

## Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

### Complaints Handling Report, 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

#### Complaints received

Total number of complaints: 45

Stage 1: 27

Stage 2: 18 (15 direct + 3 escalated)

#### Complaints closed within deadlines

The timescale for responding to complaints is 5 working days at stage 1 and 20 working days at stage 2.

(A 'working day' is any day that is not a weekend or a public holiday.)

Stage 1: 26 complaints (96% of stage 1 complaints)

Stage 2: 3 complaints direct + 3 escalated (60% overall: 43% of stage 2 complaints received direct + 100% of escalated complaints)

#### Time taken

Stage 1: average time was 4.1 working days.

Stage 2: average time (both direct and escalated combined) was 20.9 working days.

Stage 2 received directly and closed: average time was 22.1 working days. This excludes the 8 complaints pending at the end of the reporting year.

Stage 2 escalated from stage 1: average time was 18 working days.

The main reason for delays was the unavailability of staff whose input was required to take forward investigations.

#### Outcomes

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Resolved          | <b>21</b> (21 at stage 1*; 0 at stage 2) |
| Fully upheld:     | <b>1</b> (0 at stage 1; 1 at stage 2)    |
| Partially upheld: | <b>6</b> (0 at stage 1; 6 at stage 2)    |
| Not upheld:       | <b>7</b> (4 at stage 1; 3 at stage 2)    |
| Pending:          | <b>8</b> (0 at stage 1; 8 at stage 2)    |

\* In addition, we attempted to resolve 2 complaints at stage 1 but failed and escalation was requested.

#### Trends

- The total number of complaints in 2024-25 (45) was higher than in 2023-24 (38). While the number of stage 1 complaints was similar in both years (with 27 in 2024-25 and 26 in 2023-24), there was a shift in the balance of complaints, with

stage 2 complaints accounting for less than 32% of the total in 2023-24 but 40% of the total in 2024-25.

- The number of escalated complaints remains low but increased from 1 in 2023-24 to 3 in 2024-25.
- As in 2023-24, we have continued to focus on resolving complaints, particularly at stage 1, by providing an explanation, clarification and/or an apology, where appropriate. We will continue to seek resolution wherever possible and monitor how this is achieved and recorded.
- While decisions taken relating to flags, badges, clothing and the lanyards worn by Scottish Parliamentary Service staff continued to account for a significant proportion of the complaints this year (20% of the total received), it is down on 2023-24, when complaints relating to clothing and symbols accounted for nearly 37% of the total.

### **Actions taken**

As a result of complaints, we made or are making the following changes to our services and procedures:

- We have arranged for the installation of an alert mechanism, along with signage, in the accessible exit that can be used to notify staff in the event of a delay in the operation of the external door.
- Following contact with the Royal Household, which holds the copyright, we have become more flexible in terms of permitting visitors to take photographs with the portrait of The late Queen, and the signage in the Main Hall has been updated accordingly.
- We have arranged for a bug with the dark mode on the website to be fixed.
- We are reviewing guidance on whether staff must give their names when dealing with enquiries.
- We are reviewing our current position that telephone calls to the Scottish Parliament switchboard are not routinely recorded.

More information about actions taken can be found in the quarterly complaints reports.