

## South Ayrshire Council

### Report by Chief Governance Officer to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 18 November 2025

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**Subject: Complaints – Scrutiny Update**  
**Period: 1 April to 30 September 2025**

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with statistical complaints performance information for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2025 and compares performance to the same reporting period in 2024. 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; and**

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 October 2025 to 31 March 2026.**

#### 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 Mandatory KPIs as per SPSO guidance are as follows:

- **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**

- 3.3 The following Report provides performance data on all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed from 1 April to 30 September 2025 and is based on SPSO reporting indicators.
- 3.4 [Appendix 1](#) provides an analysis of our complaints data measured against the SPSO's mandatory reporting KPIs for the period 1 April to 30 September 2025 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2024. The Council received 433 complaints in this reporting period, which is an increase of 135 complaints compared to the same reporting period in 2024/25, i.e., an increase of 45%.
- 3.5 [Appendix 2](#) provides a breakdown of the reasons why complaints were raised against the Council, for the period 1 April to 30 September 2025. 91% of Stage 2 complaints have been resolved on time.
- 3.6 [Appendix 3](#) provides analysis of our complaints data measured against the four non-mandatory reporting indicators, for the period 1 April to 30 September 2025 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2024. The number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population increased by 1 per 1,000 between April – September 2024 and April – September 2025.
- 3.7 [Appendix 4](#) outlines service improvement case studies where a service improvement outcome was identified and implemented. This appendix highlights four service areas who implemented improvements in service provision following a complaint investigation.
- 3.8 [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. No Decision Notices were published by the Ombudsman relating to South Ayrshire Council. during the reporting period 1 April – 30 September 2025
- 3.9 [Appendix 6](#) provides further information on Investigation complaints received by the Council that have been noted during the reporting period. 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.
- 3.10 [Appendix 7](#) provides further information on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Annual Statistics, comparing South Ayrshire Council performance to Councils with a similar demographic. 22 Cases were referred to the SPSO, with only one being taken forward to investigation.
- 3.11 [Appendix 8](#) provides further information on statistics provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman relating to the Scottish Welfare Fund. During 2024/2025 there has been a reduction by 3 cases in the number of review applications made to the SPSO. The SPSO did not uphold any of the review requests made to them. During 2024/25 we received 3,580 applications for Crisis Grants & 1,370 applications for Community Care Grants. Overall, only 0.08% of all applicants to the SWF requested an SPSO review.

#### **4. Detail**

- 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 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026.

## **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, Policy Lead for Finance and Corporate Services, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

**Background Papers:** Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 21 November 2024 - [Complaints Scrutiny Update - Period 1 April to 1 September 2024](#)

Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 11 June 2024 - [Complaints Scrutiny Update – Period: 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025](#)

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**Date:** 7 November 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 April to 30 September 2025 with comparison to the same reporting period in 2024.

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 four mandatory KPIs. 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.***

|                |                      | <b><i>Total</i></b> | <b><i>Stage 1</i></b> | <b><i>Stage 2</i></b> | <b><i>Escalated</i></b> |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 298                 | 209 (70%)             | 58 (19.5%)            | 31 (10.5%)              |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>433 ▲</b>        | <b>334 (77%) ▲</b>    | <b>46 (11%) ▼</b>     | <b>53 (12%) ▲</b>       |

The Council received 433 complaints in this reporting period, which is an increase of 135 complaints compared to the same reporting period in 2024/25, i.e., an increase of 45%.

Council services with the most significant *increase* in complaints are as follows:

- **Committee Services** – 700% increase in complaints, from 0 complaints in 2024/25 to 7 complaints in 2025/26. Complaints to this service relate to webcast uploads, standing orders, petitions, panel papers and Councillor profiles on South Ayrshire Council’s website. Of these complaints, two related to failures to follow a procedure, four to delays in providing services and one to the standard of service provided. Of the seven complaints, two were upheld with apologies and remedial action taken, and five were not upheld.
- **Information Governance** – 600% increase from 0 complaints in 2024/25, to 6 complaints in 2025/26. Of these complaints, 4 related to the administration of the Complaints Handling Procedure, one relating to Records Management and one to FOI and were mostly in relation to failures to follow procedures and delays in publishing information. Where there have been delays or failures to follow processes, the Information Governance team have taken corrective action to ensure information is up-to-date and prevent reoccurrence.
- **Facilities** – 500% increase in complaints, from 3 complaints in 2024/25 to 18 complaints in 2025/26. The majority of these complaints relate to public conveniences, specifically about cleanliness or the need to pay for use. None of our public toilets are permanently manned, with attendants covering more facilities which means times between cleaning and stock refills have been impacted. Refurbishments have been carried out on some facilities, but those that have not been refurbished are in a greater state of disrepair. Capital bids are being submitted to carry out works on the remaining facilities, but they have not yet been accepted.

Council services with the most significant *decrease* in complaints are as follows:

- **Justice Services** – 50% decrease in complaints, from 4 complaints in 2024/25 to 2 complaints in 2025/26. No specific trend has been identified for this reduction.
- **Leisure** – 46% decrease in complaints from 24 complaints in 2024/25 to 13 complaints in 2025/26. Over the last 12 months, improvements have been made to both the booking system and cleaning/maintenance of facilities. Customer feedback was used to review and update the previous booking policy regarding booking cancellations and how this was addressed with customers resulting in a fairer approach that customers and staff are now happier to adopt. The service has also managed to fill cleaning and maintenance staff vacancies over the past 6-12 months which has had a positive impact on customer facing areas of the facilities.
- **Golf** – 33% decrease in complaints from 18 in 24/25 to 12 in 2025/26. Complaints made in relation to the Golf service often relate to course conditions, which tend to be weather driven and largely out with the control of the service. However, recent steps taken to improve communications to customers and regular course maintenance are likely to have contributed to the decrease in complaints.

***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.***

|                |                      | <b>Stage 1</b>     | <b>Stage 2</b>    | <b>Escalated</b>  |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 134 (64%)          | 40 (71%)          | 22 (71%)          |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>264 (79%) ▲</b> | <b>30 (65%) ▼</b> | <b>42 (79%) ▲</b> |

There has been a decrease in the performance against timescales for Stage 2 complaints. However, it should be noted that these statistics do not take into consideration extensions to timescales that can be added to allow a full and detailed investigation. When taking these extensions into account, 91% of Stage 2 complaints have been resolved on time.

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

|                |                      | <b>Stage 1</b> | <b>Stage 2</b> | <b>Escalated</b> |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 6              | 20             | 17               |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>5 ▼</b>     | <b>20 ◀▶</b>   | <b>17 ◀▶</b>     |

The average time to respond to a Stage 2 and Escalated complaint has remained at 20 and 17 working days respectively, which is within the 20-working day timescale expected for Stage 2 and Escalated complaints. There has also been a decrease in average time in working days for Stage 1 complaints, taking the average working days to respond within the 5-day target.

**SPSO Indicator Four: the outcome of complaints at each Stage**

**Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 1**

|                |                      | <b>Upheld</b>      | <b>Partially Upheld</b> | <b>Not Upheld</b>  | <b>Resolved</b>  |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 51 (24.5%)         | 26 (12.5%)              | 102 (49%)          | 30 (14%)         |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>113 (34%) ▲</b> | <b>30 (9%) ▼</b>        | <b>166 (50%) ▲</b> | <b>25 (7%) ▼</b> |

Of the 334 Stage 1 complaints, 43% were upheld or partially upheld, which is a 6% increase from the same reporting period in 2024/25. This indicates that in 43 out of every 100 complaints received, our Stage 1 investigations established that our customers had let us know where we could make improvements to our services.

**Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 2**

|                |                      | <b>Upheld</b>   | <b>Partially Upheld</b> | <b>Not Upheld</b> | <b>Resolved</b> |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 7 (12%)         | 3 (5%)                  | 47 (81%)          | 1 (2%)          |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>2 (4%) ▼</b> | <b>4 (9%) ▲</b>         | <b>38 (83%) ▲</b> | <b>2 (4%) ▲</b> |

83% of complaints investigated at Stage 2 were not upheld, which indicates that only 17% of complaints investigated at this stage found a failure in service provision. This is a decrease of 2% where the Council has found failure to the same reporting period in the previous year.

## Outcome of Escalated Complaints

|                |                      | <i>Upheld</i>     | <i>Partially Upheld</i> | <i>Not Upheld</i> | <i>Resolved</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 4 (13%)           | 4 (13%)                 | 23 (74%)          | 0 (0%)          |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>11 (21%) ▲</b> | <b>4 (7%) ▼</b>         | <b>36 (68%)▼</b>  | <b>2 (4%) ▲</b> |

In 2025/26, 28% of complaints that were escalated from Stage 1 to a Stage 2 investigation were either upheld or partially upheld. This figure has increased from 26% in 2024/25, showing that more complaints were escalated to this stage by a customer which were ultimately found to be justified.

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

|                |   | <i>01/04 to 30/09 (2024/25)</i> | <i>01/04 to 30/09 (2025/26)</i> |                               |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | 1 | Standard of service provided    | 1                               | Standard of service provided  |
|                | 2 | Conduct/attitude of staff       | 2                               | Failure to provide service    |
|                | 3 | Delay in providing service      | 3                               | Delay in providing service    |
| <b>Stage 2</b> | 1 | Dissatisfaction with policy     | 1                               | Standard of service provided  |
|                | 2 | Standard of service provided    | 2                               | Disagreement with decision    |
|                | 3 | Disagreement with decision      | 3=                              | Failure to follow a procedure |
|                |   |                                 | 3=                              | Delay in providing service    |

### Breakdown of Complaints by Service:

Information relating to the services which have had the biggest increase and decrease in complaints is outlined above. From highest to lowest:

Neighbourhood services complaints increased from 53 in 2024/25 to 127. This is because of programmes of removing unauthorised 2nd green bin which resulted in a number of complaints. As well as this, changes have been made in collection of clinical waste, which has meant the removal of 2<sup>nd</sup> green bins for this waste, but adding an additional green bin collection every other Saturday, taking the number of collections from 17 to 26 per year. There have also been changes to nappy collections, which are now only offered to families with 2 or more children in nappies at the same time. This is to encourage families to recycle more to ensure that their nappies can be disposed of in the green bin, as waste analysis shows that 30% of our green bin (residual waste) is food waste. Although Neighbourhood Services have received 127 complaints in 2025/26, Waste Management services 6,000,000 domestic bins per annum. These complaints contribute to the increase in the number categorised as “Failure to Provide Service”.

Our Schools Primary/Nursery had 23 complaints during this reporting period, an increase of 11 complaints from the previous year. There is no specific trend either with the standard of service provided in one specific school or in a specific type of complaint raised. Concerns addressed can include issues around bullying, class disruption and class composition.

Facilities complaints increased from 3 in 2024/25 to 18 in 2025/26, which was a result of public convenience complaints as above.

And our Property Maintenance team processed 30 complaints, an increase of 12, from the same reporting period last year. This was linked to an increase in cases where the Council refused to carry out repairs which were the tenant's responsibility under their tenancy agreement. This triggered customers logging complaints however ultimately their complaint responses only re-iterated the response they had previously been given.

|    |                           | 2024-25 | 2025-26 |    |
|----|---------------------------|---------|---------|----|
| 1  | Neighbourhood Services    | 53      | 127     | ▲  |
| 2  | Community Care            | 50      | 43      | ▼  |
| 3  | Housing                   | 40      | 37      | ▼  |
| 4  | Property Maintenance      | 18      | 30      | ▲  |
| 5  | Schools Primary/Nursery   | 12      | 23      | ▲  |
| 6  | Culture and Tourism       | 11      | 21      | ▲  |
| 7  | Facilities                | 3       | 18      | ▲  |
| 8  | Design Services           | 18      | 17      | ▼  |
| 9  | Revenues                  | 14      | 15      | ▲  |
| 10 | Leisure                   | 24      | 13      | ▼  |
| 11 | Golf                      | 18      | 12      | ▼  |
| 12 | Schools Secondary         | 4       | 10      | ▲  |
| 13 | Planning                  | 2       | 8       | ▲  |
| 14 | Committee Services        | 0       | 7       | ▲  |
| 15 | Information Governance    | 0       | 6       | ▲  |
| 16 | Bereavement Services      | 1       | 5       | ▲  |
| 16 | Children and Families     | 7       | 5       | ▼  |
| 16 | Communities               | 2       | 5       | ▲  |
| 17 | Education Central         | 2       | 4       | ▲  |
| 17 | Environmental Health      | 3       | 4       | ▲  |
| 18 | Employee Services         | 0       | 3       | ▲  |
| 18 | Scottish Welfare Fund     | 1       | 3       | ▲  |
| 18 | Social Care Finance       | 4       | 3       | ▼  |
| 19 | Communications            | 0       | 2       | ▲  |
| 19 | Justice Services          | 4       | 2       | ▼  |
| 19 | Procurement               | 0       | 2       | ▲  |
| 20 | Asset Management          | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| 20 | Early Years               | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| 20 | Economy and Regeneration  | 1       | 1       | ◀▶ |
| 20 | Finance                   | 1       | 1       | ◀▶ |
| 20 | Housing Policy            | 2       | 1       | ▼  |
| 20 | ICT                       | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| 20 | Roads                     | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| 20 | Special Property Projects | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| -- | Additional Support Needs  | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| -- | Benefits                  | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| -- | Building Standards        | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| -- | Customer Services         | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| -- | Fleet Management          | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| -- | Legal                     | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| -- | Licensing                 | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| -- | Registration              | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| -- | Trading Standards         | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |

Alphabetically:

|                           | 2024-25 | 2025-26 |    |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|----|
| Additional Support Needs  | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| Asset Management          | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| Benefits                  | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| Bereavement Services      | 1       | 5       | ▲  |
| Building Standards        | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| Children and Families     | 7       | 5       | ▼  |
| Committee Services        | 0       | 7       | ▲  |
| Communications            | 0       | 2       | ▲  |
| Communities               | 2       | 5       | ▲  |
| Community Care            | 50      | 43      | ▼  |
| Culture and Tourism       | 11      | 21      | ▲  |
| Customer Services         | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| Design Services           | 18      | 17      | ▼  |
| Early Years               | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| Economy and Regeneration  | 1       | 1       | ◀▶ |
| Education Central         | 2       | 4       | ▲  |
| Employee Services         | 0       | 3       | ▲  |
| Environmental Health      | 3       | 4       | ▲  |
| Facilities                | 3       | 18      | ▲  |
| Finance                   | 1       | 1       | ◀▶ |
| Fleet Management          | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| Golf                      | 18      | 12      | ▼  |
| Housing                   | 40      | 37      | ▼  |
| Housing Policy            | 2       | 1       | ▼  |
| ICT                       | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| Information Governance    | 0       | 6       | ▲  |
| Justice Services          | 4       | 2       | ▼  |
| Legal                     | 1       | 0       | ▼  |
| Leisure                   | 24      | 13      | ▼  |
| Licensing                 | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| Neighbourhood Services    | 53      | 127     | ▲  |
| Planning                  | 2       | 8       | ▲  |
| Procurement               | 0       | 2       | ▲  |
| Property Maintenance      | 18      | 30      | ▲  |
| Registration              | 0       | 0       | ◀▶ |
| Revenues                  | 14      | 15      | ▲  |
| Roads                     | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| Schools Primary/Nursery   | 12      | 23      | ▲  |
| Schools Secondary         | 4       | 10      | ▲  |
| Scottish Welfare Fund     | 1       | 3       | ▲  |
| Social Care Finance       | 4       | 3       | ▼  |
| Special Property Projects | 0       | 1       | ▲  |
| Trading Standards         | 0       | 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 April and 30 September 2024, compared to the same reporting period in 2024/25.

**Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints**

|   |                               | 2024/25    |                    | 2025/26    |                    |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|
|   |                               | Number     | % Of Total Stage 1 | Number     | % Of Total Stage 1 |
| 1 | Standard of Service Provided  | 63         | 30%                | 136        | 41%                |
| 2 | Failure to Provide Service    | 26         | 12%                | 54         | 16%                |
| 3 | Delay in providing service    | 27         | 13%                | 38         | 11%                |
| 4 | Conduct/attitude of staff     | 32         | 15%                | 32         | 10%                |
| 5 | Dissatisfaction with Policy   | 22         | 11%                | 31         | 9%                 |
| 6 | Disagreement with decision    | 21         | 10%                | 28         | 8%                 |
| 7 | Failure to follow a procedure | 8          | 4%                 | 9          | 3%                 |
| 8 | Other                         | 7          | 3%                 | 6          | 2%                 |
| 9 | Failure to respond to Enquiry | 3          | 2%                 | 0          | 0%                 |
|   | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>209</b> | <b>100%</b>        | <b>334</b> | <b>100%</b>        |

### Standard of Service Provided

The Council received 136 complaints categorised as standard of service provided at Stage 1. This equates to 41% of all Stage 1 complaints. No one specific service received a higher proportion of complaints, services receiving Stage 1 complaints under this category included Community Care, Design Services, Facilities, Golf, Leisure, Housing, Property Maintenance, Revenues, Schools and Neighbourhood services.

### Failure to Provide Service

The Council received 54 complaints relating to failure to provide a service, which equates to 16% of all complaints received at Stage 1. Of these 54 complaints, 38 related to Neighbourhood Services, and can be further categorised as relating to missed bins (26), wheelie bins (5), other (1), recycling facilities (1), special uplifts (2), and waste collection (3).

## Delay in Providing a Service

The Council received 38 complaints relating to a delay in providing a service, which equates 11% of all complaints received at Stage 1, with Neighbourhood Services (14) and Property Maintenance (7) receiving the highest proportions. Other services to receive complaints relating to delays in service are Bereavement, Community Care, Environmental Health, Housing, Information Governance, Planning and Schools.

The following categories have been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (GOSS) based on information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. This gives an overview of the Categories of Stage One complaints.

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 Stage one complaints reported.*

### Stage 1 Complaint Categories

| Service               | Subject                      | 01/04 – 30/09/24 | 01/04 – 30/09/25 |   |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>Community Care</b> | Arran View                   | 5                | 5                |   |
|                       | Arrol Park                   | 2                | 0                |   |
|                       | Homecare                     | 4                | 9                |   |
|                       | Ayr North Locality Team      | 0                | 1                |   |
|                       | Ayr South Locality Team      | 0                | 0                |   |
|                       | Troon Locality Team          | 2                | 0                |   |
|                       | Girvan/Maybole Locality Team | 1                | 1                |   |
|                       | Prestwick Locality Team      | 0                | 1                |   |
|                       | Mental Health Team           | 0                | 2                |   |
|                       | Telecare                     | 0                | 0                |   |
|                       | Occupational Health          | 0                | 2                |   |
|                       | <b>Schools</b>               | Alloway Primary  | 0                | 1 |
|                       |                              | Annbank Primary  | 0                | 0 |
|                       |                              | Ayr Academy      | 0                | 0 |
| Ayr Grammar           |                              | 0                | 0                |   |
| Barr Primary          |                              | 0                | 0                |   |
| Barassie Primary      |                              | 3                | 0                |   |
| Belmont Academy       |                              | 2                | 2                |   |
| Braehead Primary      |                              | 0                | 0                |   |
| Cairn Primary         | 0                            | 0                |                  |   |

| <b>Service</b>    | <b>Subject</b>         | <b>01/04 – 30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09/25</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                   | Carrick Academy        | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Crosshill Primary      | 0                       | 2                       |
|                   | Coylton Primary        | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Culzean Primary School | 1                       | 0                       |
|                   | Dailly Primary         | 1                       | 0                       |
|                   | Dalmilling Primary     | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Doonfoot Primary       | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Dundonald Primary      | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Forehill Primary       | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Gardenrose Primary     | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Girvan Academy         | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Girvan Primary         | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Glenburn Primary       | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Heathfield Primary     | 2                       | 3                       |
|                   | Holmston Primary       | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Kincaidston Primary    | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Kingcase Primary       | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Kyle Academy           | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Maidens Primary        | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Marr College           | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Minishant              | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Monkton Primary        | 1                       | 0                       |
|                   | Newton Primary         | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Prestwick Academy      | 2                       | 1                       |
|                   | Queen Margaret Academy | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Sacred Heart           | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | St Cuthbert's Primary  | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | St John's Primary      | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Struthers Primary      | 2                       | 3                       |
|                   | Symington Primary      | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Tarbolton Primary      | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Troon Primary          | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Childcare              | 0                       | 0                       |
|                   | Nursery                | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Facilities</b> | Catering Services      | 1                       | 0                       |
|                   | Janitorial             | 0                       | 1                       |
|                   | Public Convenience     | 1                       | 14                      |
|                   | School crossing patrol | 0                       | 0                       |

| <b>Service</b>                | <b>Subject</b>                            | <b>01/04 – 30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09/25</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Children and Families</b>  | Children and Families Disability Team     | 1                       | 0                       |
|                               | Ayr North Locality Team                   | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Ayr South Locality Team                   | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Girvan/Maybole Locality Team              | 2                       | 0                       |
|                               | Prestwick/Troon Locality Team             | 1                       | 0                       |
|                               | Initial Response Team                     | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Children's Houses                         | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Family Placement and Adoption Team        | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Management Team                           | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Young People Support and Transitions Team | 0                       | 1                       |
| <b>Housing</b>                | Access to Housing/Support                 | 0                       | 6                       |
|                               | Equalities                                |                         | 1                       |
|                               | Customer Landlord Relations               | 21                      | 13                      |
|                               | Neighbourhood and Community               | 1                       | 0                       |
|                               | Policy                                    | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Quality Maintenance                       | 8                       | 3                       |
| <b>Leisure</b>                | Activity Centres                          | 3                       |                         |
|                               | Citadel                                   | 11                      | 9                       |
|                               | Maybole Fitness Suite                     | 3                       | 1                       |
|                               | Other                                     | 2                       | 0                       |
|                               | Swimming Pools                            | 3                       | 3                       |
| <b>Golf</b>                   | Belleisle/Seafield                        | 2                       | 6                       |
|                               | Dalmilling                                | 4                       | 1                       |
|                               | Girvan                                    | 1                       | 1                       |
|                               | Lochgreen/Darley/Fullarton                | 2                       | 3                       |
|                               | Other                                     | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Neighbourhood Services</b> | Assisted Collection                       | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Missed Bin                                | 11                      | 35                      |
|                               | Bin Return                                | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Wheelie Bins                              | 2                       | 35                      |
|                               | Burials                                   | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Grass Cutting                             | 0                       | 6                       |
|                               | Litter                                    | 1                       | 5                       |
|                               | Litter Bins                               | 0                       | 8                       |
|                               | Beaches                                   | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Other                                     | 1                       | 3                       |

| <b>Service</b>              | <b>Subject</b>           | <b>01/04 – 30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09/25</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                             | Play Areas               | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Recycling Facilities     | 2                       | 3                       |
|                             | Special Uplifts          | 0                       | 3                       |
|                             | Staff                    | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Street Sweeping          | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Waste Collection         | 10                      | 15                      |
|                             | Waste Disposal           | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Weed Removal             | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Parks                    | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Paths                    | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Waste Recycling          | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Trees                    | 0                       | 1                       |
| <b>Benefits</b>             | Other                    | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Service Delivery         | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Property Maintenance</b> | Communication            | 3                       | 3                       |
|                             | External Contractor      | 1                       | 2                       |
|                             | Dissatisfied with Repair | 8                       | 10                      |
|                             | Private Owner            |                         | 2                       |
|                             | Staff Attitude/Behaviour | 2                       | 3                       |
|                             | Other                    | 1                       | 0                       |
| <b>Culture and Tourism</b>  | Air Show                 | 2                       | 9                       |
|                             | Seafront Barriers        | 5                       | 0                       |
|                             | McKechnie                | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Carnegie                 | 0                       | 1                       |
|                             | Rozelle                  | 0                       | 0                       |
|                             | Town Halls               | 0                       | 3                       |
|                             | Other                    | 1                       | 3                       |

The undernoted table provides an overview of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at **Stage 2** between 1 April and 30 September 2025.

**Table 2/**

**Table 2 - Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints**

|   |                               | <b>2024/25</b> |                           | <b>2025/26</b> |                           |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
|   |                               | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> |
| 1 | Standard of Service Provided  | 15             | 26%                       | 18             | 39.1%                     |
| 2 | Disagreement with a Decision  | 8              | 14%                       | 12             | 26.1%                     |
| 3 | Failure to follow procedure   | 0              | 0%                        | 7              | 15.3%                     |
| 4 | Conduct/attitude of staff     | 1              | 2%                        | 2              | 4.3%                      |
| 4 | Dissatisfaction with policy   | 24             | 41%                       | 2              | 4.3%                      |
| 4 | Failure to provide service    | 4              | 7%                        | 2              | 4.3%                      |
| 5 | Failure to respond to enquiry | 1              | 2%                        | 1              | 2.2%                      |
| 5 | Delay in providing a service  | 5              | 8%                        | 1              | 2.2%                      |
| 5 | Other                         | 0              | 0%                        | 1              | 2.2%                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>58</b>      | <b>100%</b>               | <b>46</b>      | <b>100%</b>               |

**Standard of Service Provided**

The Council received 18 complaints relating to the standard of service provided, which equates 39% of all complaints received at Stage 2. Complaints relating to standards of service vary across a range of services, including Asset Management, Community Care, Education, Housing and Property Maintenance.

**Disagreement with Decision Complaints**

26% of complaints received at Stage 2 during this reporting period related to disagreements with Council decisions, compared to only 14% in the previous reporting period. Complaints received were across a range of services, including Communications, Communities, Community Care, Culture and Tourism, Economy and Regeneration, Finance, Neighbourhood Services, Property Maintenance and Roads. Of these 12 complaints, 11 were not upheld, and 1 resolved.

## Failure to Follow Procedure

The Council received 7 complaints relating to failures to follow procedures, which equates 15% of all complaints received at Stage 2. Complaints relating to failures to follow procedures vary across a range of services, including Committee Services, Communities, Culture and Tourism, Employee Services, Procurement and Special Property Projects.

## Stage 2 Complaint Categories

The undernoted categories have 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 Stage two complaints reported.

| <b>Service</b>               | <b>Subject</b>                 | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/25</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Schools</b>               | Maidens Primary School         | 1                           | 0                           |
|                              | Alloway Primary                | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Braehead Primary               | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Carrick Academy                | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Crosshill Primary              | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Heathfield Primary             | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Kingcase Primary               | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Monkton Primary                | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Struthers Primary              | 0                           | 1                           |
| <b>Children and Families</b> | Management Team                | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Fostering                      | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Disability Team                | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Girvan/Maybole Locality        | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b>Community Care</b>        | Homecare                       | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Learning/Physical Disability   | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Overmills                      | 1                           | 0                           |
|                              | Arran View                     | 3                           | 1                           |
| <b>Housing</b>               | Customer Landlord Relationship | 1                           | 5                           |
|                              | Quality Maintenance            | 3                           | 1                           |
|                              | Access to Housing/Support      | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Neighbourhood and Community    | 1                           | 0                           |

| <b>Service</b>                | <b>Subject</b>             | <b>01/04 – 30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09/25</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                               | External Contractor        | 1                       | 0                       |
| <b>Neighbourhood Services</b> | Garden Waste Charge        | 20                      | 0                       |
|                               | Wheelie Bin                | 1                       | 1                       |
|                               | Missed Bin                 | 1                       | 0                       |
|                               | Litter Bins                | 0                       | 2                       |
|                               | Open Spaces                | 0                       | 1                       |
|                               | Waste Collection           | 0                       | 1                       |
| <b>Golf</b>                   | Belleisle/Seafield         | 5                       | 0                       |
|                               | Lochgreen/Darley/Fullarton | 1                       | 0                       |
|                               | Other                      | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Leisure</b>                | Swimming Pools             | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Other                      | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Planning</b>               | Objection                  | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Other                      | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Planning Enforcement       | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Planning Application       | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Neighbour Notification     | 0                       | 0                       |
| <b>Property Maintenance</b>   | Dissatisfied with Repair   | 1                       | 3                       |
|                               | Contact/Communication      | 0                       | 0                       |
|                               | Private Owners             | 0                       | 2                       |
|                               | Other                      | 0                       | 0                       |

**Table 3 - Reasons for Escalated Complaints**

|   |                               | <b>2024/25</b> |                           | <b>2025/26</b> |                           |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
|   |                               | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> |
| 1 | Standard of Service Provision | 10             | 32%                       | 22             | 41%                       |
| 2 | Delay in providing service    | 5              | 16%                       | 10             | 19%                       |
| 2 | Disagreement with decision    | 3              | 10%                       | 10             | 19%                       |

|   |                               | <b>2024/25</b> |                           | <b>2025/26</b> |                           |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
|   |                               | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> | <b>Number</b>  | <b>% Of Total Stage 2</b> |
| 3 | Failure to follow a procedure | 0              | 0%                        | 4              | 7%                        |
| 4 | Conduct/attitude of staff     | 5              | 16%                       | 3              | 6%                        |
| 5 | Dissatisfaction with Policy   | 2              | 7%                        | 1              | 2%                        |
| 5 | Failure to provide service    | 6              | 19%                       | 1              | 2%                        |
| 5 | Failure to respond to enquiry | 0              | 0%                        | 1              | 2%                        |
| 5 | Other                         | 0              | 0%                        | 1              | 2%                        |
|   | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>31</b>      | <b>100%</b>               | <b>53</b>      | <b>100%</b>               |

### **Standard of Service Provided Complaints**

41% of complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 were categorised as relating to the standard of service provided, an increase of 9% from the previous reporting period. There was no specific trend in one particular department receiving most of those complaints, which were dealt with by, for example, Children & Families, Community Care, Culture and Tourism, Design Services, Education, Facilities, Housing Golf, ICT, Property Maintenance and Revenues .

- **6 complaints were upheld with apologies or explanations provided.**
- **14 complaints were not upheld, with a further explanation provided.**
- **2 complaint was partially upheld, with an explanation provided.**

### **Delay in Providing a Service Complaints**

The Council received 10 complaints relating to delays in providing services , which equates 19% of all complaints received at Stage 2. Complaints relating to failures to follow procedures vary across a range of services, including Committee Services, Community Care, Environmental Health, Housing, Neighbourhood Services, Property Maintenance and Social Care Finance.

### **Disagreement with Decision Complaints**

The Council received 10 complaints relating to disagreements with decisions, which equates 19% of all complaints received at Stage 2. Complaints relating to failures to follow procedures vary across a range of services, including Children and Families, Community Care, Employee Services, Housing and Neighbourhood Services.

## Escalated Complaint Categories

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:

| <b>Service</b>               | <b>Subject</b>                     | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/25</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Children and Families</b> | Ayr North Locality Team            | 1                           | 0                           |
|                              | Girvan/Maybole Locality Team       | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Family Placement and Adoption Team | 0                           | 2                           |
|                              | Management Team                    | 1                           | 0                           |
|                              | Disability Team                    | 1                           | 0                           |
| <b>Customer Services</b>     | Waiting Times                      | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b>Schools</b>               | Ayr Grammar                        | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Carrick Academy                    | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Belmont Academy                    | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Dailly Primary                     | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Doonfoot Primary                   | 1                           | 0                           |
|                              | Girvan Primary                     | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Glenburn Primary                   | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Kingcase Primary                   | 0                           | 1                           |
|                              | Symington Primary                  | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Marr College                       | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Queen Margaret Academy             | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Symington Primary                  | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b>Community Care</b>        | Arran View                         | 3                           | 1                           |
|                              | Homecare                           | 1                           | 1                           |
|                              | Ayr North Team                     | 1                           | 1                           |
|                              | Ayr South Team                     | 0                           | 0                           |
|                              | Maybole Girvan Team                |                             | 2                           |
|                              | Troon Team                         | 0                           | 1                           |
| <b>Facilities</b>            | Public Conveniences                | 0                           | 3                           |
| <b>Housing</b>               | Customer Landlord Relations        | 0                           | 2                           |
|                              | Housing Policy                     | 0                           | 1                           |

| <b>Service</b>                           | <b>Subject</b>               | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/24</b> | <b>01/04 –<br/>30/09/25</b> |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Quality Maintenance          | 2                           | 1                           |
|  | Access to<br>Housing/Support | 2                           | 3                           |
| <b><i>Leisure</i></b>                    | Citadel                      | 0                           | 0                           |
|  | Other                        | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b><i>Golf</i></b>                       | Belleisle/Seafield           | 1                           | 1                           |
|  | Dalmilling                   | 1                           | 0                           |
|  | Other                        | 0                           | 0                           |
| <b><i>Neighbourhood<br/>Services</i></b> | Recycling Facilities         | 0                           | 0                           |
|  | Waste Collection             | 1                           | 0                           |
|  | Allotments                   | 1                           | 0                           |
|  | Wheelie Bin                  | 1                           | 1                           |
|  | Litter Bin                   | 0                           | 1                           |
|  | Parks                        | 0                           | 1                           |
| <b><i>Planning</i></b>                   | Planning Application         | 1                           | 1                           |
| <b><i>Property Maintenance</i></b>       | Dissatisfied with Repair     | 1                           | 2                           |
|  | Contact/Communication        | 1                           | 2                           |
|  | External Contractor          | 0                           | 1                           |
|  | Private Owners               | 0                           | 0                           |
|  | Staff Attitude               | 0                           | 0                           |

## 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.***

|                |                      |                     |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 2024/25        | 01/04 – 30/09        | 3 per 1,000         |
| <b>2025/26</b> | <b>01/04 – 30/09</b> | <b>4 per 1000 ▲</b> |

The number of complaints received per 1,000 of the population increased by 1 per 1,000 between April – September 2024 and April – September 2025.

### ***Additional Information – Number of Cases where an Extension is Authorised***

|         |               | <b><i>Stage 1</i></b> | <b><i>Stage 2</i></b> | <b><i>Escalated</i></b> |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024/25 | 01/04 – 30/09 | 27                    | 4                     | 4                       |
| 2025/26 | 01/04 – 30/09 | <b>27 ◀▶</b>          | <b>12 ▲</b>           | <b>9▲</b>               |

An extension, when required, is undertaken in consultation with the complainant when it is established the complaint is complex and requires time to fully investigate.

For this reporting period, 48 complaints were subject to an authorised extension compared to 35 2024, an increase of 13 cases. Extensions are encouraged when complaints will take longer than the required timescale, to ensure that complainants are kept informed of the status of their case - and it is encouraging that Council services have recognised that they can communicate with the complainant to use this extension facility, to ensure the investigation is carried out effectively. Services who utilised application of an authorised extension to allow additional time to investigate a complaint included Children and Families, Community Care, Culture and Tourism, Education, Housing, Property Maintenance and Neighbourhood Services.

### ***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.

Most of the feedback we receive through this survey comes from customers who did not receive the outcome they sought following their complaint, with the trend being customers who are satisfied do not complete the survey. We will continue to look at ways to engage our customers to elicit meaningful feedback to improve our procedures.

Between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025, 60 requests were issued to members of the public inviting them to participate in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. 16 customer satisfaction surveys were completed which constitutes a 27% return, this is a decrease of 6% from the previous reporting period where the return rate was 33%.

Feedback received from the 27% who responded indicates that:

|  | 2024/25                     |         |          | 2025/26                     |         |          |
|--|-----------------------------|---------|----------|-----------------------------|---------|----------|
|  | Agree/<br>Strongly<br>Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Agree/<br>Strongly<br>Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
| Information about the complaint's procedure was easily accessible.   | 50%                         | 20%     | 30%      | 75%                         | 12.5%   | 12.5%    |
| I found it easy to make my complaint.  | 50%                         | 30%     | 20%      | 62%                         | 19%     | 19%      |
| I was happy that the Investigating Officer fully understood my complaint.  | 35%                         | 15%     | 50%      | 37.5%                       | 12.5%   | 50%      |
| I was given the opportunity to fully explain my complaint.   | 50%                         | 10%     | 40%      | 44%                         | 25%     | 31%      |
| The points of my complaint were identified and responded to  | 30%                         | 25%     | 45%      | 37%                         | 19%     | 44%      |
| The response to my complaint was easy to understand.   | 45%                         | 10%     | 45%      | 31%                         | 31%     | 38%      |
| Overall, I was satisfied with the handling of my complaint.  | 5%                          | 20%     | 75%      | 19%                         | 25%     | 56%      |
| I was told if the response was going to take longer than the set timescales ( <i>five working days at Stage 1 and 20 working days at Stage 2</i> ) | 15%                         | 50%     | 35%      | 25%                         | 50%     | 25%      |
| I was clearly told what the next Stage of the complaints process was for me.   | 30%                         | 10%     | 60%      | 44%                         | 12%     | 44%      |

While more than half of respondents indicated their dissatisfaction in the overall handling of complaints, overall, the responses show an increase in satisfaction from the same period in 2024/25.

Members are asked to note that negative responses are received from customers who felt the Council did not provide the outcome to their complaint they hoped for or expected (e.g., not upheld). All complaint investigators are encouraged to work with the customer to clarify the basis of their complaint, to support a clearly defined complaint investigation that meets customer expectations and clearly sign post customers to the next stage in the complaints handling process should they remain dissatisfied.

## Service Improvement Case Studies

### Facilities Management

A customer complained that she had been refused access to a public toilet as she did not have any form of contactless payment with her. As a result of her complaint, an apology for the inconvenience was offered and reminder communications were delivered to on-site attendants advising them to use discretion and, where appropriate, to support access to facilities when a customer is faced with difficulties.

### Golf

A customer complained that there was an increase of stray golf shots in and around her property following a redesign of Lochgreen Golf Course in Troon. As well as an apology, as a result of her complaint, the greenkeepers at Lochgreen Golf Course were reminded that the area in question is a compulsory no-play zone and should not be maintained for use.

### ICT/Planning

A customer complained that the Planning team were not able to access the information he had submitted in a planning enforcement breach form. Following an investigation, it became clear that this was due to a systems error which meant that the form was submitted but did not reach the Planning mailbox due to the size of attachments. As a result of this complaint, the process has been updated to ensure the case manager also gets an alert from the system when a case is submitted, and it is not only reliant on the email being received in the enforcement mailbox which can be blocked due to large attachments.

### Neighbourhood Services

A customer complained that his assisted collection for brown bins was often missed. As well as an apology and an uplift of the bins, a reminder was also issued to the relevant foreman to ensure this did not reoccur.

## **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Improvement Cases**

No Decision Notices were published by the Ombudsman relating to South Ayrshire Council during the reporting period 1 April – 30 September 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.

In reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2025 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.

Most Stage 2 complaints were undertaken at this 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.

## Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Annual Statistics<sup>1</sup>

The SPSO publish an annual Statistical Report for complaints they receive for Councils. These relate to complaints that have been referred by a member of the public to the SPSO to investigate following the Council undertaking a Stage 2 investigation.

Further benchmarking of these statistics against similar Local Authorities is outlined below in [Appendix 8](#). Details of the most recent Council's SPSO Statistics for Council Services, are detailed below. *As these statistics are provided by the SPSO the Council cannot provide further analysis on the categorisation or breakdown of these statistics, nor can we influence the dates when these statistics are published:* [Statistics | SPSO](#).

| Stage            | Outcome Group  | South Ayrshire Council – 2024/25 |
|------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Advice           | A&G - Complaint submissions - mature                                 | 0                                |
|                  | A&G - Complaint submissions - premature                              | 0                                |
|                  | A&G - Enquiries  | 0                                |
|                  | Unable to proceed  | 0                                |
|                  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>0</b>                         |
| Early Resolution | Cause and impact test not met (s 5 (3))                              | 0                                |
|                  | Discretion – Alternative action proposed                             | 0                                |
|                  | Discretion – Alternative route used or available                     | 0                                |
|                  | Discretion – Good complaint handling                                 | 13                               |
|                  | Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation | 2                                |
|                  | Discretion – Referred back   | 1                                |
|                  | Discretion – Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome | 1                                |
|                  | Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))                          | 2                                |
|                  | Premature  | 0                                |
|                  | Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))       | 0                                |
|                  | Subject matter not in jurisdiction                                   | 1                                |
|                  | Time limit (s 10)  | 0                                |
|                  | Unable to proceed  | 1                                |
|                  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>21</b>                        |
| Investigation    | Fully upheld   | 0                                |
|                  | Not duly made or withdrawn   | 0                                |

<sup>1</sup> Please note this information was provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and the Information Governance team are therefore unable to provide any analysis of these statistics. Where a difference in the number of complaints received and closed is noted, this is a result of either complaints from the previous reporting year being included in the closed total, or complaints received in 2024/25 continuing to be investigated/considered by the SPSO into 2025/26.

| <b>Stage</b> | <b>Outcome Group</b> | <b>South Ayrshire Council – 2024/25</b> |
|--------------|----------------------|---|
|              | Not upheld           | 0                                       |
|              | Some upheld          | 1                                       |
|              | <b>Total</b>         | <b>1</b>                                |
| <b>Total</b> |                      | <b>22</b>                               |

## Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Annual Statistics

In accordance with Local Government bench marking scheme, and to allow a realistic indication of performance among Scottish Local Authorities, a benchmarking process has been organised around ‘family groups’ of councils to compare those similar in terms of the type of population that they serve (e.g., relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area in which they serve them (e.g., urban, semi-rural, rural). Cases escalated to the SPSO within South Ayrshire Council’s family group (South Ayrshire Council forms family three in Local Government Bench Marking <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/how-do-we-compare-councils>) are as follows:

The undernoted complaints group has 8 members. Of these eight members, **South Ayrshire Council has the second-lowest number of cases escalated to the Ombudsman** in the family group, which is an improvement from the SPSO report from 2024/25 in which we placed second.

In 2024/25 South Ayrshire Council dealt with 606 complaints. Of these, 22 were referred to the SPSO for further consideration, one of which warranted a full investigation. In 21 cases, the customer was provided with advice by the SPSO, or an early resolution was reached (see [Appendix 7](#) above).

This is a positive indication that the Council is providing a complaint handling service which meets the approval of the SPSO in line with the statutory complaints handling process. Additionally, it is encouraging that over 96% of customers who complained to the Council were satisfied with the handling of their complaint by the relevant Council service and did not feel there was a requirement to contact the SPSO.

| Ranking (from lowest to highest number of complaints received) | Local Authority       | 2023/24    |                      | 2024/25     |                      |
|--|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
|  |                       | Complaints | % Family Group Total | Complaints  | % Family Group Total |
| 1  | Clackmannanshire      | 15         | 3.5%                 | 17          | 3%                   |
| 2  | <b>South Ayrshire</b> | <b>15</b>  | <b>3.5%</b>          | <b>22 ▲</b> | <b>5% ▲</b>          |
| 3  | Dumfries & Galloway   | 29         | 7%                   | 44          | 9%                   |
| 4  | Renfrewshire          | 54         | 13%                  | 52          | 11%                  |
| 5  | Falkirk               | 63         | 15%                  | 70          | 14%                  |
| 6  | West Lothian          | 71         | 17%                  | 87          | 18%                  |
| 7  | South Lanarkshire     | 71         | 17%                  | 92          | 19%                  |
| 8  | Fife                  | 101        | 24%                  | 102         | 21%                  |

## Scottish Welfare Fund Annual Statistics

From 1 April 2016 the SPSO have been responsible for independent reviews of applications made to the SWF for both Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. (Previously this role was undertaken by each Local Authority).

When an applicant requests a review the SPSO can conduct a review with the following possible outcomes.

- To change part, or all, of the Council's decision
- To tell the Council to make a new decision, or
- Not to change the Council's decision in any way

### Summary of SPSO Decisions

| Application Type      | Total Decisions |       | Not Upheld |       | Upheld |       | Uphold rate |       | National average uphold rate |       |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|-------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
|                       | 23-24           | 24-25 | 23-24      | 24-25 | 23-24  | 24-25 | 23-24       | 24-25 | 23-24                        | 24-25 |
| Crisis Grants         | 5               | 3     | 4          | 3     | 1      | 0     | 20%         | 0%    | 16%                          | 21%   |
| Community Care Grants | 2               | 1     | 0          | 1     | 2      | 0     | 100%        | 0%    | 52%                          | 56%   |
| Total                 | 7               | 4     | 4          | 4     | 3      | 0     | 43%         | 0%    | -                            | -     |

During 2024/2025 there has been a reduction by 3 cases in the number of review applications made to the SPSO. The SPSO did not uphold any of the review requests made to them. During 2024/25 we received 3,580 applications for Crisis Grants & 1,370 applications for Community Care Grants. Overall, only 0.08% of all applicants to the SWF requested an SPSO review.

Whilst the overall requests for review are very low, we will continue to examine any decisions taken by the SPSO to ensure our staff continue to interpret the guidance appropriately. However, in accordance with the scheme customers do have the right to request a review by the SPSO and where this happens, we will continue to co-operate fully with the SPSO reviews