

# Complaints Standards Authority (CSA)



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## NHS – Complaints procedure

On 28 January 2015 the Scottish Government wrote to the chief executives of the NHS boards and other key NHS stakeholders to notify them of proposed changes to the NHS procedure for handling complaints. These changes will be developed by the Complaints Standards Authority who will work with boards to develop a revised NHS model complaints handling procedure (CHP) using the framework of the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011, ‘Can I Help You?’ guidance and the model CHPs developed and implemented by other public bodies in Scotland.

The revised procedure will encourage better early, local, resolution of complaints wherever appropriate. The Scottish Government outlined the proposal to introduce a distinct five-working-day stage for early resolution, ahead of the 20-working-day investigation stage. Importantly, this will replace the existing requirement to attempt resolution within the first three working days of the 20 working day period. These changes are intended to support NHS providers to improve outcomes for people using their services, by helping them to resolve more complaints quickly at the early stages, and improve performance in meeting the subsequent 20-day target. The changes will require amendments to the regulations and directions associated with the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011.

In January we attended the NHS Executive Masterclass (‘Listening and learning – from Feedback to Action’) jointly hosted by the Scottish Government and Scottish Health Council. We also attended the NHS Complaints Personnel Association Scotland meeting. This allowed us to share our thoughts about the development of a NHS model complaints handling procedure, and how we will work with the sector to achieve this.

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## NHS – Early resolution masterclasses

Following discussion with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) we have agreed to help develop and run a series of events for NHS middle managers on early resolution and elements of change that would be required in implementing the CHP. Dates have now been identified to hold regional events over February and March. Further details are available from NES.

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## Local government

We have now received annual complaint reports information from all councils for the year 2013/14. For the first time ever, information collected and reported in a standardised way is available to allow the sector to better understand and learn from the handling of complaints. This information, together with the other performance information reported against the SPSO’s performance indicators for the local authority model CHP provides a baseline against which we can measure performance in the future.

We have agreed with the sector’s local authority complaints handlers network that we need to learn from the data collection, reporting and publication process to ensure that, in future, annual complaints performance information is made available to the network at the earliest opportunity, and at least by the end of the first quarter. There may also be a need to further develop the performance indicators to ensure they provide information that is helpful to the sector. The network is undertaking further work to look at how the data collection and reporting process works in practice, and produce a summary report to use for benchmarking purposes.

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## Housing

The next meeting of the housing complaints handlers network is scheduled for 27 March 2015 in Edinburgh. The location and time have yet to be finalised.

The network is run by the sector for the sector, and aims to identify, evaluate and share good practice in complaints handling. It also seeks to compare and contrast complaints handling performance with a view to benchmarking and sharing the learning from complaints handling. The meeting in March will reflect on the CHP in operation, performance reporting and benchmarking and possibly other issues of interest to the sector such as the application of unacceptable actions policies.

If you would like to attend the meeting on 27 March 2015, please contact us at [csa@spsso.org.uk](mailto:csa@spsso.org.uk). Further information will be provided to those who express an interest in attending.

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## Further education

The further education complaints advisory group met in January. The main areas of discussion included the requirement for colleges to produce annual complaints reports and planning for the advisory group's workshop on benchmarking complaints performance. It was agreed that the workshop will be held on Wednesday 6 May 2015, and will cover the issues of complaints handling and the reporting and benchmarking of complaints performance across the sector. The group agreed that it was important for all colleges to be represented at the workshop wherever possible, but acknowledged that for some (the UHI colleges for example) special arrangements may be appropriate, where one college attends on behalf of others.

A number of colleges have already prepared and reported their annual complaints performance information. The advisory group agreed, however, that to allow for a meaningful comparison, it was important that the data was presented in a standardised consistent way. It was agreed that the CSA would, on behalf of the advisory group, develop a template for reporting performance for use by all colleges. The template will be assessed by members of the group and completed by all colleges prior to the workshop, so that we can better understand the complaints handling performance across the sector.

The College Development Network will provide further details of the workshop directly to all colleges in due course.

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## Higher education

We would like to remind all universities of the requirement to report on their complaints handling performance annually in line with SPSO requirements, as documented in ***the Scottish higher education model complaints handling procedure Guide to Implementation (PDF, 101KB)***. We ask all higher education institutions that have not already done so, to provide us with their report, or a link to their published annual complaints report online, by writing to us at [csa@spsso.org.uk](mailto:csa@spsso.org.uk)

For all previous updates, and for more information about CHPs, visit our dedicated website [www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk). You can also contact the CSA directly at [csa@spsso.org.uk](mailto:csa@spsso.org.uk)

# SPSO Training Events



## **Managing Difficult Behaviour:** 1 day open course Wednesday 15 April 2015, in central Edinburgh

### **Who should attend?**

Staff who might receive negative feedback from the public or other stakeholders.

### **What does it cover?**

- why people complain and what they want to achieve by complaining
- how people react in situations of conflict and how this can give rise to behaviours that cause problems
- ways to de-escalate potential complaints and look at what can go wrong when concerns are responded to badly
- how an unacceptable actions policy (or equivalent) can be helpful in dealing with situations which become difficult

Participants will be given an opportunity to assess their own conflict styles and develop ways of managing their own personal 'triggers'. We will consider a number of different theories and tools that can be helpful in managing conflict. The session will include a number of opportunities to put theory into practice and participants will be able to discuss their own particular concerns.

**Price: £180 pp** To apply for the course, please email [training@spsso.org.uk](mailto:training@spsso.org.uk)

For more SPSO course information, please visit the SPSO Training Unit website:  
[www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/training-centre/](http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/training-centre/)

## **Save the date:**

### **SPSO Conference, Thursday 8 October 2015**

With a range of keynote speakers, interactive workshops and cross-sector networking opportunities, our one-day conference will focus on helping you implement improvements to your complaints handling, quality assure your complaints responses, and maximise learning from complaints using root cause analysis.

Location: **COSLA conference centre, Edinburgh (near Haymarket train station)**

Price: **delegate rate £150pp, including refreshments and conference materials**

**Spaces will be limited, but to register your early interest or for more information, please contact [training@spsso.org.uk](mailto:training@spsso.org.uk)**