



Meeting	SPA Complaints & Conduct Committee
Date	22 August 2023
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	SPA Quarterly Report (Q1 – 23/24)
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 Q1 – 23/24

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 Q1, 2023/24.

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 Q1 2023/24, 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.

2.3. Suitability of Police Scotland Complaints Handling

- 2.3.1. A high-level summary and statement on the suitability of Police Scotland's complaints handling is included in the SPA Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23. A more detailed, Committee-specific report aiming to supplement this approach is presented as a separate agenda item at the private session of this meeting.

2.4. Stakeholder Meetings

- 2.4.1. The National Complaint Handling Development Group (NCHDG) met on 8 June 2023, and agreed a refreshed focus on delivering better complaints handling via a peer group advisory forum format, with an opportunity to focus on areas of organisational learning and picking up on key matters being raised by the PIRC or the SPA Complaints & Conduct Committee; a vehicle to address issues, such as training, which arise due to officer rotation into and out of Police Scotland Professional Standards Department; and a means of prioritising and co-ordinating partner audit/dip-sampling plans. A further meeting will take place after the Committee meeting.
- 2.4.2. The Strategic Oversight Group (SOG) has not met since the last CCC meeting.

2.5. Engagement with Other Organisations

2.5.1. The team continue to progress activity to identify and conduct benchmarking exercises in relation to complaints handling and oversight/assurance reporting. Specifically, work includes analysis of the [Baroness Casey Review](#), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) [Inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in policing](#), the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) [Police Complaints Statistics for England and Wales](#) and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (PONI) [Annual Statistical Bulletin](#).

2.6. Organisational Learning/Improvement Activity

2.6.1. The SPA is committed to promoting a culture of organisational learning and improvement activity. 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.



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Appendix A

SPA Complaints Overview

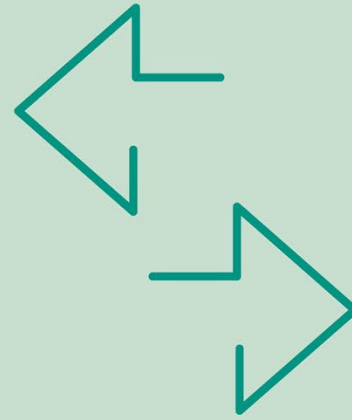


SPA Complaints Overview

- 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 of 17 July 2023, there are 14 officers of senior rank in Police Scotland and 640 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
Q1 2023/24

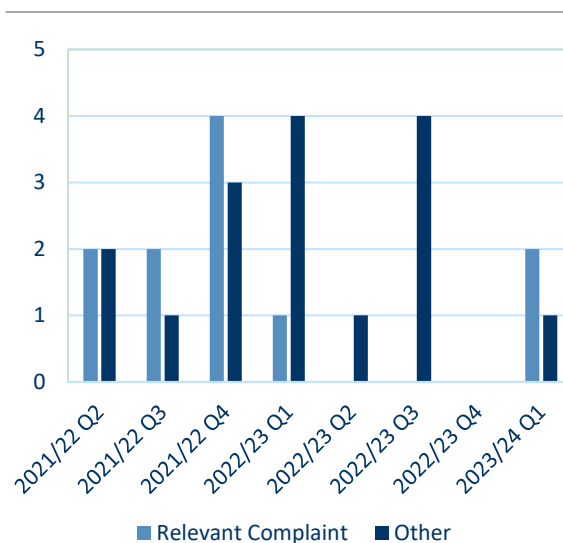


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Highlights (8 quarter view)

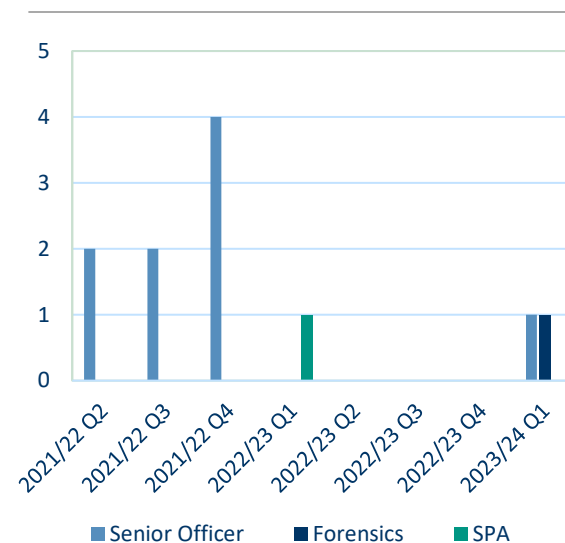
- Recognising that no relevant complaints were received in 2022/23 Q2 to Q4, volumes of complaints and allegations received continue largely to remain consistent
- Majority of relevant complaints, and allegations, relate to senior officers
- 93% of allegations relate to On Duty complaints and the remaining 7% 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 (43% of all allegations received)
- Of the 11 complaints closed over the reporting period, 82% were completed within the targeted completion time of 40 working days
- At the end of Q1, no allegations are ongoing
- Data excludes complaints received that are outside the SPA's mandate

Cases received



- Across 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 (PSD)

Subject of complaints

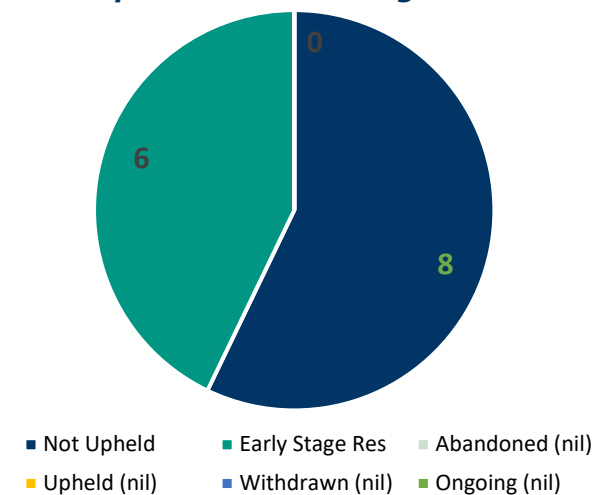


- The majority of relevant complaints (82%) relate to senior officers, although absolute volumes remain low
- Within these complaints, 14 individual allegations were made. The split of allegations mirrors that of the complaints, with 86% relating to senior officers

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

Determination

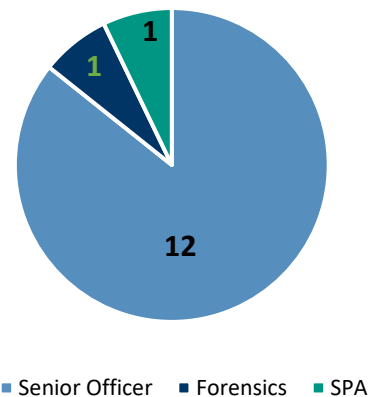
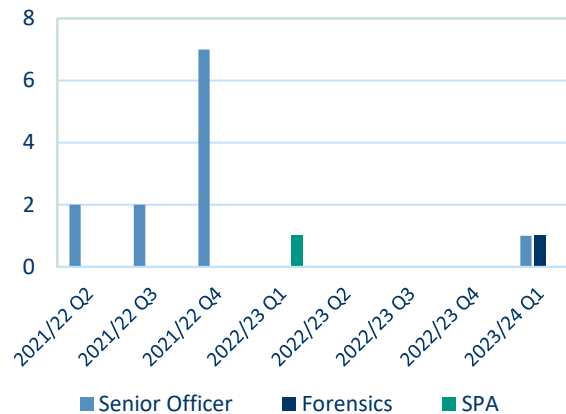
8 quarter view of allegations



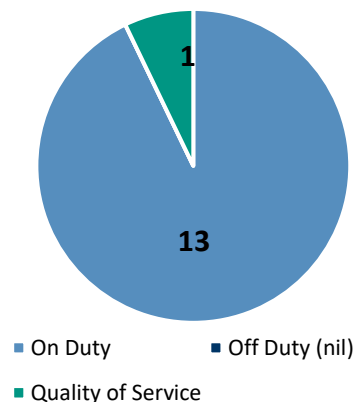
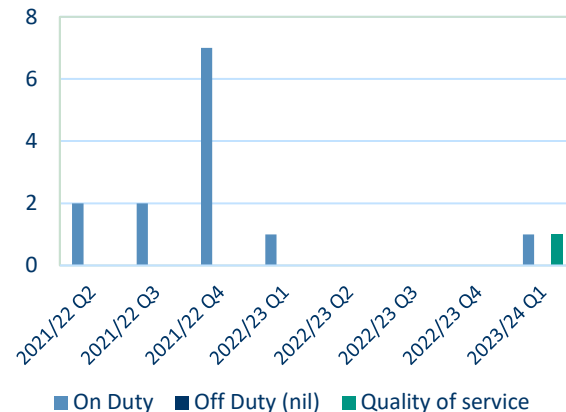
- Of the cases closed during the reporting period, 43% of allegations were resolved by Early Stage Resolution (ESR) via explanation, assurance or apology
- Of the remaining 57% which required a formal determination, no allegations were upheld.

Allegations by subject

Drill down from 'Subject of complaints' on previous page



Allegations by category



Timescales to close

	2021/22			2022/23				2023/24
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Closed	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	2
Ave. working days to close	6	9	58	14	0	0	0	27
Cases closed beyond 40 working days								
Closed	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Days to close			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:

- Multiple requests for the complainer to submit additional information to allow the investigation to progress
- Complexity of enquiries and investigation undertaken