

## Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

### Complaints Handling Annual Report, 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

#### Complaints received

Total number of complaints: 51

Stage 1: 41

Stage 2: 10 (7 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: 30 complaints (75% of stage 1 complaints)

Stage 2: 5 complaints direct + 2 escalated (78% overall: 83% of stage 2 complaints received direct + 67% of escalated complaints)

The figures above exclude complaints that were not pursued.

#### Time taken

The average time taken to deal with complaints at stage 1 was 5.2 working days.

The average time taken to deal with complaints at stage 2 (both direct and escalated combined) was 20.8 working days.

- Stage 2 received direct and closed: average time was 20.2 working days.
- Stage 2 escalated from stage 1: average time was 22 working days.

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

#### Outcomes

Resolved	<b>28</b> (28 at stage 1; 0 at stage 2)
Fully upheld:	<b>4</b> (2 at stage 1; 2 at stage 2)
Partially upheld:	<b>5</b> (1 at stage 1; 4 at stage 2)
Not upheld:	<b>5</b> (2 at stage 1; 3 at stage 2)
Not pursued:	<b>2</b> (1 at stage 1; 1 at stage 2)

In addition, we were unsuccessful at resolving 7 complaints at stage 1: 3 of these were escalated and 4 were given a further response. (For the 4 – concerning the SPCB's interim decision on toilet facilities – we reiterated the interim nature of the stance; we committed to considering views raised by complainants and to including those working regularly and closely with people with all protected equalities

characteristics in the next steps. Given this, we considered their complaints resolved and signposted to the SPSO if they were not content with our decision.)

## **Trends**

- The total number of complaints in 2025-26 (51) was higher than in 2024-25 (45) due to an increase in stage 1 complaints (41). There was also a change in the balance of complaints compared to the previous year, with stage 2 complaints accounting for 24% of the total in 2025-26, compared to 40% in 2024-25.
- The SPCB's interim decision on changes to toilet facilities accounted for almost 49% of stage 1 complaints and 39% of the total complaints received.
- The number of escalated complaints (3) remains low and is consistent with the number (3) in 2024-25.
- 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.

## **Actions taken**

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

- We improved signage to the gender-neutral toilet facilities and updated our maps of public areas.
- We have ensured that staff training includes considering the impact of the search on the person being searched when coming into the building.
- We have updated the 'Complain about an MSP' section of the website to clarify the role of the Presiding Officer in relation to complaints against MSPs under section 8 of the Code of Conduct.
- We determined a clear approach to the wearing of badges by visitors, which is set out in the revised visitor behaviour policy, and have ensured staff are aware and apply it consistently.
- We are using a complaint about political bias in communications as a case study, with learning from the complaint being used to inform the review of the Parliament's Communications Strategy.
- We have reviewed our tour content and retrained staff on inclusive language to avoid any inappropriate or stigmatising content.
- We are taking action to improve air quality in the Scottish Parliament building and security procedures when dealing with visitors wearing face-coverings, as well as information for the public on both aspects (including publication of an Indoor Air Quality Assurance Statement and updates to the Accessibility Guide).
- We are reviewing our procedures in relation to the handling of evidence by clerking teams.

- We are arranging Deaf Awareness training for all frontline Security staff and investigating other actions to improve the visitor experience for British Sign Language users.

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