	26.3%
SPSO Decision									
Fit for SPSO	1	1.2%	7%	1	1.6%	7%	2	5.3%	3.4%
Upheld / Partially Upheld	0	0%	4%	0	0%	4%	1	4.0%	2.2%

In 2021/22, the SPSO undertook two investigations into complaints about SBC. The published Case Studies for these complaints are detailed below. Case Study One was not upheld and SBC did not receive any recommendations, but Case Study Two was upheld and there were five recommendations.

Case Study One:

C complained that the council failed to provide kinship care allowance after they had moved into the area from England, despite them having custody of their grandchild through a Residence Order (a court order which determines where a child should live) from an English court. The council had refused on the basis that they considered the English council should be responsible for the cost of the allowance, unless and until the Residence Order was confirmed by a Scottish court. C was also concerned that the council had failed to provide appropriate support to them and their grandchild.

The SPSO took independent advice from a Social Worker. We found that, apart from a delay of a couple of months when C first applied for assistance, the council had acted appropriately, and that the order in question was not one that was transferrable between England and Scotland. As such, the SPSO did not uphold C's complaints.

Case Study Two:

C complained about the council's social work involvement with their child (A). A had a range of conditions that affected their development and behaviour. A was placed in residential care and was made subject to a legal order via the children's hearing system.

A was transitioning out of children's services and into adult services. C raised a number of concerns with the council about the support provided by the council when arranging A's transition. Whilst the council upheld aspects of C's complaint, C remained dissatisfied with the council's response and brought their complaint to us.

C felt that some aspects of the council's response were unclear, that they had not taken responsibility for what had gone wrong, and that they misunderstood some of the family's concerns.

The SPSO took independent advice from a Social Worker. They found that the council could have done more to facilitate clear communication with C and to involve C in A's care planning and assessments. The SPSO also found that the council unreasonably excluded C from certain aspects of the decision-making process for A. The SPSO upheld all of C's complaints.

Recommendations

The SPSO asked the council to do the following in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at: www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What The SPSO said should change to put things right in future:

- Social Work staff should allow enough time to carry out the appropriate planning and assessment work, consider if a capacity assessment should be sought at an early stage, and take a holistic view of the needs of the young person and their wider support networks.
- Social Work staff should take into account the young person's wishes about their family's involvement in the decision-making process. Social work staff should meet with families to discuss and address any issues prior to children's hearing/review meetings and try to agree a course of action to present to the Children's Panel/review officer.
- Social Work staff should endeavour to use emails to contact clients/their families, when that is their preference, as it is more effective and efficient than corresponding by post. Unless there is good reason not to, Social Work staff should arrange a face-to-face meeting or a phone call to discuss sensitive matters, rather than communicating the information in writing.

The SPSO have asked the council to provide them with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations made on this case by the deadline set.

4. 2021/22 Complaint Summary

In 2021/22, the council closed 849 valid complaints and this represents an increase of 69 from the 2020/21 figure of 780.

83% of all complaints closed by the council were resolved at Stage One (Frontline Resolution), 13.6% of complaints resolved at Stage Two (Investigation) with the remaining 3.4% of complaints being resolved at Stage Two – Escalated.

The average times taken by the council to resolve Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Two – Escalated complaints were 7.1 days, 30.5 days and 42.2 days respectively. The council's overall performance relating to the timeliness of processing complaints has decreased for all stages, but especially for Stage Two complaints. Of the 115 Stage Two complaints, only 57 were answered on time. That said, the council's performance in closing complaints on time at Stage One is better than the Family Group and the Scottish Averages and accounts for 83% of all the complaints submitted. SBC's performance at Stage Two and Stage Two - Escalated complaints is worse than the Family Group and Scottish Averages.

80.6% of Stage One complaints were resolved within 5 days and 49.6% of Stage Two complaints were resolved within 20 days, which is a drop of just over 16% when compared to 2020/21. The percentages in 2020/21 were 80% and 66% respectively. However, 27.6% of Stage Two - Escalated complaints were resolved within 20 working days compared to 22% in 2020/21. The Scottish National Average for 2021-22 is 67.1% and 63.4% for Stage One and Stage Two resolution respectively. SBC's performance at Stage One in relation to the Scottish and Family Group averages is positive. The Scottish National Average for 2020-21 for Stage Two - Escalated complaints is 61.6%.

The percentage of Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Two - Escalated complaints that were upheld in 2021/22 were 50.5%, 37.4% and 44.8% respectively. The council's performance in relation to this measure outperformed the Scottish National Averages for 2021/22 that were 55.1%, 38.9% and 45.6%.

In 2021/22, the number of surveys issued increased significantly compared to 2020/21. We achieved a return rate of 17%, which was down from 25% in 2020/21. The percentage of customers either fairly or very satisfied has also reduced with 42% either fairly or very satisfied. We continue to have more customers say they are fairly satisfied with the handling of their complaint than any of the other categories. See Figure 2.

In 2021/22, the Council also received approximately 112 unsolicited comments and compliments for the services provided. This was a decrease from 192 in 2020/21. Of these 68 were compliments. These compliments related to areas such as kerb-side waste and recycling, roads, community recycling centers, health and social care and customer services.

Overall, there has been an increase in the number of complaints closed in 2021/22 when compared to the previous year. In 2021/20, for the first time we have more Stage One complaints that were upheld compared to those not upheld. For Stage Two and Stage Two – Escalated we continue to have more complaints that are not upheld than are upheld. The council's performance relating to the processing of complaints performs well against the Scottish National averages in many indicators, but performance is poorer in relation to indicators that measure timeliness of responses. Work is currently being undertaken to pursue overdue complaints more vigorously, which will hopefully have a positive impact on the indicators in 2022/23.

5. Live Borders Complaints

Live Borders has a Complaints Handling Procedure that aligns with SBC's and the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP). The Volume of all complaints, comments and compliments for 2021/22 are presented below as well as overall figures for 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 for comparison. Figures for 2020/21 are missing due to service closures for much of the year as a result of Covid.

Complaints 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2021/22	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Price	0	1	0	6	7	4	8	14	16
Booking/access/info	1	14	7	10	32	61	87	55	78
Quality	0	4	5	8	17	45	47	47	27
Staff attitude	1	1	1	2	5	9	19	11	4
Other	2	9	7	6	24	37	21	47	8
Total	4	29	20	32	85	156	181	174	133
Comments	0	0	0	0	0	31	72	87	64
Compliments	0	4	4	6	14	25	12	21	8

The number of complaints recorded has decreased since 2019/20 by 45%. The number of comments and compliments is lower than in prior years, see Channel below.

Channel:

90% of our complaints in 2021/22 were received electronically, the majority of these were received by email. In the past it has been a fairly equal division between email and online. During lockdown in the prior year the 3Cs portal became disconnected, this was reinstated in quarter three 2021/22. The majority of complaints this year (73%) were received by email.

Price:

The number of complaints concerning price (8%) continues to indicate that our price point is right for the Borders

Booking / access/ information:

The majority of the complaints, 37% in the year, relate to booking /access and information, with a spike in quarter 2 when we restarted services. Booking was essential for a number of our activities as we restarted our services, this was to ensure Covid compliance including the management of number of attendees per session. We recognised some customer difficulties and responded by providing additional information and enhanced the "how to" guides on our website. We also made an amendment to our system configuration in August to address issues with booking family swims, and other group bookings.

Staff Attitude:

There has been some learning from complaints concerning staff attitude, the roll out of World Host training has been superseded by a bespoke programme of customer services excellence training which was put in place in quarter 4 of 2021/22 and continues into 2022/23 to support staff. These awareness and training programmes have had a positive impact on complaints concerning staff attitude.

Quality:

The number of complaints concerning quality has fallen from 29% in 2019/20 to 20% in 2021/22. Only half of these were upheld and of these 40% received customer satisfaction for the way they were handled.

Customer Satisfaction:

We have 21 records of customer satisfaction with complaints handling and resolution reasons include:

- Proactive actions and proposals going forward
- Being kept informed
- Appreciation of follow up
- Speed, result and explanation

Quarter by Quarter analysis	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2021/22
Total received	4	29	20	32	85
Received online	0	0	7	8	15
% received online	0%	0%	35%	25%	17.6%
Closed complaints	3	29	21	32	85
Closed at stage 1	3	29	20	29	81
Closed at stage 2	0	0	1	0	1
Stage Two - Escalated and closed	0	0	0	3	3
Total Upheld	1	8	12	16	37
Upheld at Stage 1	1	8	12	15	36
Upheld at Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0
Stage Two - Escalated and Upheld	0	0	0	1	1
Closed within authorised timescale	2	25	21	31	79
Closed at stage 1 within 5 working days	2	25	20	28	75
Closed at stage 2 within 20 working days	0	0	1	0	1
Stage Two - Escalated and closed within 20 working days	0	0	0	3	3
% closed within time scale	66.7%	86.2%	100%	96.9%	92.9%

5.1 Live Borders Learning from Complaints

Facility Closures:

We need to improve our communications when having to execute quick facility closures, these last minute closures are in the main due to Covid causing staff unavailability.

Engagement:

We continue to use the CHP as a means to engage positively with our customers, to demonstrate that we listen and follow through when a complaint is received.

Thank you for taking the time to write back to me. As I said, my experience with Live Borders staff was positive, but there were definitely issues with the booking, which I'm pleased to hear you address. I'm happy to accept your apology and appreciate you getting in touch.

Thank you, I really appreciate the action you've taken. And so swiftly too. I am still dubious on the date of birth bit, but I understand the reasoning. Personally, I'm all about making sure people feel included. It doesn't affect me directly, but I work with people whom it does affect.

Again, I very much appreciate your responsiveness.

5.2 2021/22 Comments & Compliments

Compliments are shared with our staff or the facility concerned, and the upward management structure. Compliments in the main are about our staff, their friendliness, helpfulness and knowledge. We are proud of our people.

Examples include:

“Thank you for your prompt response. I would also like to take this chance to praise your staff at the pool who have been fantastic during the last 2 very difficult years!”

“I went back to Eyemouth swimming pool today and had a lovely experience. The music was gentle background sound and the pool nice and warm. The staff, X particularly was very welcoming”.

“Thank you all very much for all the hard work in such difficult times. Appreciate being able to swim at Eyemouth again”.

“Not only is the museum a fantastic tribute to a racing legend, the customer service afforded by your staff is similarly to be commended and although we did say to X as we left how much we had enjoyed the museum and admired his patience both with an obstreperous customer and with difficult technology, we felt we should make sure that someone higher up the line should be aware.”