



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>SPA Complaints &amp; Conduct Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>1 March 2023</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>MS Teams</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>SPA Quarterly Report (Q3 – 22/23)</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Darren Paterson, Head of Workforce Governance</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Yes – Appendix A – SPA Complaints Overview Appendix B - SPA Complaints Performance Report</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on complaints and conduct matters including includes key statistics reflecting the position at the end of Q3, 2022/23.

*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 Performance Report (includes key statistics reflecting the position at the end of Q3, 2022/23) is attached as Appendix B to this report.

### 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.

### 2.3. Stakeholder Meetings

- 2.3.1. The National Complaint Handling Development Group (NCHDG) will reconvene once its Terms of Reference have been reviewed and refreshed. It is the intention that the Committee will be provided with a fuller update at its meeting on 1 June 2023.

- 2.3.2. The Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) last met on 16 November 2022, with discussion continuing in respect of development of new on-call guidance, and on the HM Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland [Inspection of the management of criminal allegations against the police by COPFS](#) report.

### 2.4. Wider SPA Complaints Team Activity

- 2.4.1. The team attended a recent PSD Induction Day to provide an input covering the Authority's role in respect of complaints & conduct matters.

### 2.5. Engagement with Other Organisations

- 2.5.1. The team have made contact with counterparts working with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) in England

and Wales, as well as the Northern Ireland Policing Board, with a view to identifying opportunities for learning and benchmarking.

## **2.6. Improvement Activity**

2.6.1. Measures continue to be taken to reduce the number of cases received that are outwith the remit of the SPA<sup>1</sup> and ensure that members of the public are signposted appropriately when making a complaint. Engagement with other organisations (see above) has identified that challenges in this regard are not unique to the Authority, those organisations having taken similar steps to ensure appropriate signposting.

## **2.7. Organisational Learning**

2.7.1. 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. No specific organisational learning opportunities have been identified during this reporting period.

## **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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 13% of cases received in Q3 2022/23 were within SPA's remit, compared to 10% for the reporting period as a whole.

**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.



**SCOTTISH POLICE  
AUTHORITY**  
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

## **Appendix A**

# **SPA Complaints Overview**

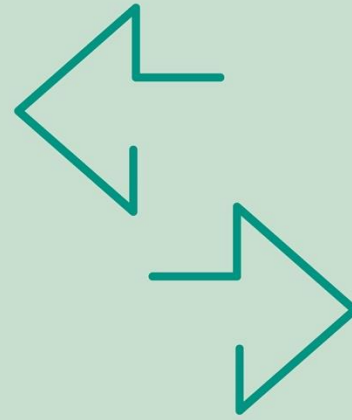
## SPA Complaints Overview

- 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 9 February 2023, there are 12 officers of senior rank in Police Scotland and approximately 635 SPA 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

Q3 2022/23

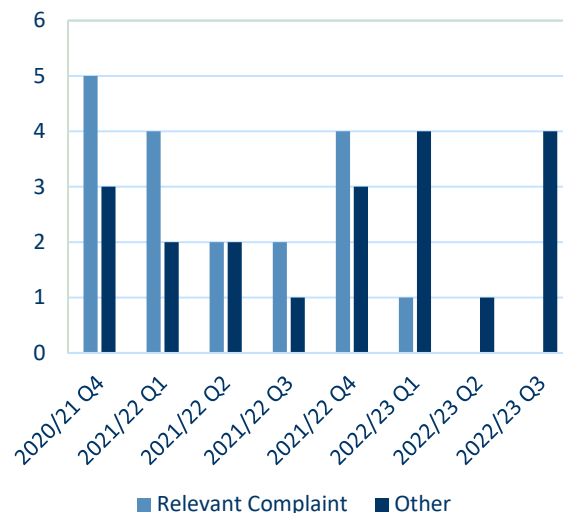


SCOTTISH POLICE  
**AUTHORITY**  
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

## Highlights (8 quarter view)

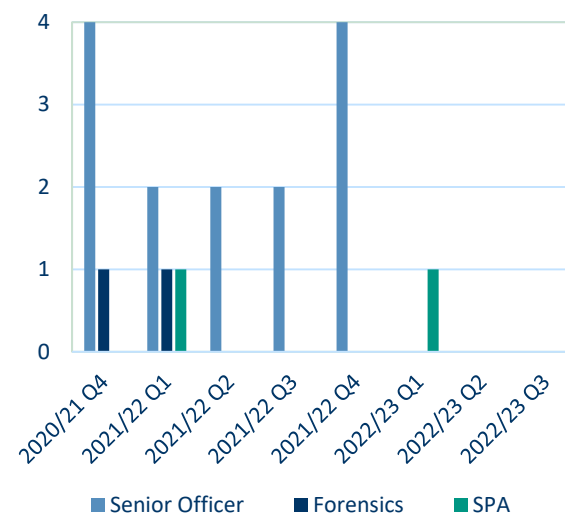
- Consistent trend in volumes of relevant complaints and allegations
- Majority of relevant complaints relate to senior officers
- 87% of allegations relate to On Duty complaints and the remaining 13% relate to complainers' dissatisfaction with the Quality of Service received
- Early stage resolution continues to be an effective means of addressing complaints of a less serious nature (35% of allegations resolved)
- Of the 18 complaints closed over the reporting period, 15 were completed within the targeted completion time of 40 working days
- During Q3, no relevant complaints within SPA remit were received
- At the end of Q3, no allegations are ongoing
- Data excludes complaints received that are outside the SPA's mandate

## Cases received



- Across 8 quarter period 47% 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 (PSD)

## Subject of complaints

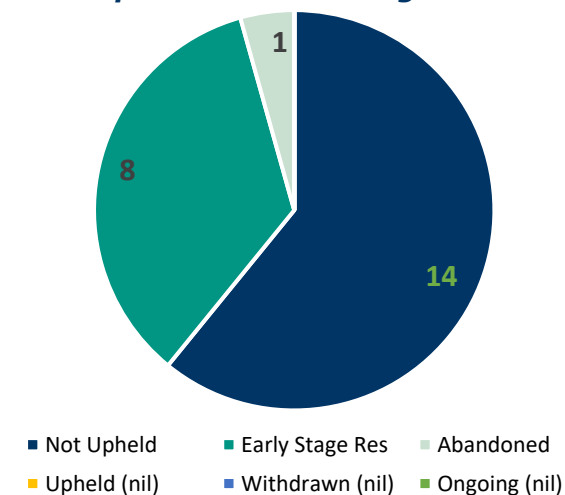


- The majority of relevant complaints (78%) relate to senior officers, although absolute volumes remain low
- Within these complaints, there were 23 individual allegations made. The split of these allegations mirrors that of the complaints, with 83% relating to senior officers

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

## Determination

### 8 quarter view of allegations

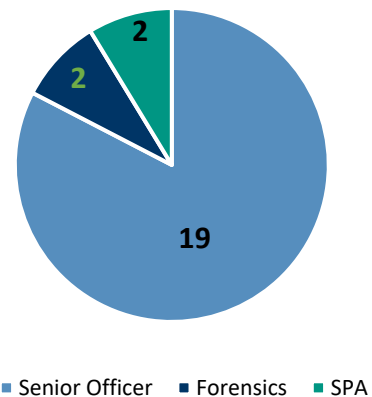
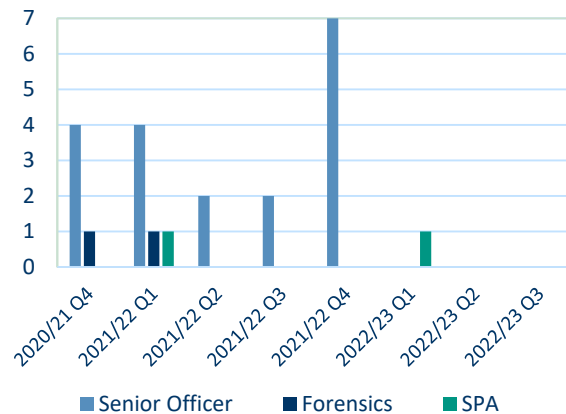


- 61% of allegations not upheld
- 35% resolved by early stage resolution (ESR) via explanation, assurance or apology

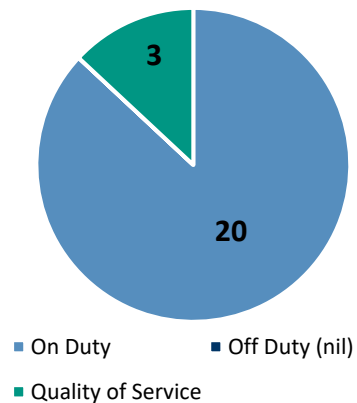
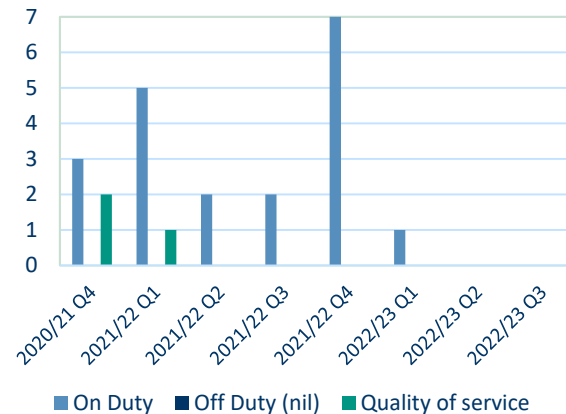


## Allegations by subject

Drill down from 'Subject of complaints' on previous page



## Allegations by category



## Timescales to close

	2020/21	2021/22				2022/23		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Closed	5	4	2	2	4	1	0	0
Ave. working days to close	13	25	6	9	58	14	0	0
Cases closed beyond 40 working days								
Closed	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Days to close		74			51 166			

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:

- Large volumes of documentation provided by the complainer, in addition to further information required from outside the SPA which was not readily available
- Multiple requests for the complainer to submit additional information to allow the investigation to progress
- Complexity of enquiries and investigation undertaken