

### Organisational Culture:

Crucial to good complaints handling, is an underpinning culture that truly values complaints. A culture where all staff, who can potentially be the first point of contact, value all of the views expressed and where customers feel comfortable about expressing their views without fear of this affecting the service or treatment or they receive or their relationship with service provider.

Creating and embedding that culture needs strong leadership. This calls for senior management to visibly support good complaints handling and so develop a culture within their organisation that values complaints. Frontline staff should be empowered to deal with complaints which have been identified as relatively straightforward, and where a response can be provided quickly. Likewise, investigative staff should have a clear remit to access any information necessary and to effectively investigate and reach a robust decision on more complex issues. This requires clear direction from senior management on the extent and limits of discretion and responsibilities in resolving complaints, including the ability to identify failings, take effective remedial action and apologise. Senior management also have a responsibility to ensure that complaints are central to the overall governance of the organisation.

		Self Assessment score		
	Organisational Culture	Yes = 1 No = 0		Evidence
1	The organisation can demonstrate evidence of a strong focus on welcoming and responding positively to complaints.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have knowledge of how to respond to complaints (training and awareness sessions attended)</li> <li>• Staff have a clear awareness of their role and responsibility on the complaints process (documented within the CHP and discussed at performance reviews and appraisals)</li> <li>• Staff are aware of the Complaints Handling Procedure and any relevant associated guidance (discussed at performance reviews and appraisals)</li> <li>• There a prevailing culture of complaints being welcomed as opposed to feared or responded to in a defensive manner (Complaints trends, themes, outcomes and improvements publicised)</li> <li>• Evidence of an approach to learning from complaints for example lessons learned meetings/briefings and examples of improvements on the back of complaints is readily available</li> <li>• Complaints files and response to feedback records show that staff and management regularly speak to complainants to try and resolve their dissatisfaction</li> </ul>			
2	The organisation ensures that all staff are aware of the CHP and have been trained to handle complaints as appropriate to their role in the organisation.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation has documented arrangements for training and developing staff, for example, a Training and Development Policy document that states for everyone, regardless of their job and grade, that they will be trained, and will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an awareness of the requirements of the complaints procedure, the importance of early resolution (where possible) and the requirement to conduct and thorough and evidence based investigation</li> <li>• Understand the importance of Good Complaints Handling</li> <li>• Be empowered to provide a meaningful apology, where appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The organisation supports staff in developing the key skills required for Good Complaints handling through access to e learning modules and other training opportunities</li> </ul>			

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3	Leadership actively demonstrates that complaints are valued and staff in senior positions demonstrate a positive complaints culture.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Head of the Organisation states that the organisation welcomes and values complaint, for example in the CHP and in annual reports, business, strategic and/or operational plans</li> <li>Senior managers in the organisation take an active interest in the complaints being handled by the organisation, by for example speaking with complainants or checking the quality of decision letters to ensure empathy, understanding and thoroughness of complaints investigations</li> <li>Complaints files, minutes of meetings, articles published online or within a newsletter reflect senior managers interaction with complainants and the learning and service improvements that result from the outcome of customers complaints</li> </ul>		
4	Leaders meet with complainants, during and/or after the complaint process where appropriate.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints files, minutes of meetings, articles published online or within a newsletter reflect senior managers interaction with complainants and the learning and service improvements that result from the outcome of customers complaints</li> </ul>		
5	Staff at the frontline have (and feel that they have) the knowledge, training and skills to respond effectively to complaints.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training needs analysis and staff surveys test this to validate the views of both frontline staff and managers.</li> <li>At least 75% of staff in frontline roles have completed, or have had the opportunity to complete, the SPSO frontline complaint handling e-learning modules.</li> </ul>		
6	Staff empowered to make decisions, and to apologise as appropriate, where complaints are relatively straightforward and service failures are identified.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job descriptions reflect the parameters within which staff are empowered to make decisions on complaints</li> <li>Complaints performance information is used to verify staff exercise empowerment appropriately</li> <li>Complaints performance information indicates that in excess of 85% of complaints are closed at stage 1</li> <li>Senior management provide clear guidelines identifying the issues that should be handled by frontline staff</li> <li>Staff are provided with guidance detailing the parameters within which they can decide on complaints and are given the operational authority to do so</li> </ul>		

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7	The organisation supports its staff in fulfilling their complaints handling requirements.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation visibly supports staff by providing support services or counselling to handle difficult situations</li> </ul>			
8	The organisation runs training and/or awareness sessions on complaints handling on at least a three year cycle.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence is available to show that staff have participated in frontline e-learning, investigation skills, power of apology training and/or training for senior staff and board members on governance.</li> <li>Evidence is available to show that general complaints awareness sessions to raise the profile and understanding of all staff's responsibilities under the CHPhave been delivered</li> </ul>			
9	Strategic/operational plans, vision and or mission statements demonstrate that the organisation 'Values Complaints'.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation's annual report, strategic, operational and/or business plans make reference to the complaints handling function of the organisation and clearly states its commitment to valuing complaints and its commitment to resolving customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery where possible and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations when appropriate.</li> <li>The organisation publicises information about the complaints it has dealt with and demonstrates that learning from complaints has resulted in improvements in the way that it delivers its services</li> </ul>			
10	Complaints feature as a documented agenda item in team, management and senior management team meetings.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting agendas reflect complaints as a discussion topic</li> <li>Minutes of meetings record discussions around complaints, learning from complaints and complaints performance</li> </ul>			

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11	The organisation can show evidence of a strong focus on welcoming and responding positively to complaints.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational guidance is in place which explains the requirement to respond positively to complaints in terms of empathy, understanding the complaint from the customer's perspective and ensuring that each issue complained about is responded to in full.</li> <li>Decision letters are clear, easy to understand, non-confrontational and written in a way that demonstrates the value of the complaint to the organisation</li> <li>Decision letters avoid technical language, but where such descriptions must be used a full explanation of the term used is also provided;</li> <li>Decision letters address all the issues raised in the complaint and demonstrate that each has been fully and fairly investigated</li> <li>Decision letters include an apology in the first paragraph where things have gone wrong</li> <li>Decision letters highlight any area of continuing disagreement and explain why the issue cannot be resolved to the customers satisfaction</li> <li>Decision letters signpost customers to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman – irrespective of the outcome of the complaint.</li> </ul>		
12	Senior managers have a clearly defined role in relation to signing off individual complaints and in ensuring service failures are remedied and improvements implemented as a result of complaints received.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior management provide clear guidelines on their roles and responsibilities in the complaints handling process</li> <li>The outcome of an investigation provides a single definitive decision, signed off by a senior officer</li> <li>Senior management take ownership of decisions reached and the resulting requirements for learning and service improvements</li> </ul>		
13	The organisation ensures that all staff have a knowledge of the complaints process, are trained and empowered to deal with complaints and difficult customers and their training needs are updated on a regular basis.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints are covered in new employee's induction to the organisation</li> <li>Training records are held to show that employees have been trained in complaints handling and in managing difficult situations</li> <li>Staff surveys show that employees feel qualified/empowered to deal with complaints and have the knowledge, training and skills to respond effectively</li> <li>Guidance is in place to show that employees are empowered to make decisions, and to apologise as appropriate, where complaints are relatively straightforward and service failures are identified</li> <li>The organisation has a training and development programme for staff who deal with complaints, to build and keep up-to-date competencies in providing an effective complaints handling service to the public</li> <li>The organisation supports staff personal development plans which address individual's complaints training needs</li> <li>Each member of staff receives refresher training (either formal or informal) to keep them up-to-date in relation to effective complaints handling/management</li> <li>Training needs are updated on a (frequency) cycle</li> </ul>		

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14	Each member of staff dealing with the public has in place a job description/performance agreement/key work objectives or similar document that covers their role/responsibility in handling/managing complaints.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees have a personal job description/performance agreement/key work objectives or similar document that covers their role/responsibility in handling/managing complaints</li> <li>• The organisation undertakes performance appraisals which include an assessment of complaints handling performance</li> </ul>		
15	Complainants are thanked for bringing the complaint to the organisation.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff dealing with complaints at the frontline stage of the CHP always thank the customer for bringing a complaint to the organisation</li> <li>• Decision letters thank the customer for bringing their complaint to the organisation</li> <li>• When the organisation publicises the outcomes, trends and learning from complaints it thanks the customers who have brought these matters to its attention</li> </ul>		
16	Where a problem has occurred, we say sorry.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The records of frontline complaints outcomes show that an apology was provided where something had gone wrong for the customer</li> <li>• Decision letters include an apology in the first paragraph where things have gone wrong for the customer</li> </ul>		
17	Where a problem has occurred quick and effective action is taken to remedy and where appropriate improve services.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records are held to show actions required as a result of complaints and the timescales within which they should be completed</li> <li>• Lessons learned reports show the outcomes of complaints together with the service improvements introduced as a result</li> </ul>		
18	The organisation always looks to solve the core issue which led to the complaint and learn from the outcome of complaints so as to reduce the potential for more/similar complaints.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation can demonstrate that a 'root cause analysis' had been undertaken and where appropriate action has been taken to prevent reoccurrence of a problem</li> <li>• Lessons learned reports show the outcomes of complaints together with the service improvements introduced as a result</li> </ul>		

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19	The organisation always feeds back to the complainant to confirm that action has been taken and how services have improved.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation can demonstrate through records or letters sent, that the customer has been updated on the action taken as a result of their complaint and how services have improved as a consequence</li> </ul>			
20	The organisation has a continuous improvement culture and checks customer satisfaction with complaint outcomes and with service delivery.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation can demonstrate that through regular (<b>what is regular</b>) customer satisfaction surveys their views on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way in which they were treated by the organisation's staff, for example in relation to</li> <li>professionalism, friendliness, politeness, courtesy, communication style etc</li> <li>Empathy, for example how the organisation understood the complaint from the customer's perspective</li> <li>Whether, and to what extent the organisation did what it said it would do, for example meeting timescales and providing updates to the customer</li> <li>The clarity of the decision and the basis for reaching that decision</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
21	All staff attend either a complaints awareness session, or receive specific complaints handling training within a 3 year cycle.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a training and development programme ensuring that staff who deal with complaints, build and keep up-to-date competencies in providing an effective complaints handling service to the public on a cycle which does not exceed 3 years</li> </ul>			
<b>Organisational Culture score</b>			

		Standard score	Self Assessment score
1	<b>Organisational Culture</b>	21	/21
2	<b>Accessibility</b>	11	/11
3	<b>Process and Procedure</b>	20	/20
4	<b>Quality</b>	08	/08
5	<b>Learning from Complaints</b>	16	/16
6	<b>Complaints Handling Performance</b>	09	/09
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>/85</b>