

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Governance Officer
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 10 June 2025**

Subject: Complaints – Scrutiny Update
Period: 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and compares performance to the same reporting period in 2023/24. It reflects the statutory reporting categories required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), as well as information on how we improve our services following Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report.

2.1.2 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025.

3. Background

- 3.1 Our complaints procedure Listening to You, has 2 stages. We expect most complaints received to be resolved at Stage 1. If a customer remains dissatisfied after Stage 1, they can escalate their complaint to Stage 2. If an initial complaint is complex enough to require detailed investigation, it will be handled at Stage 2 from the outset. If the complainant is not satisfied with their response at Stage 2, the next stage in the Complaints Handling Procedure is for the complainant to approach the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and ask that they carry out an independent review into how the Council have investigated their complaint.
- 3.2 In April 2022 the SPSO amended their key performance indicators (KPIs) for Complaints Performance. The SPSO has indicated that the consistent application and reporting of performance against these KPIs can be used to compare, contrast and benchmark complaints handling with other organisations and will help share learning and improve standards of complaints handling performance.

- 3.3 The number of mandatory KPIs has been reduced by the SPSO from eight to four. The four mandatory SPSO KPIs formed part of the previous eight mandatory SPSO KPIs. These are:
- **Indicator One: The Total Number of Complaints Received**
 - **Indicator Two: The Number and Percentage of Complaints at Each Stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days.**
 - **Indicator Three: the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.**
 - **Indicator Four: The Outcome of Complaints at Each Stage**
- 3.4 Further information on the changes made by the SPSO to Complaints KPIs for Model Complaints Handling Procedures can be found at: [Complaints KPIs for MCHPs \(spso.org.uk\)](https://www.spsos.org.uk). Further detail on the mandatory reporting of Key Performance Indicators, information is included in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.5 The following Report provides performance data on all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed from 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and is based on updated SPSO reporting indicators, which are applicable to complaints from April 2022.
- 3.6 The Panel is asked to note that the following SPSO KPIs are no longer mandatory in terms of reporting Council complaints performance:
- **Complaints Received per 1,000 of the population.**
 - **Numbers of Complaints Where an Extension is Authorised**
 - **Customer Satisfaction**
 - **Learning from Complaints**
- 3.7 Performance information is provided within this Report to members for these non-mandatory performance indicators, with comparison against the same reporting period in 2023/24.
- 3.8 [Appendix 1](#) provides an analysis of our complaints data measured against the SPSO's mandatory reporting KPIs for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2023/24.
- 3.9 [Appendix 2](#) provides a breakdown of the reasons why complaints were raised against the Council, for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2023/24.
- 3.10 [Appendix 3](#) provides analysis of our complaints data measured against the four non-mandatory reporting indicators, for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 and compares our performance for the same reporting period in 2023/24.
- 3.11 [Appendix 4](#) outlines service improvement case studies relating to Stage 2 complaints that were upheld or partially upheld where a service improvement outcome was identified and implemented.

- 3.12 [Appendix 5](#) outlines details of complaints that have progressed to the SPSO during this reporting period, which have had recommendations made by the SPSO for the Council to improve service provision.
- 3.13 [Appendix 6](#) provides further information on Investigation complaints received by the Council that have been noted during the reporting period.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel:

- 4.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report and identifies any performance concerns or required improvement actions.
- 4.1.2 decides if future reporting should focus only on the four SPSO mandatory KPIs, or continue to include the four non-mandatory KPIs included in this report; and
- 4.1.3 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April to 30 September 2025.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

- 8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) considers the following areas:

- Public Sector Equality Duty, Human Rights and Fairer Scotland Duty;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);
- Sustainability, climate change and biodiversity;
- Potential impact on older people;
- Rural communities;

- Health and wellbeing;
- A trauma informed organisation; and
- The Promise.

9.2 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy, or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

13. **Link to Shaping Our Future Council** Yes ☐ No ☒

13.1 Not applicable.

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers: Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 11 June 2024 - [Complaints Scrutiny Update – Period: 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024](#)

Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 19 November 2024 – [Complaints – Scrutiny Update – Period: 1 April to 30 September 2024](#)

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Date: 29 May 2025

Complaints Data Analysis Against SPSO Reporting Indicators

Please find below analysis of our complaints data measured against mandatory Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) reporting indicators for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 with comparison to the same reporting period in 2023/24.

Following on from changes to the Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in 2021, new reporting requirements were introduced by the SPSO which were applicable to complaints data from 1 April 2022 onwards. The SPSO's requirements for reporting and publicising complaints information requires all 32 local authorities in Scotland to use a standardised set of complaints key performance indicators (KPIs). There are now four mandatory KPIs which will be used in this and future reports. They are as follows:

- **Indicator One: The total number of complaints received.**
The sum of the number of complaints received at Stage 1 (including escalated complaints as they were first received at Stage 1), and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2.
- **Indicator Two: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days.**
The number of complaints closed in full at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation within complaint timescales as % of all stage 1, stage 2 and escalated complaints responded to in full.
- **Indicator Three: The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.**
The average (mean) time in working days to respond at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation.
- **Indicator Four: The outcome of complaints at each stage**
The number of complaints upheld, partially upheld, not upheld and resolved at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation as % of all complaints closed at stage 1, stage 2 and after escalation.

SPSO Indicator One: the total number of complaints received

		<i>Total</i>	<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Escalated</i>
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	323	226 (70%)	71 (22%)	26 (8%)
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	308 ▼	235 (76%) ▲	41 (14%) ▼	32 (10%) ▲

The number of complaints received by the Council has decreased by 5%, i.e., from 323 received in the same reporting period of 2023/24 and 308 for this reporting period, being 15 fewer complaints in reporting period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

There has been an *increase* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2023/24 for the following service area:

- **Design Services** – 1800% increase in complaints, from 1 in 2023/24 to 19 in the same reporting period in 2024/25. Complaints to this service relate to works undertaken to Girvan Library and proposals in relation to Belleisle Enhanced Practice Facilities, with the majority of cases relating to work undertaken to council properties.
- **Community Councils** – 700% increase in complaints from 0 in 2023/24 to 7 in 2024/25. A number of complaints were received during this reporting period which related to Barr Community Council's suspension.
- **Waste Management** – 115% increase from 40 in 2023/24 to 86 in 2024/25. This is a result of an increase in complaints relating to missed bin collections. Of the 29 missed bin complaints during this reporting period, 41% were upheld, compared with 20% from the previous reporting period. As well as complaints relating to the removal of unauthorised 2nd green bins (8) and solar compaction bins (4).

The following services have shown a significant *decrease* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2023/24:

- **Culture and Tourism** - 86% decrease in complaints from 49 complaints in 2023/24 to 7 complaints in 2024/25. A significant number of complaints were received during this reporting period in 2023/24 which related to parking at the Air Show. However in this reporting period, only one complaint for this service related to the Air Show.
- **Golf** – 67% decrease in complaints from 33 complaints in 2023/24 to 8 complaints in 2024/25. It should be noted that during 2023/24, a number of complaints in relation to ongoing works at South Ayrshire Council golf courses were received, as well as in relation to the proposals for a golf academy at Belleisle/Seafield.
- **Leisure** – 72% decrease in complaints from 29 complaints in 2023/24 to 8 complaints in 2024/25. This is attributed to there being a number of complaints during the 2023/24 reporting period which related to changes to opening hours and the removal of a Dance Fit class at the Citadel which showed a trend in complaints on a specific issue for the service at that time.

SPSO Indicator Two: the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	65%	90%	96%
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	77%▲	59% ▼	75% ▼

There has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints closed within 20 working days at Stage 2 and at the Escalated stage. However when taking into account agreed extensions to timescales, this rises to 81% of timescales met at Stage 2 and 84% at the Escalated stage. There has been an improvement in timescales at Stage 1 which has risen 12%, compared with the same reporting period in 2023/24.

SPSO Indicator Three: the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	6	15	11
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	5 ▼	23 ▲	18 ▲

The SPSO timescale for responding to a Stage 1 complaint is 5 working days. The average time taken to investigate and respond to a Stage 1 complaint during this reporting period was 5 working days which is an improvement on the same reporting period from 2023/24 and brings the Stage 1 average response within SPSO requirements.

The SPSO time scale for responding to both Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is 20 working days. The average response time for Stage 2 complaints has increased from 15 to 23 days across the reporting period, which is out with SPSO requirements. However, 9 extensions were applied to Stage 2 complaints during this time. As noted above, taking these extensions into consideration 81% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within agreed timescales.

The average response time for Escalated complaints has increased from 11 to 18 days across the reporting period, this is still within the 20 working days response time scale.

SPSO Indicator Four: the outcome of complaints at each stage

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 1

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Resolved
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	64 (28%)	24 (11%)	106 (47%)	32 (14%)
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	81 (35%) ▲	22 (9%) ▼	108 (46%) ▼	24 (10%) ▼

A total of 235 complaints were closed at Stage 1 in 2024/25, 44% of these were either upheld or partially upheld, an increase of 5% percentage points from the same reporting period in 2023/24. This indicates that in almost half of stage one investigations it was established that the customer had raised legitimate concerns about a service delivery.

10% of cases were closed as “resolved” – this outcome was introduced by the SPSO in 2021. A complaint is resolved when both the investigating officer and the complainant agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the complainant, without deciding about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. This is a 4% decrease from the same reporting period in 2023/24. Further information on this SPSO outcome is available on Pages 3 and 4 at: [LAMCHPPart3.pdf \(spsso.org.uk\)](https://www.spsso.org.uk/LAMCHPPart3.pdf)

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 2

		<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>	<i>Resolved</i>
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	9 (13%)	8 (11%)	53 (75%)	1 (1%)
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	3 (7%) ▼	3 (7%) ▼	34 (83%) ▲	1 (3%) ▲

41 complaints were closed at Stage 2, a decrease of 30 complaints in comparison to the 71 complaints which were closed in the same period in 2023/24. This decrease is in part due to the high number of Stage 2 complaints in 2023/24 which related to the 2023 Air Show. Of the 41 Stage 2 complaints, 83% were not upheld indicating that in more than four fifths of the Stage 2 investigations it was found our service was meeting expected standards.

Outcome of Escalated Complaints

		<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>	<i>Resolved</i>
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	4 (15%)	6 (23%)	15 (58%)	1 (4%)
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	2 (6%) ▼	9 (28%) ▲	21 (66%) ▲	0 (0%) ▼

32 complaints were escalated by the customer from Stage 1 to Stage 2, an increase of 6 complaints from the 26 escalated complaints in the same reporting period in 2023/24. This indicates that fewer customers were satisfied by the outcome of their complaint at Stage one.

Of these 32 escalated complaints 34% were either upheld or partially upheld, indicating that in over one-third of escalated complaint investigations it was established customer concerns were further considered and accepted by Council services.

Further detailed analysis of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

The top 3 reasons for complaints received by the Council (as categorised within the Complaints Handling system) are:

		<i>Reasons for Complaints</i>
Stage 1	1	Standard of service provided
	2	Failure to provide service
	3	Conduct/attitude of staff
Stage 2	1	Standard of service provided
	2	Disagreement with decision
	3	Dissatisfaction with policy

Please note that reasons for complaint categories are mandated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and were updated in April 2024 and therefore no comparative data is available.

Breakdown of Complaints by Service:

Information relating to the services which have had the biggest increase and decrease in complaints is outlined above, on page 6 of this Report.

Alphabetically

	2023- 24	2024- 25	
Additional Support Needs	0	0	◀▶
Asset Management	0	0	◀▶
Benefits	0	0	◀▶
Bereavement Services	1	0	▼
Building Standards	1	0	▼
Children and Families	12	1	▼
Committee Services	0	2	▲
Communities	0	1	▲
Community Care	46	44	▼
Community Councils	0	7	▲
Culture and Tourism	49	7	▼
Customer Services	0	2	▲
Design Services	1	19	▲
Early Years	0	3	▲
Economy and Regeneration	0	2	▲
Education Central	0	1	▲
Employee Services	0	1	▲
Environmental Health	1	0	▼
Facilities	3	9	▲
Finance	1	0	▼
Fleet Management	0	0	◀▶
Golf	33	8	▼
Housing	27	35	▲
Housing Policy	0	1	▲
ICT	1	2	▲
Information Governance	0	1	▲
Justice Services	1	0	▼
Legal	0	0	◀▶
Leisure	29	8	▼
Licensing	1	0	▼
Neighbourhood Services	40	86	▲
Planning	4	6	▲
Property Maintenance	33	28	▼
Registration	0	0	◀▶
Revenues	9	15	▲
Schools Primary/Nursery	13	9	▼
Schools Secondary	9	6	▼

	2023-24	2024-25	
Scottish Welfare Fund	3	0	▼
Social Care Finance	3	1	▼
Special Property Projects	0	2	▲
Trading Standards	0	1	▲
Ukrainian Support Team	2	0	▼

Highest – Lowest Services

		2023-24	2024-25	
1	Neighbourhood Services	40	86	▲
2	Community Care	46	44	▼
3	Housing	27	35	▲
4	Property Maintenance	33	28	▼
5	Design Services	1	19	▲
6	Revenues	9	15	▲
7	Facilities	3	9	▲
7	Schools Primary/Nursery	13	9	▼
8	Golf	33	8	▼
8	Leisure	29	8	▼
9	Community Councils	0	7	▲
9	Culture and Tourism	49	7	▼
10	Planning	4	6	▲
10	Schools Secondary	9	6	▼
11	Early Years	0	3	▲
12	Committee Services	0	2	▲
12	Customer Services	0	2	▲
12	Economy and Regeneration	0	2	▲
12	ICT	1	2	▲
12	Special Property Projects	0	2	▲
13	Children and Families	12	1	▼
13	Communities	0	1	▲
13	Education Central	0	1	▲
13	Employee Services	0	1	▲
13	Housing Policy	0	1	▲
13	Information Governance	0	1	▲
13	Social Care Finance	3	1	▼
13	Trading Standards	0	1	▲
--	Additional Support Needs	0	0	◀▶
--	Asset Management	0	0	◀▶
--	Benefits	0	0	◀▶
--	Bereavement Services	1	0	▼
--	Building Standards	1	0	▼

		2023-24	2024-25	
--	Scottish Welfare Fund	3	0	▼
--	Environmental Health	1	0	▼
--	Finance	1	0	▼
--	Fleet Management	0	0	◀▶
--	Justice Services	1	0	▼
--	Legal	0	0	◀▶
--	Licensing	1	0	▼
--	Registration	0	0	◀▶
--	Ukrainian Support Team	2	0	▼

Further detailed analysis of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is outlined in [Appendix 2](#)

Reasons for Complaints

The undernoted Table 1 provides a breakdown of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 1, between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025. *Please note that reasons for complaint categories are mandated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and were updated in April 2024 and therefore no comparative data is available.*

Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints

Category		2024/25	
Subject		Number	% Of Total Stage 1
1	Standard of service provided	69	29%
2	Failure to provide service	49	21%
3	Conduct/attitude of staff	33	14%
4	Delay in providing service	25	11%
5	Dissatisfaction with policy	24	10%
6	Disagreement with decision	20	9%
7	Failure to follow a procedure	12	5%
8	Failure to respond to enquiry	3	1%
9	Other	0	0
	Total	235	100%

Conduct/attitude of staff Complaints

The number of conduct/attitude of staff complaints constitutes 14% of complaints closed at stage 1. Of these complaints:

- 14 were upheld, with an apology issued to the customer.
- 13 were partially or not upheld, with an explanation provided as appropriate.
- 6 were resolved, with an explanation or apology provided.

The complaints received were across various Council services, including Community Care, Housing, Leisure, Neighbourhood Services and Property Maintenance, with there being no specific trend or thread of concern noted. Limited information is recorded centrally regarding these complaints in compliance with data protection legislation, but as with all employee complaints Service Leads and line managers would apply the relevant Council policies to any employee behaviours having been found to fail meeting Council standards.

The undernoted has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by our Services showing which Council Services received the complaints referred to in Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints, above.

Providing this level of information on the GOSS system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints in Table 1, although services are encouraged to provide this data. As a result, the number of complaints detailed below may not equate to the total number of Stage one complaints reported.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
Children and Families	Ayr North Locality Team	3	-
	Ayr South Locality Team	-	-
	Children and Families Disability Team	-	-
	Children's Houses	2	-
	Family Placement/Adoption Team	1	-
	Girvan and Maybole Locality Team	1	-
	Management Team	1	-
	Prestwick/Troon Locality Team	1	-
Community Care	Alert Response	-	2
	Arrol Park		1
	Arran View	10	3
	In House Homecare	5	10
	Mental Health Team	1	1
	Older People Team Ayr North	1	-
	Older People Team Maybole Girvan	3	-
	Older People Team Prestwick	-	3
	Older People Team Troon	-	-
	Older People Ayr Hospital	-	-
	Older People Ayr South	-	2
	Older People Maybole & Girvan	-	-
	Older People Prestwick	-	-
	Occupational Therapy	4	3
	Overmills	-	1
	Re-enablement	-	-
	Self-Directed Support	-	1
	South Lodge	1	-
	Telecare	-	-
Culture and Tourism	Carnegie	2	-
	Prestwick Library		1

<u>Service</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
	Other Libraries		2
	Air Show	5	-
Customer Services	Accuracy of Information	-	-
	Customer Journey	-	-
	Quality of Customer Service	-	2
	Waiting Times	-	-
Facilities	Catering	-	1
	Public Convenience	3	5
	School crossing patrol	-	2
Golf	Belleisle/Seafield	17	2
	Girvan	1	-
	Lochgreen	4	2
	Maybole	-	1
Housing	Housing Policy	5	2
	Access to Housing Support	5	-
	Customer Landlord Relations	3	15
	Neighbourhood and Community	-	2
	Quality Maintenance	7	9
	Housing Service Value	1	1
	Travellers	-	-
Leisure	Citadel	15	3
	Swimming Pools	8	-
	Other Leisure Facilities	1	1
Neighbourhood Services	Missed Bin	4	27
	Litter Bin	5	5
	Grass Cutting	-	1
	Litter	1	-
	Other	-	2
	Parks	-	-
	Play Areas	-	-
	Recycling Facilities	7	2
	Special Uplifts	1	3
	Staff	4	3
	Street Sweeping	-	2
	Waste Collection	4	19
Planning	Planning Application	-	1
	Planning Enforcement	-	-
	Planning Objection	3	-
	Other	1	1
Property Maintenance	Quality Maintenance	-	-
	Staff	-	3
	Communication	2	1
	Dissatisfied with Repair	21	9
	Private Owner	-	4
	External Contractor	2	2
	Other	3	-

<u>Service</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
Schools	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Ayr Grammar	-	-
	Annbank Primary	-	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Barassie Primary	1	-
	Belmont Academy	3	1
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Carrick Campus	4	-
	Coylton Primary	-	-
	Dailly Primary	1	-
	Doonfoot Primary	1	-
	Dalmilling Primary	-	2
	Fisherton Primary	-	1
	Forehill Primary	-	-
	Gardenrose Primary	-	-
	Girvan Academy	-	-
	Girvan Primary	1	1
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	-
	Holmston	-	1
	Kingcase Primary	1	-
	Kincaidston Primary	-	1
	Kyle Academy	-	-
	Marr College	-	-
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Monkton Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	1
	Prestwick Academy	4	2
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	1
	Sacred Heart Primary	-	-
	Symington Primary	-	-
	St Johns Primary	-	-
	St Patrick's	1	-
	Struthers Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	-	1
	Troon Primary	-	-
	Wallacetown Nursery	-	-

The undernoted table provides an overview of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 2 between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025 compared to the same reporting period in 2023/24. Please note that reasons for complaint categories are mandated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and were updated in April 2024 and therefore no comparative data is available.

Table 2 - Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints

Category		2024/25	
Subject		Number	% Of Total Stage 2
1	Disagreement with decision	11	27%
2	Standard of service provided	10	24%
3	Dissatisfaction with policy	7	17%
4	Failure to follow a procedure	6	15%
5	Failure to provide service	3	7%
6	Failure to respond to enquiry	3	7%
7	Conduct/attitude of staff	1	3%
8	Delay in providing service	0	0%
9	Other	0	0%
	Total	41	100%

Disagreement with decision complaints

Eleven complaints were received at Stage 2 which related to disagreements with decisions. These related to Community Councils (2), Culture and Tourism (2), Design Services (1), Economy and Regeneration (2), Housing (1) Neighbourhood Services (1), Planning (1) and Revenues (1). None of these complaints were upheld, with the Planning complaint being partially upheld.

Standard of service provided complaints

Ten complaints were received at Stage 2 which related to standard of service provided, These related to Community Care (3), Culture and Tourism (1), Early Years (1), Planning (1), Property Maintenance (2), Primary Schools (1) and Trading Standards (1). Of these complaints, one was upheld (Property Maintenance) and two were partially upheld (Community Care), with the remaining seven not being upheld.

Conduct/attitude of staff complaints

One conduct/attitude of staff complaint was logged at Stage 2 complaint, which related to our Leisure service. This complaint was not upheld and an explanation as to why was provided to the customer.

The undernoted has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by our Services showing which Council Services received the complaints referred to in Table 2 – Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints, above.

Providing this level of information on the GOSS system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints in Table 2, although services are encouraged to provide this data. As a result, the number of complaints detailed below may not equate to the total number of Stage two complaints reported.

Service	Subject	2023/24	<u>2024/25</u>
Children and Families	Ayr North Team	1	-
	Girvan/Maybole Team	-	-
	Disability Team	-	-
Community Care	Older People Ayr South	-	-
	Older People Ayr Troon	-	-
	Older People Team Prestwick	-	1
	Arrol Park	-	-
	Arran View	1	1
	In-House Home Care	2	1
	Private Home Care	-	-
	Maybole/Girvan Team	-	1
	Mental Health	-	1
Culture & Events	Air Show	40	1
	Carnegie	-	1
	Town Halls	-	1
Golf	Belleisle/Seafield	-	-
Housing	Quality Maintenance	2	-
	Customer Landlord Relations	3	2
	Value	-	-
	Access to Housing/Support	-	-
	Neighbourhood and Community	-	-
Leisure	Citadel	-	-
	Swimming Pools	-	1
Planning	Planning Applications	-	-
	Planning Enforcement	-	2
Property Maintenance	Communication	-	1
	Dissatisfied with Repair	2	2
	Private Owners	-	2
	Other	-	-
Schools	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Culzean Primary	-	1

Service	Subject	2023/24	<u>2024/25</u>
	Glenburn Primary	-	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Doonfoot Primary	1	-
	Dundonald Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Troon Primary	-	-
	Carrick Campus	-	-
	Kincaidston Primary	1	-
	Kyle Academy	-	1
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Prestwick Academy	1	-
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-

Table 3 - Reasons for Escalated Complaints

The following table provides a breakdown of the reasons for a complaint being escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Please note that reasons for complaint categories are mandated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and were updated in April 2024 and therefore no comparative data is available.

Category		2024/25	
Subject		Number	% Of Total Escalated
1	Standard of service provided	9	28%
2	Failure to provide service	6	19%
3	Delay in providing service	5	16%
4	Failure to follow a procedure	4	13%
5	Conduct/attitude of staff	3	9%
6	Dissatisfaction with policy	3	9%
7	Failure to respond to enquiry	2	6%
8	Disagreement with decision	0	0%
9	Other	0	0%
	Total	32	100%

Standard of service provided

Of the nine standard of service complaints, one each was received for Children and Families, Community Care, Culture and Tourism, Design Services, Golf, Housing, Neighbourhood Services, Property Maintenance and Special Property Projects. Seven of these complaints were not upheld, with one complaint for Neighbourhood Services being partially upheld, and one complaint for Design Services being upheld.

Failure to provide service

Of the six complaints relating to failure to provide a service, three related to Community Care, one to Housing, one to Property Maintenance and one to Neighbourhood Services. Four of these complaints were not upheld, and two were partially upheld, which related to Housing and Community Care.

Conduct/attitude of staff complaints

Three conduct/attitude of staff complaints were escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of our complaints process, one of which related to Housing, the other two to our Community Care team. The Housing complaint was partially upheld with an explanation offered, and of the Community Care complaints, one was partially upheld with an apology offered, the other not upheld with an explanation given.

The following has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) using information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. It is not a mandatory requirement for services to input this information when completing cases on our GOSS system - but they are encouraged to complete these fields. As a result, the number of complaints detailed below may not equate to the total number of Escalated complaints reported:

Service	Subject	2023/24	2024/25
Community Care	Arran View	3	-
	Arrol Park	-	-
	In House Home Care	-	2
	Learning/Physical Disability	-	1
	Older People Ayr North	1	-
	Older People Ayr South	1	-
	Older People Maybole/Girvan	-	1
	Older People Prestwick	-	-
	Older People Troon	-	-
	Occupational Therapy	-	-
	Overmills	-	1
Culture & Events	Air Show	1	-
	Other Libraries	-	1
Golf	Belleisle/Seafield	32	-
	Lochgreen	2	-
	Dalmilling	-	1
Housing	Customer Landlord Relations	-	2
	Quality Maintenance	1	1
	Access	-	-
	Neighbourhood and Community	-	1

Service	Subject	2023/24	<u>2024/25</u>
Leisure	Citadel	1	-
Neighbourhood Services	Missed Bin	1	2
	Recycling Facilities	-	-
	Trees	1	1
	Litter Bin	-	1
	Waste Collection	-	1
	Weed Removal	-	1
Property Maintenance	Dissatisfied with Repair	-	2
	Private Owners	1	-
	Contact/Communication	-	1
Schools	Alloway Primary	-	-
	Annbank Primary	1	-
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	-
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	-	-
	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	-
	Dalmilling Primary	-	-
	Kingcase Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	-
	Struthers Primary	-	-
	Symington Primary	-	-
	Prestwick Academy	-	1
	Carrick Academy	-	-
	Belmont Academy	-	-

Additional Information - Complaints Data Analysis

Against Non-Mandatory Reporting Indicators

The undernoted no longer forms part of the mandatory KPI reporting to the SPSO, however this information has been included to Members in this report as additional information:

Additional Information - Complaints Received per 1,000 of the population

2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	3 per 1,000
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	3 per 1,000

The number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population has remained the same between the two reporting periods.

Additional Information – Number of Cases where an Extension is Authorised

		<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Escalated</i>
2023/24	01/10 – 31/03	44	4	0
2024/25	01/10 – 31/03	15 ▼	9 ▲	3 ▲

An extension, when required, can be applied to a complaint investigation when it is established that the complaint is complex and requires time to fully investigate.

Extensions are encouraged when complaints will take longer than the required time scale, to ensure that complainants are kept up to date with the status of their case. For this reporting period 27 complaints were subject to an authorised extension in comparison to 48 for the same reporting period in 2023/24, i.e., a 78% decrease. This decrease is mainly seen at Stage 1 which is in line with the improvement of the number and percentage of complaints that were closed in full within the set timescales of five working days, i.e. where more cases are closed within timescales, fewer extensions are needed.

Additional Information – Customer Satisfaction

To gauge Customer Satisfaction in our complaints process we actively encourage members of the public to provide us with their feedback on their experience. This feedback allows us to establish where our process can be strengthened to meet customer needs.

Completion of this survey is not a compulsory part of the complaints process, and it is challenging to elicit feedback from the public in how we can continuously improve our actual complaints process. A survey is available online for anyone using our service to complete, and Information Governance also invites a sample of customers to provide us with this helpful feedback.

Between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025, 60 requests were issued to members of the public inviting them to participate in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. 17 customer satisfaction surveys were completed which constitutes a 29% return.

Feedback received from the 29% who responded indicates that:

	2023/24			2024/25		
	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Information about the complaint's procedure was easily accessible	63%	0%	37%	53% ▼	29%	18% ▼
I found it easy to make my complaint	55%	18%	27%	64% ▲	18%	18% ▼
I was happy that the Investigating Officer fully understood my complaint	37%	18%	45%	41% ▲	12%	47% ▲
I was given the opportunity to fully explain my complaint	55%	27%	18%	76% ▲	12%	12% ▼
The points of my complaint were identified and responded to	36%	28%	36%	53% ▲	6%	41% ▲
The response to my complaint was easy to understand	55%	37%	8%	82% ▲	12%	6% ▼
Overall, I was satisfied with the handling of my complaint	37%	18%	45%	41% ▲	12%	47% ▲
I was told if the response was going to take longer than the set timescales	18%	55%	27%	41% ▲	41%	18% ▼
I was clearly told what the next stage of the complaints process was for me	45%	18%	37%	53% ▲	18%	29% ▼

Overall, responses received for this reporting period show an increase in customer satisfaction in comparison to the same reporting period in 2023/24, with 76% of customers being in agreement that they had the opportunity to explain their complaint and 82% agreeing the response to their complaint was easy to understand.

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Learning from Complaints - Service Improvement Case Studies

Neighbourhood Services

A customer raised a complaint that the requirement to provide a doctor's note as evidence when requesting an additional bin for medical waste. Following this complaint and after discussion with GP surgeries across South Ayrshire, the application for an additional bin for medical waste was updated to ask residents to provide any medical documentation that confirms the medical conditions detailed in the application rather than the previous request for a doctor's note.

Neighbourhood Services

A customer raised concerns regarding vehicle noise at Maybole Recycling Centre, which was affecting the surrounding residential streets particularly early in the morning. As well as offering an apology, as a result of the complaint, steps were taken to ensure that no chain lift operations are undertaken before 7am.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Improvement Cases

No Decision Notices were published by the Ombudsman relating to South Ayrshire Council during the reporting period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025.

Stage 2 Complaints Monitoring

All Stage 2 complaints investigated by the Council are monitored, and each quarter any considered to be serious or high risk are reported to the Integrity Group.

Most Stage 2 complaints were undertaken at the Stage 2 level because they involved either a response from more than one service or were too complex to resolve within 5 working days at Stage 1.

In reporting period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 no Stage 2 complaints were identified as being serious or high risk, i.e., those that would have a serious impact on the Council's ability to provide services to the public.