



Meeting	SPA Complaints & Conduct Committee
Date	1 June 2023
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	SPA Annual and Quarterly Report
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 Quarterly Report Q4 – 22/23 Appendix C - SPA Complaints Annual Report 2022/23

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 Q4, 2022/23. The report also includes key statistics over the past 4 years, 2019/20 to 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 Quarterly Performance Report, including key statistics reflecting the position at the end of Q4 2022/23, is attached as Appendix B to this report. The quarterly report provides comparison to the previous 7 quarters.
- 2.1.3. Appendix C contains the SPA Complaints Annual Report providing details over the past 4 years. Previous Annual Reports have provided analysis over a 5 year period but recent changes to the SPA recording process mean it is not possible to provide comparable data for 2018/19. However, in line with the previous recording process, further information on historical statistics is presented in the Complaints and Conduct Committee 2021-22 [Annual 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. As previously reported, the National Complaint Handling Development Group (NCHDG) is currently paused while partners review the purpose and remit of the group. SPA, PIRC and Police Scotland colleagues met in March 2023 to review the group's Terms of Reference (ToR) and it is envisaged that the group will reconvene once the ToR have been refreshed.
- 2.3.2. The Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) has not met since the last CCC meeting.

2.4. Engagement with Other Organisations

2.4.1. The team are progressing activity to identify & conduct benchmarking exercises in relation to complaints handling and oversight/assurance reporting. Specifically, work includes analysis of the [Baroness Casey Review](#), [HMICFRS Inspection Report](#), [IOPC Annual Complaints Statistics](#) and [PONI Annual Report](#).

2.5. Improvement Activity

2.5.1. Measures continue to be taken to reduce the number of cases received that are outwith the remit of the SPA and ensure that members of the public are signposted appropriately when making a complaint.

2.6. Organisational Learning

2.6.1. 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.

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

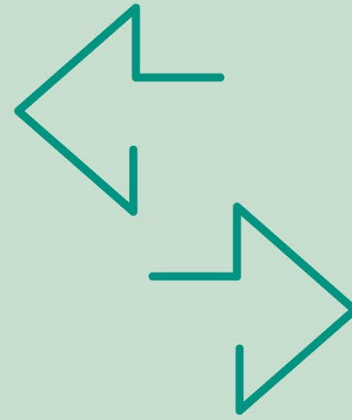
SPA Complaints Overview

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 10 May 2023, there are 14 officers of senior rank in Police Scotland and 636 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
Q4 2022/23

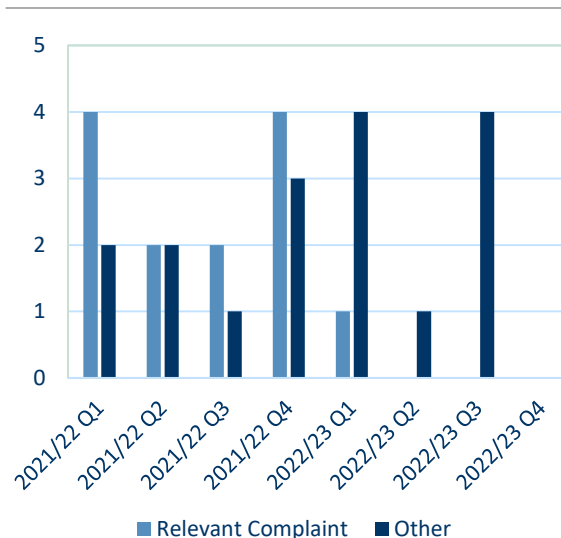


SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Highlights (8 quarter view)

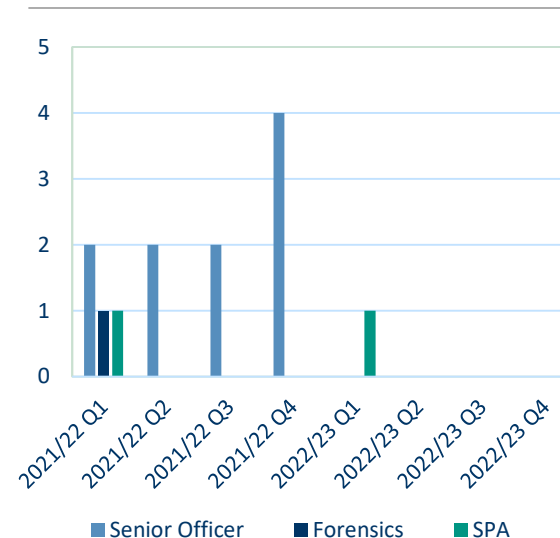
- Volumes of relevant complaints and allegations remained consistent until 2022/23 Q2, since which, no relevant complaints within SPA remit have been received
- Majority of relevant complaints relate to senior officers
- 94% of allegations relate to On Duty complaints and the remaining 6% relate to complainers' dissatisfaction with the Quality of Service received
- Early stage resolution continues to be an effective means of addressing complaints of a less serious nature (28% of allegations resolved)
- Of the 13 complaints closed over the reporting period, 77% were completed within the targeted completion time of 40 working days
- At the end of Q4, no allegations are ongoing
- Data excludes complaints received that are outside the SPA's mandate

Cases received



- Across 8 quarter period 43% 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

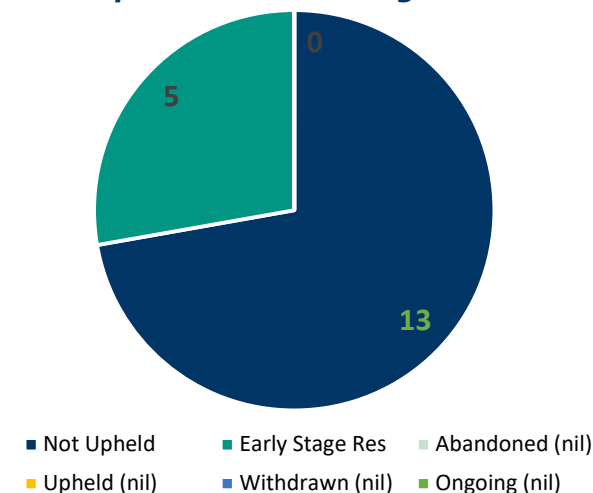


- The majority of relevant complaints (77%) relate to senior officers, although absolute volumes remain low
- Within these complaints, 18 individual allegations were made. The split of allegations mirrors that of the complaints, with 83% relating to senior officers

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

Determination

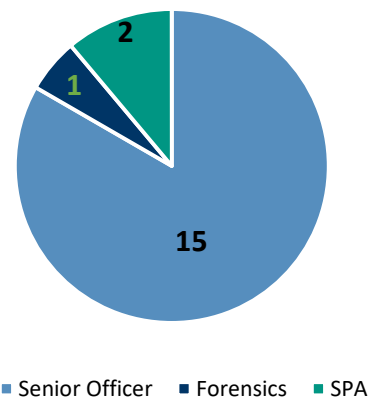
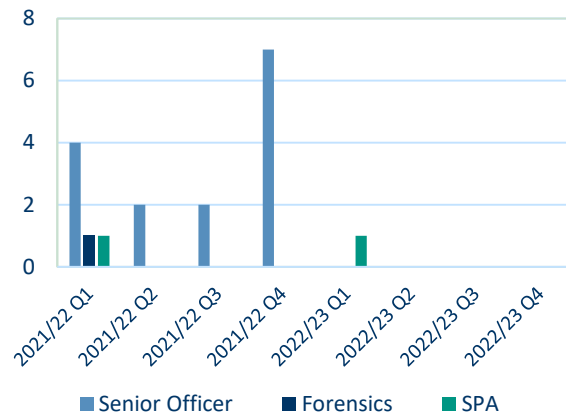
8 quarter view of allegations



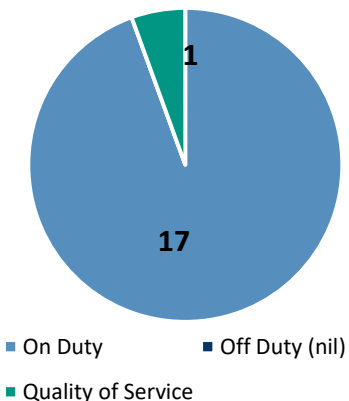
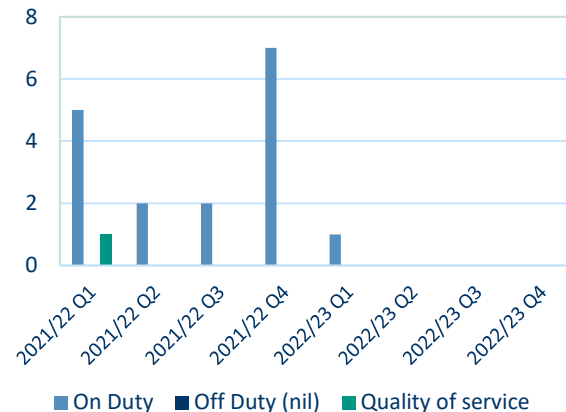
- 72% of allegations not upheld
- 28% resolved by early stage resolution (ESR) via explanation, assurance or apology

Allegations by subject

Drill down from 'Subject of complaints' on previous page



Allegations by category



Timescales to close

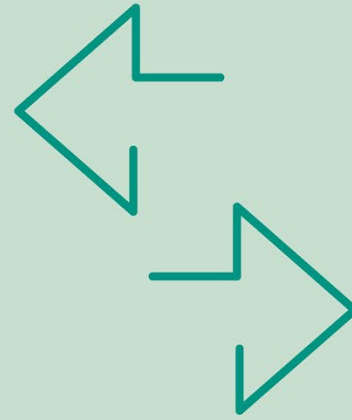
	2021/22				2022/23			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Closed	4	2	2	4	1	0	0	0
Ave. working days to close	25	6	9	58	14	0	0	0
Cases closed beyond 40 working days								
Closed	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Days to close	74			51				166

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

SPA Complaints Performance Report

Annual Report
2022/23

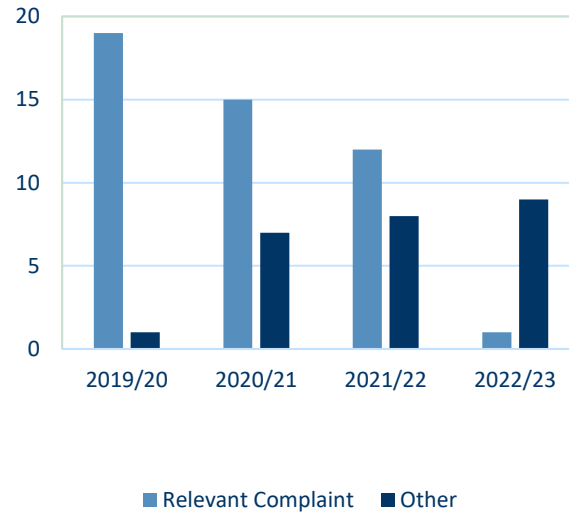


SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Highlights (4 year view)

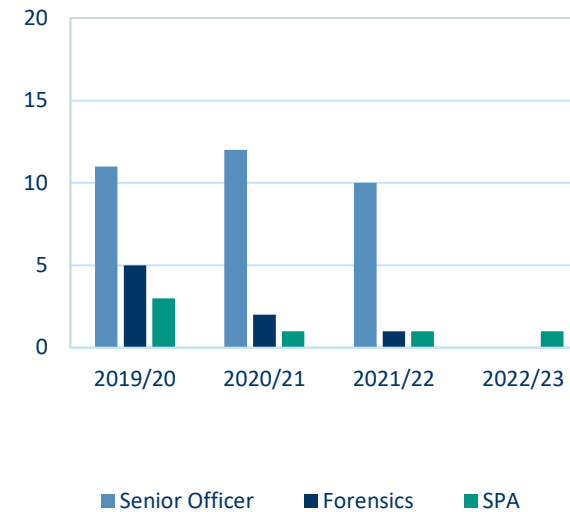
- The following is in the context of low numbers of relevant complaints and allegations received generally
- Volumes of relevant complaints and allegations show a gradual decline until a steep drop last year
- Steady increase in other cases, not classed as relevant complaints
- The number of relevant complaints and allegations about senior officers was largely static until none received last year
- From a high in 2019/20, there are now minimal numbers of relevant complaints and allegations about Forensics and SPA
- On Duty allegations were broadly similar in number until a significant drop last year
- The number of Quality of Service allegations shows a steady decline until none received last year
- Previous reports showed that, in 2017/18, the average time to close relevant complaints was 96 days. This has broadly reduced to a low last year of 14 days
- Following a high in 2018/19, the number closed over target (40 working days) has decreased, with 73% overall completed within target

Cases received



- Across 4 year period 65% 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 (70%) relate to senior officers, although absolute volumes remain low
- Within these complaints, 70 individual allegations were made. The split of allegations mirrors that of the complaints, with 61% relating to senior officers

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

Determination

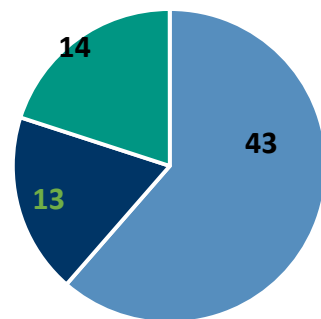
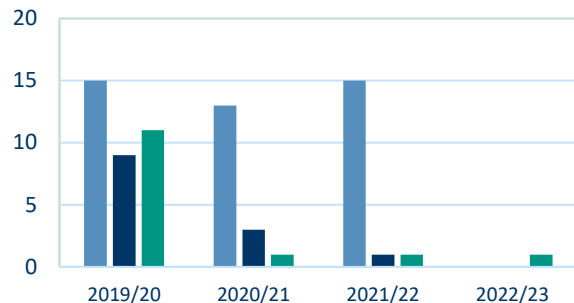
4 year view of allegations

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Upheld	3	0	0	0
Not Upheld	17	9	13	0
ESR	4	6	4	1
Withdrawn	0	1	0	0
Abandoned	3	1	0	0
Closed UA	8	0	0	0
Ongoing	0	0	0	0
Total	35	17	17	1

- 56% of allegations not upheld
- 21% resolved by early stage resolution (ESR) via explanation, assurance or apology
- Closed UA refers to a complaint closed due to complainer being subject to the SPA's 'Unacceptable, Persistent or Unreasonable Actions by Complainers Policy'.

Allegations by subject

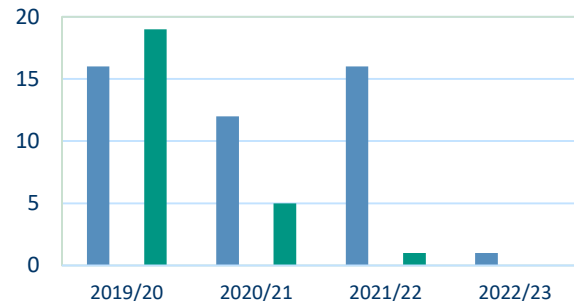
Drill down from 'Subject of complaints' on previous page



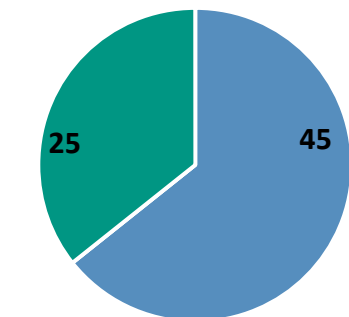
■ Senior Officer ■ Forensics ■ SPA

■ Senior Officer ■ Forensics ■ SPA

Allegations by category



■ On Duty ■ Off Duty (nil) ■ Quality of Service



■ On Duty ■ Off Duty (nil)

■ Quality of Service

Timescales to close

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Closed	27	19	15	12	1
Ave. working days to close	46	23	41	30	14
Cases closed beyond 40 working days					
Closed	10	4	3	3	0
Days to close	45, 45, 52, 54, 57, 90, 118, 120, 176, 179	52, 60, 73, 84	44, 188, 232	51, 74, 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:

- Complexity/seriousness of enquiries and investigations undertaken
- Requirement for case reviews by Forensic Services
- Large volumes of documentation provided by the complainer
- Information required from outside the SPA which was not readily available
- Multiple requests for complainer to submit information