

Midlothian



MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

ANNUAL COMPLAINT HANDLING REPORT 2024/25

Welcome

to Midlothian Council's Annual Complaint Handling Report for 2024/25



“ We have provided compliments in this report ”

“ We upheld 53% of complaints at stage 1 and 20% at stage 2 ”

“ We handled 1308 complaints and closed 794 complaints during the year 2024/25 ”

Contents

Foreword	3
Background	4
Complaints Handling Procedure	5
Channel Used to Submit Complaints for 2023/24	6
Statutory Performance Indicators	7
Compliments throughout 2023/24	18
Annual Complaints Handled by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)	19
Next Steps	22
Your feedback counts	23

Midlothian Council is committed to discharging its duties required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). We recognise that valuable lessons can be learnt from the feedback we receive from customers. The council's complaints handling procedure provides our customers with a clear and structured way to provide feedback on council service delivery.

The 2024/25 Annual Complaint Handling report presents information about the way Midlothian Council managed complaints between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

The report centres on 8 key performance indicators, and the data provides an overview of how the council has performed when processing complaints. We have included examples of what improvements we have made to our services following complaint handling. The report also takes account of other additional feedback data that contributes towards the council's determination to value its customers in the most efficient way.

Services use this information to learn, plan and monitor change/outcomes and supports council services to continually develop.

While there are areas for improvement, we value complaints by viewing them in a positive way and using the information to continually improve the way we deliver services for our citizens. We strive to be thorough, transparent, objective and fair in our approach to complaints, and we make every effort to ensure that the process is accessible, straightforward and timely.



Dr Grace Vickers,
Chief Executive
Midlothian Council

Background

Complaints are crucial in identifying areas or processes that are not working for customers. Reporting complaints data is a national objective that is monitored by Audit Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), and it is in line with Best Value arrangements.

The Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) specifies how Midlothian Council handles complaints. The 8 key indicators, developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) in partnership with other public sector experts, are reported on a quarterly cycle.

The CHP has thus far:

- introduced a uniform two stage procedure for dealing with complaints, with timescales for each stage;
- encouraged the use of early resolution methods wherever feasible;
- allocated responsibility for complaint handling in organisations;
- included requirements for recording complaints and publishing complaint data and for reporting on complaint performance;
- provided a definition of ‘complaint’; and
- encouraged learning from complaints.

Complaint information is also used in the shared risk assessments of local authorities that Audit Scotland conducts with other regulators such as Education Scotland. It helps to build up an overall picture of service delivery within the local authority.

The SPSO handles the final stage of complaints about public services in Scotland. The Ombudsman service is independent of government and has a duty to act impartially. The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) was established by the SPSO to work with public bodies to standardise and simplify complaints handling procedures and to help drive improvement. In addition, the CSA has taken forward new responsibilities provided to the SPSO by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, including requiring the SPSO to monitor and promote best practice in complaints handling. These responsibilities allow the SPSO to take forward recommendations made by the Crerar Review (2007)¹ and Sinclair (2008)² reports which concluded that there is a need for a quicker, more consistent, more user focused approach to handling complaints.

The local authority complaint handler network (LACHN) is a national forum for local authority complaint handlers to meet quarterly to assist in the development of professional practice in

relation to complaint handling. The SPSO attend these meetings to support the ongoing development of complaint handling within local authorities and to achieve consistency in approach.

Midlothian Council defines a complaint per the SPSO’s recommended description as follows:

“An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about Midlothian Council’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on Midlothian Council’s behalf.”

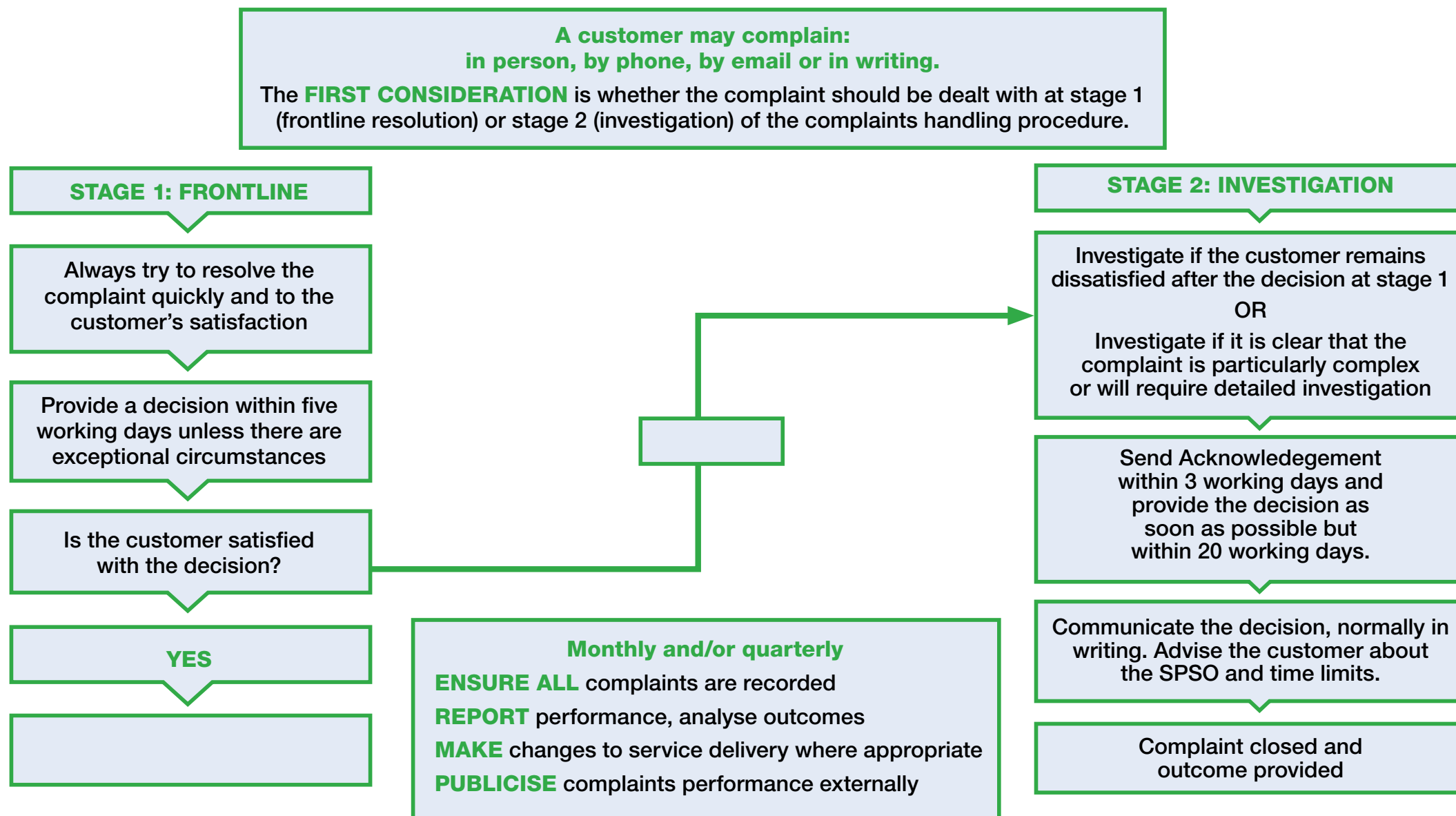
To supplement Midlothian’s commitment to valuing complaints, the report illustrates comparative data to the indicator figures from last year, along with benchmarking information that measures Midlothian Council’s complaints information to similarly likened local authorities known as a Family Group³. Additionally, comparisons to the Scottish average complaints’ statistics are presented.

- 1 The Crerar Review: The Report of the Independent Review of Regulation, Audit, Inspection and Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland, 2007.
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/IndependentReviewofReg/latest-news/TheCrerarReview
- 2 Fit-for-Purpose Complaints System Action Group (FCSAG), 2008.
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0063564.doc
- 3 Councils are arranged in 'Family Groups', as agreed by Local Authority Officers in association with the Improvement Service, so that councils that are 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) can be compared. The point of comparing like with like is that this is more likely to lead to useful learning, sharing good practice, and working together to improve services. Midlothian Council's Family Group includes Angus; Clackmannanshire; East Renfrewshire; Inverclyde; Renfrewshire; South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

Complaints handling procedure

Figure 1 illustrates a summary flow chart of the complaints procedure, which is used for Midlothian Council's Complaint Handling Procedure, and adheres to the SPSO's Model Complaint Handling Procedure.

FIGURE 1: Complaints Handling Procedure



Channel Used to Submit Complaints for 2024/25

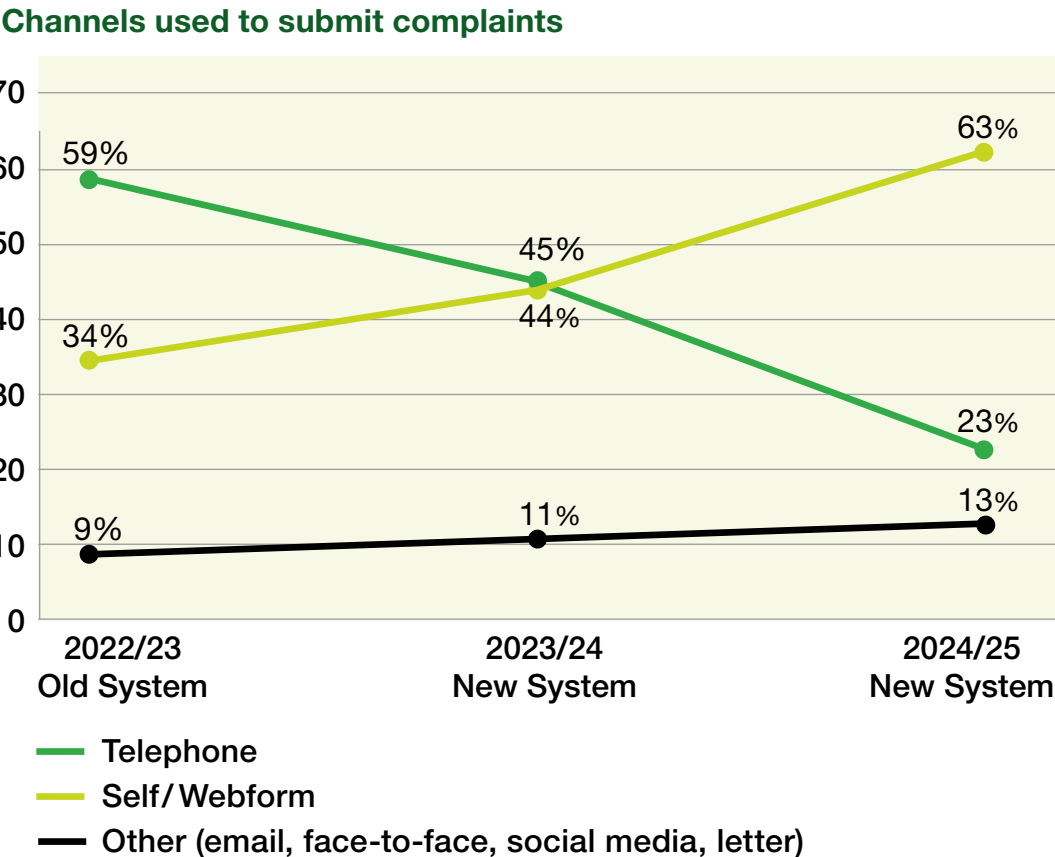
Figure 2 illustrates the differences in the channel used to submit complaints for the years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. It includes the earlier year 2022/23 as the Council moved to a new customer platform in 2023. Figure 2 therefore presents a clear difference in methods of contact between the old system and the new system used to record complaint information.

An ongoing objective of the new system is to improve webform access so that it is more user friendly whilst empowering customers to be self-sufficient through self-reporting. The functionality behind the process was also improved, ensuring cases get to the required service area faster and more efficiently.

Figure 2 shows the relative percentages of the channels used by customers to make a complaint. In the year 2022/23, telephone contact is the most used method of contact for complaints at 59%, followed by webform at 34%, then other methods such as face to face, email, letter etc were very small by comparison, (which is why they are grouped together) with only 9% of contact being those methods.

Looking at the methods of contact more closely, in the year 24/25 there is a visible decline in telephone contact, and an uptick in webform access with 23% and 63% respectively, with little movement in the 'other' category at just 13%. This change in the way that complaints are submitted demonstrates channel shift is being adopted.

FIGURE 2: Comparison of old feedback/complaints management system (2022/23), and new system (2023/24 and 2024/25) showing the relative percentage of channel used to log complaints in each year.



Statutory Performance Indicators

Midlothian Council monitors complaints handling performance, through quality assurance, to facilitate continuous improvement and to assist in benchmarking performance between local authorities.

There are 8 indicators:

- 1** Complaints received per thousand population
- 2** Complaints closed at each stage as a percentage of all complaints closed
- 3** The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at each stage
- 4** Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage
- 5** Optional - The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days
- 6** Optional - The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the 5 or 20 working day timeline has been authorised.
- 7** Optional - Customer Satisfaction statement about the complaints service provided.
- 8** A statement outlining changes or improvements to services or procedures as a result of the consideration of complaints.

INDICATOR 1: Complaints received per thousand population

This indicator records the total number of complaints received at stage 1, or directly at stage 2. The sum is divided by the estimated population size of Midlothian Council. Population size data is a Mid-Year Population Estimate from 2022 obtained from the National Records of Scotland (NRS).

- The population of Midlothian Council is estimated to be 98,260
- Midlothian Council handled 1308 complaints
- This equates to an average of 13 complaints received per 1000 population
- Expressed another way, 1 in every 75 people made a complaint about a service

FIGURE 3: Figures for Performance Indicator 1: Complaints received per thousand population

The figures shown for 19/20 to 23/24 provide internal benchmarking data and the 24/25 data includes external benchmarking data.

	Internal Benchmarking - Midlothian						External Benchmarking	
	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	24/25 Family Group	24/25 Scotland
Population	91,340	92,460	93,150	94,680	96,527	98,260		
Total Complaints	5421 (↑314)	7337 (↑1916)	6450 (↓887)	6478 (↑28)	1755 (↓4723)	1308 (↓375)		
Complaints Per 1000 Population	59	79	69	68	18	13	16	12

INDICATOR 2: Complaints closed at stage 1 and stage 2, and escalated as a percentage of all complaints closed

Closed complaints are those that have been allocated an outcome and a response has been given to the customer. At time of reporting, no further action was required.

The number of closed complaints differs to the number of received complaints because some of the 2024/25 closed complaints were received in 2023/24, while some of the 2024/25 received complaints will be closed in 2025/26 as their target date falls into the next reporting cycle.

Customers who have undergone the complaints procedure at stage 1, but who remain dissatisfied are invited to **escalate** their complaint to a stage 2 investigation.

FIGURE 4: Figures for Performance Indicator 2: Relative percentage figures for complaints closed at stage 1, stage 2 and escalated

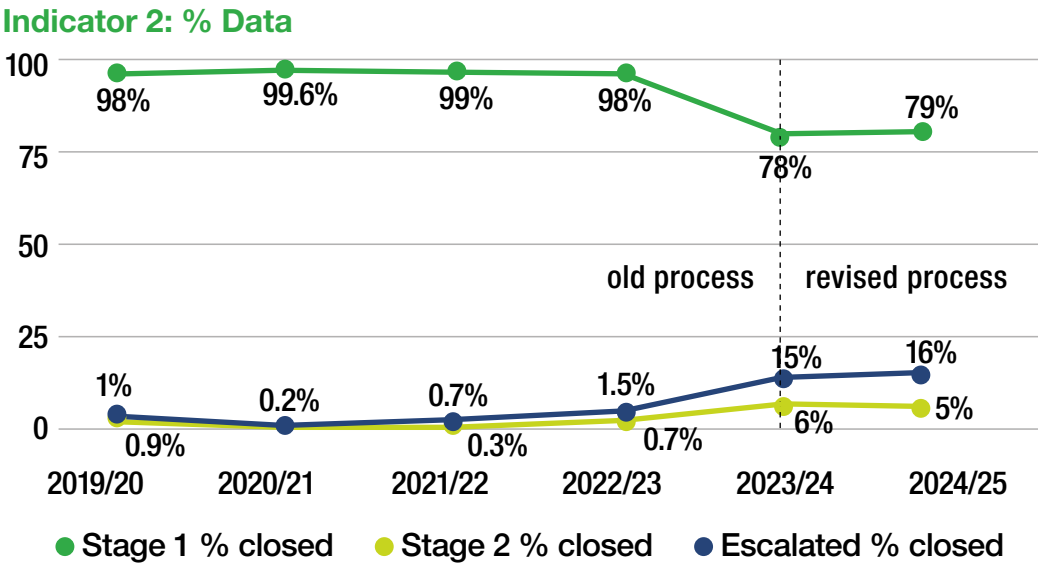


Figure 4 shows that the most recent relative percentage of complaints closed at stage 1 is 79%, a similar figure to the previous year at 78%. The dotted line highlights the year that Midlothian implemented a revised complaint management system and process. The reduction in the percentage of complaints closed can be explained because further analysis of old system data identified that the statistics are heavily skewed due to a dominance of ‘missed bin’ complaints, which accounted for circa two thirds of the total figures. To overcome this, a Service Standard was changed, and this has contributed towards providing a realistic position.

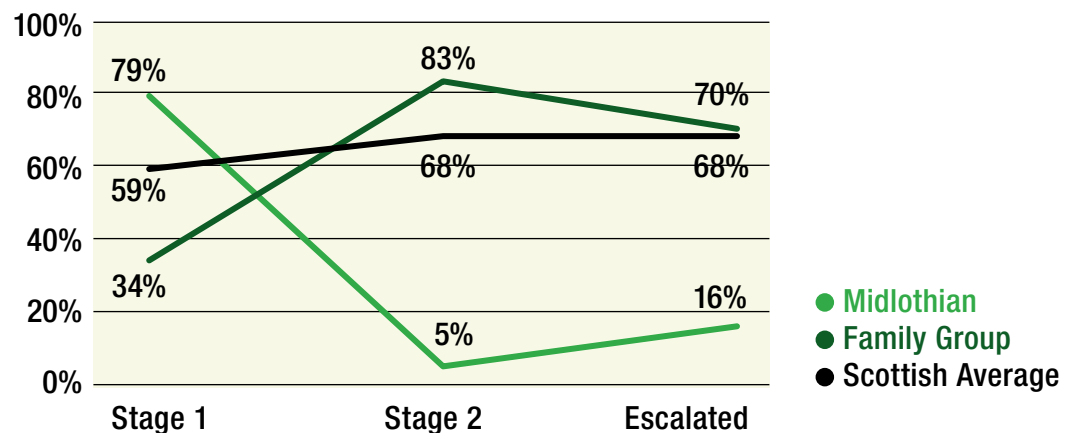
For closed stage 2 and escalated complaints, the proportionate percentage is similar at 5% for 24/25 compared with 6% the year before (23/24)

Looking at the old process and the difference in stage 2 complaints, there is an increase that can again be attributed to the change mentioned above. The data is a relative percentage of all complaints closed and there are now less closed complaints due to the stripping out of the weighted data causing the above mentioned skew.

Escalated complaints are also consistent with the previous year with 16% for 2024/25 and 15% the previous year.

A positive function of the new system that impacts this statistic, is that it will auto-escalate stage 1 cases to stage 2 if they ‘breach’ i.e. are not dealt with at that stage by officers within the service and within the deadlines as set out in the policy.

FIGURE 5: 2024/25 data for performance indicator 2: Complaints closed at each stage as a percentage of all complaints closed, including comparative data for family group and Scottish average



It can be seen in Figure 5 above that Midlothian Council closed proportionately more stage 1 complaints in 2024/25 (79%) than the family group and Scottish total at 34% and 59% respectively. This is good and reflects the SPSO's ethos, which is to close complaints at as early a stage as possible to prevent the need for lengthy and costly investigations.

For stage 2 complaints, Midlothian Council has comparatively less, with 5% closed at stage 2 compared with 83% and 68% for both the family group and Scottish average amount. Midlothian is considerably lower than the groups, but this can be explained when looking at the much higher percent closed at stage 1

Midlothian has less escalated complaints than the family group and Scottish average at 16%, 70% (family group) and 68% (Scottish total).

INDICATOR 3: Complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage (as a % of complaints closed in full at each stage).

“

The procedure states that there is a requirement to record an outcome for each complaint received.
The outcomes are categorised as follows:

Upheld	This means that the findings of the complaint show that a Midlothian Council service is at fault, made mistakes, or fell below expected standards and confirms that the complaint is justified.
Not upheld	Investigations find that Midlothian Council acted correctly and the complaint is not justified.
Partially upheld	There are some aspects within one complaint where the Council have acted correctly and some where there is fault.
Resolved	Midlothian Council and a customer have agreed on actions to resolve an issue without the need for a formal finding of fault.

”

**FIGURES 6, 7 and 8: 2024/25 data for performance indicator 3:
The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld and the newest outcome, resolved at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full including comparative data for previous years.**

Figure 6 shows the relative proportion of upheld complaints for stage 1 in has increased slightly from the previous year with 53% for 2024/25 compared with 50% in 2023/24. The newer Resolved outcome data for this indicator has decreased from 19% (2023/24), to 12% in 2024/25 while the other stage 1 outcomes remain consistent with the previous year.

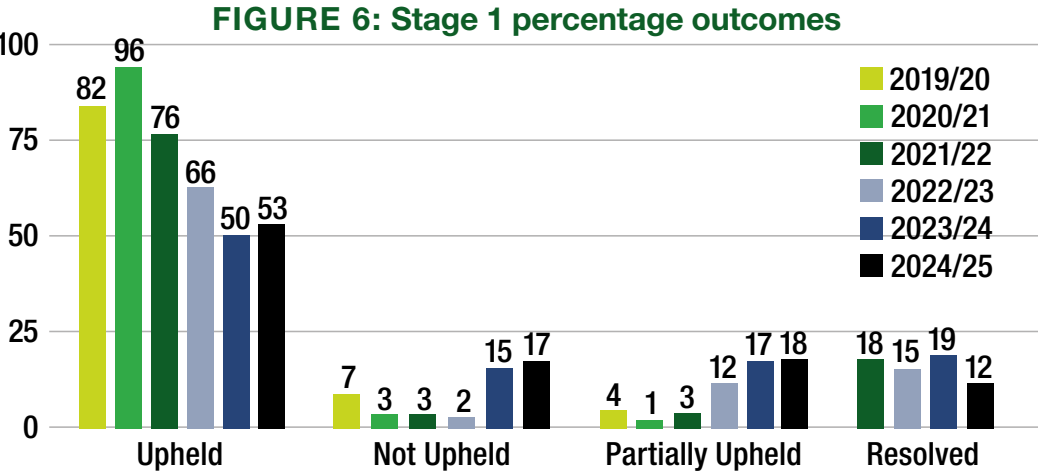


FIGURE 7: Stage 2 percentage outcomes

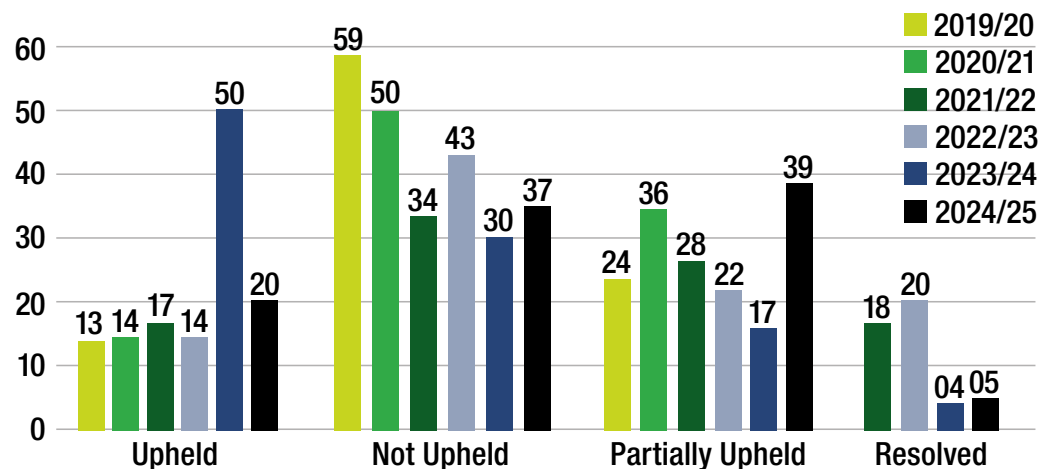


Figure 7 highlights that the proportion of stage 2 complaints that were upheld is much lower than the previous year with 20% against the previous year's 50%. One of the key actions of the council is to decrease the number of upheld complaints at stage 2. Those that were not upheld show 37%, partially upheld 39% and resolved 5% for the current year 2024/25.

FIGURE 8: Escalated percentage outcomes

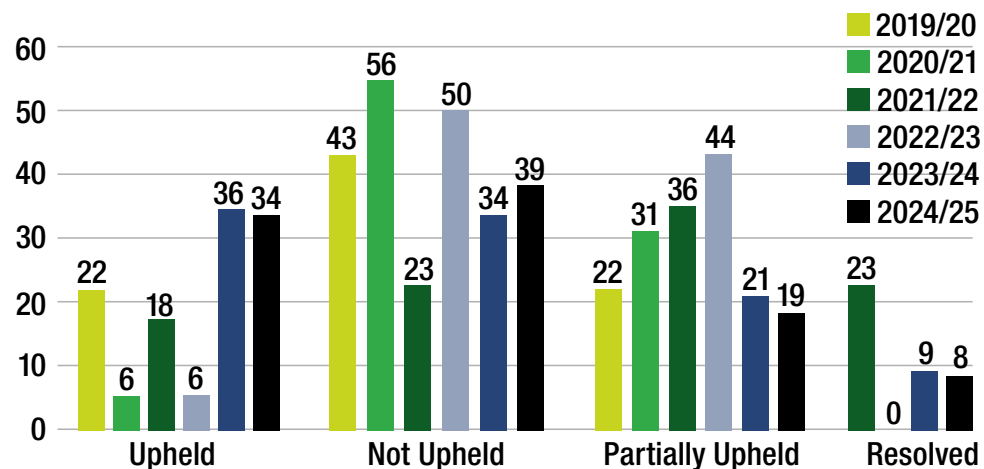


Figure 8 highlights that the proportion of escalated complaints that were upheld is slightly reduced to 34% (2024/25) from 36% 2023/24. Escalated complaints not upheld, partially upheld and resolved are sitting at 39%, 19% and 8% respectively for the current year 2024/25 compared to the previous year of 34%, 21% and 9% respectively.

FIGURE 9: Data for performance indicator 3: The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/ not upheld and resolved at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at each stage, including comparative data for family group and Scottish average

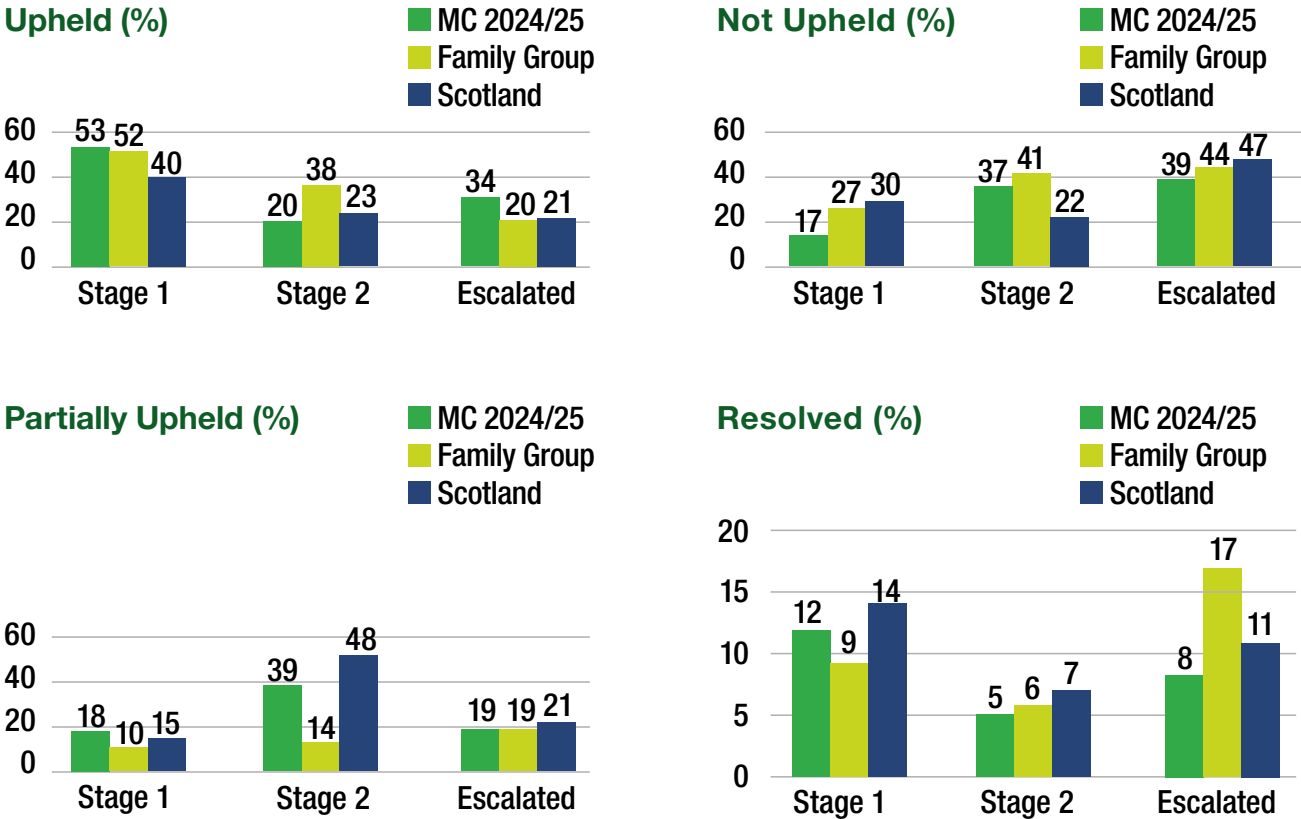


Figure 9 shows that upheld stage 1 complaints in 2024/25 for Midlothian Council is higher than the Family Group and the Scottish Average. This supports the SPSO expectations that customers are happy with the response that they have been provided at this early stage i.e. to apologise and uphold complaints early on.

Midlothian Council’s upheld stage 2 complaints (20%) are consistent with the Scottish Average (23%), but the family group is higher at 38%.

Upheld escalated complaints in 2024/25 are at 34% and higher than the Family Group (20%) and the Scottish average (21%).

The ‘not upheld’ outcomes for stage 1 and escalated complaint categories are lower than both the family group and Scotland. However, stage 2 complaints (37%) are more in line with the family group average (41%) than the lower Scottish average figure at 22%.

The newer outcome ‘resolved’ shows that Midlothian has less of these cases than the Family Group and Scotland for stage 2 and escalated cases. across all complaint categories. With it being a reasonably new outcome there is not a lot of historical comparative data. However, the data supports our endeavour to work with our customers to amicably and mutually agree on a course of action to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

INDICATOR 4: Average time in working days to provide a full response to complaints at each stage

“ This indicator takes the sum of the total number of working days for all complaints to be dealt with and closed at stage 1; at stage 2; and escalated complaints. An average time in working days for a full response to be given is then calculated by dividing the sum by the total number of closed complaints for each stage. ”

FIGURE 10: 2023/24 data for performance indicator 4: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage including comparative data for previous years. An indicator line is present to highlight deadlines at each stage.

INDICATOR 4: average working days

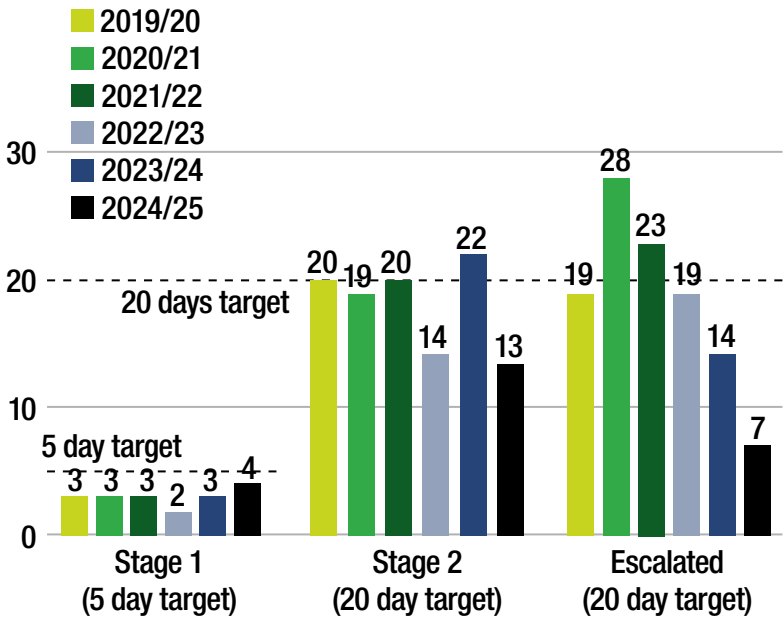
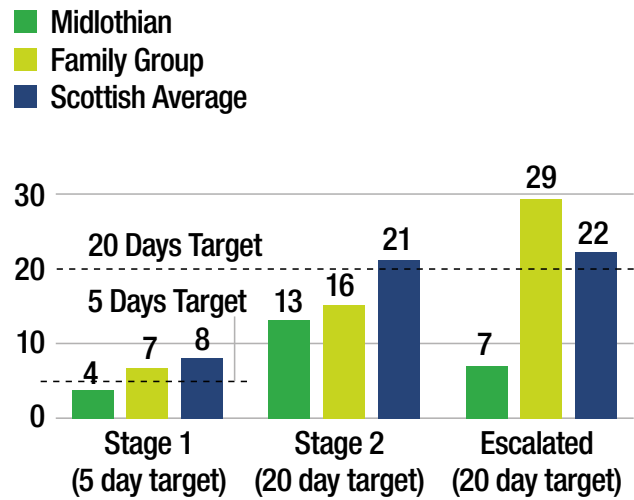


Figure 10 indicates that Midlothian Council has remained within the pre-determined target of 5 days for stage 1 complaints. The average number of days over the years illustrated is fairly consistent.

Also shown in Figure 10 is the average time for stage 2 complaints for each year. At the time of the publication of the 23/24 annual report an improvement action was identified to meet the 20 day deadline. This has been achieved in 25/25 with an average of 13 days for 2024/25.

Indicator 4 data for escalated complaints has reduced to 7 days in 2024/25.

FIGURE 11: 2024/25 data for performance indicator 4: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage including comparative data with Family Group and Scottish average. An indictor line is present to highlight deadlines at each stage.



Part of the SPSO’s ethos is that complaints should be dealt with at as early a stage as possible, so the less time it takes to deal with complaints the better. Figure 11 shows that when compared to the Family Group average at 7 days, and the Scottish average at 8 days, Midlothian Council shows good performance in this area with an average of 4 days to complete stage 1 complaints.

Figure 11 illustrates that the average time for stage 2 complaints for Midlothian Council during 24/25 is 13 days, with the Scottish average at 21 days. Compared to the Family Groups and Scotland with an average of 29 and 22 days respectively for escalated complaints, Midlothian shows a 7 day average.

INDICATOR 5: the number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.

“ This indicator represents the number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the predetermined timescales of 5 and 20 working days. Cases where an extension to the timescales has been authorised are included. ”

FIGURE 12: 2023/24 data for performance indicator 5: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days, including comparative data with previous years

Figure 12 shows the relative amount of Midlothian Council’s complaints that were closed against timescales. Stage 1 complaints reduced from 83% in 2023/24 to 78% in 2024/25. This dip will be monitored.

The proportion of stage 2 complaints closed against timescales shows an increase from 58% in 2023/24 to 90% for the current year. This is an improvement on the previous year.

The number of escalated complaints closed on time has increased again this year from 77% in 2023/24 to 89% on 2024/25.

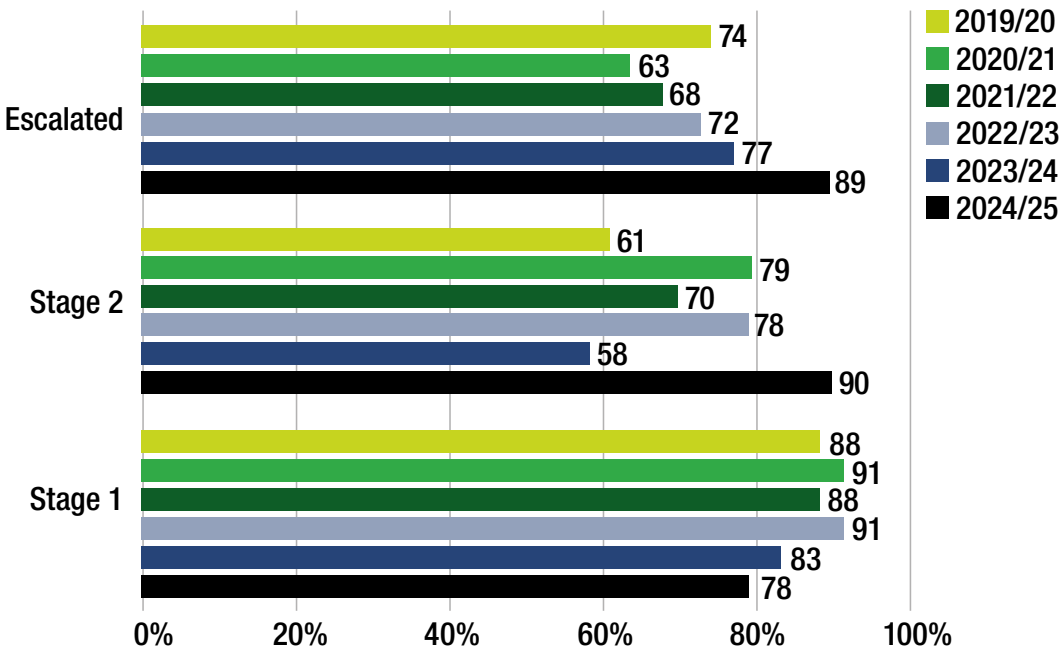
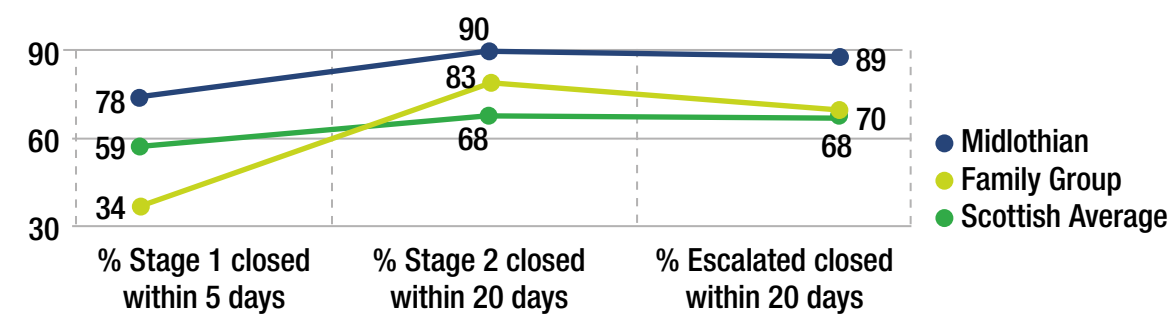


FIGURE 13: 2024/25 data for performance indicator 5: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days, including comparative data with family group and Scottish average



Midlothian Council had a higher proportion (78%) of stage 1 complaints that were closed within the timescale of 5 days when compared to both the Family Group and the Scottish average.

The percentage of both stage 2 and escalated complaints closed on time is higher at 90% and 89% respectively for Midlothian Council. Investigations tend to be complicated in nature and at times can require cross-service communication. This can sometimes cause delays in providing a timely response, however it is important to gather all the correct information to ensure that the council is positioned to provide an objective and proportionate response.

INDICATOR 6: The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were granted an authorised extension.

“ With authorisation from a senior manager such as a Chief Officer, the pre-determined 5 day limit to respond to a stage 1 complaint may be extended a further 5 days if there are extenuating circumstances in which the complaint cannot be dealt with within the 5 day limit. Similarly, an extension may be approved by management to the 20 day limit for stage 2 and escalated complaints. This indicator looks at the number and percentage of complaints at each stage where authorisation was agreed to extend the 5 or 20 working day timeline. It does not include complaints that were late but authorisation was not requested and/or logged accordingly. ”

FIGURE 14: data for performance indicator 6: number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the 5 or 20 working day timeline has been authorised, including previous year’s data for comparison

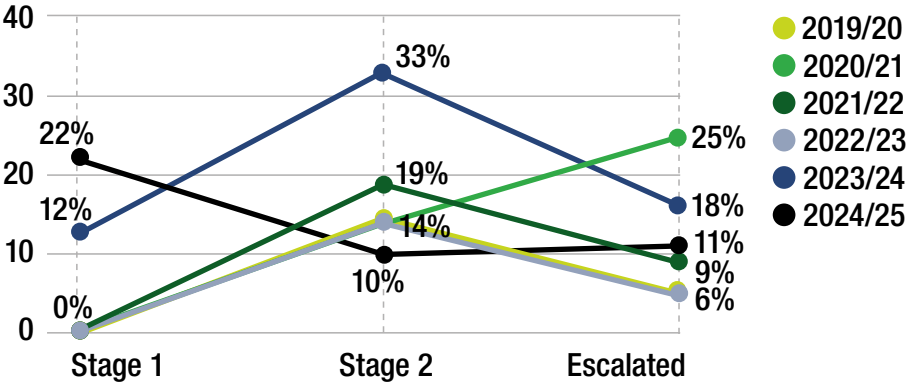


Figure 14 shows that the function to extend stage 1 complaints has been used minimally in years past, however the latest two years, with the new system, shows an uptick in this function for stage 1 at 22%. Stage 2 decreased to 10% and is reflective of the overall lower number of complaints at stage 2. Escalated cases that required an extension have lowered to 11% from 18%. The relative percentage remains low, which reflects most cases are being dealt with within time scales.

INDICATOR 7: customer satisfaction about the complaint handling procedure

The council has identified the area of satisfaction about the complaint handling procedure as one that requires some development work. There has been a poor uptake in responses about satisfaction of the complaint handling procedure. It is hoped that work, such as integrating feedback forms into the complaint webform will allow for better response numbers to enable the satisfaction data to be collated, analysed and reported.

INDICATOR 8: Learning, changes and improvements made to service areas as a result of the feedback given from complaints

CASE STUDY

Service: Landscape

Complaint Analysis

The service needed to review the handling of Information Governance enquiries and complaints, which were not being responded to timeously due to a restructure and staff reallocation. There was an uptick in calls through the Contact Centre about this from customers querying the lack of response.

Service Improvement Actions

A new post with a focus on customer service, information governance and complaints was resourced.

Compliments throughout 2024/25

There were 156 compliments received in 2024/25 covering a range of services and each Chief Officer and Head of Service received the information relevant to their areas to ensure that staff were informed. Many of the compliments were broad and covered factors on a larger scale such as the good work of the council overall, and also adverse weather conditions, with some specific to staff whom our customers felt had gone above and beyond. Table 1 shows some of these, and includes the service areas in which they belong.

TABLE 1: Excerpt of compliments received during 2024/25

SERVICE AREA	COMPLIMENTS
Adult Health & Social Care	"exceptional service from the Occupational Therapist assigned to mum's care, and upgrade to our home facilities. On a wider sense the coordination with team support staff and suppliers was absolutely first class. The high quality staff is clearly a reflection on the Council's care with recruitment and training.
Customer Services	"As always, a quick response from the girls dealing with social media. My favorite way of contacting the Council is through their Facebook chat because the engagement is amazing."
Libraries	"I have attended the Bookbug group for the first time this month at Gorebridge library and I wanted to feedback how amazing the group is. As a first time mum I found this class very welcoming, love the fact it is free and a way for me to meet other mums in my local community- thank you!"
Landscape & Countryside	"Well done to the Greenspaces team for making Penicuik look so well by grass cutting and planting, which improves the quality of life for all spending time outdoors, first rate job!!"
Leisure Centres	"Please pass on to all the staff at Loanhead Leisure, from reception , to all the lifeguards, cafe staff, aquafit instructor and for the first time today - you are all "Simply the best". I Have been a member at many health clubs and for me , none match the friendliness, welcoming environment of Loanhead Leisure, it has a real family feeling, nothing is ever too much of a problem, 5 star every time. I absolutely love it and cannot praise the staff highly enough, thankyou everyone."
Building Maintenance Services	"I would like to thank the trades putting up my kitchen ceiling - brilliant job and very tidy when they leave - I was in the trade before so I know good work when I see it and I appreciate them cleaning up after themselves."
	"Customer would like to thank the Manager and the two plumbers that attended to his tap repair on 17/11/23. He was very impressed and said that he has not had such good service like that for a long time, and wanted to pass on his compliments to all involved."
Revenues & Benefits	"I have found the staff at Midlothian Council to be understanding and extremely helpful. The arrears team has given me information about further services available to help my brother and followed up our telephone call with a comprehensive e-mail detailing next steps. The level of customer service was excellent. I think the team have done an excellent job in making the processes accessible and ensuring my brother does not fall back into arrears. Thanks for the support - it has made the whole process much easier."
Roads	"Customer wishes to pass on big thanks to the team who installed disabled parking space at the property today (24/7/23) Has been done in a very timely fashion. Please pass on customers thanks to team."
Waste	"Compliment for friendly nature and road awareness/courtesy to drivers if the crew operating the red bull rubbish truck on Thursday 22nd June at about 8:30am on Newtongrange Main Street. This great service and thought does not go unnoticed."
	"Customer would like to say a big thank you to the waste team and the call handler for putting the bin on the right side of the road after collection."
Registrars	"Thank you to the Registrar who expedited the update and turnaround of the death certificate. This allowed me to continue the closing of my brothers estate some 7 months later to much family relief. Thankyou."

Annual Complaints Handled by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the organisation that handles complaints about public services in Scotland. The Ombudsman service is independent of government and with a duty to act impartially. The SPSO also shares learning from its work to improve service delivery across the public services spectrum in Scotland. The office carries out awareness-raising activities with the general public, and bodies under jurisdiction and promotes good complaints handling by public service providers in Scotland. The SPSO has a separate website to support best practice in complaints handling.

Mentioned earlier, customers who have undergone Midlothian Council's established Complaint Handling Procedure, and who remain dissatisfied with any aspect of the way in which their complaint has been handled, are signposted by the council to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). Provided it is within their jurisdiction, the SPSO will review the complaint and consequently reach a decision. Depending on the decision, the SPSO will make recommendations to the authority accordingly. This is to encourage lasting improvements to services so that the trust and confidence of the public is re-established. Excerpts 1 and 2 are taken from the SPSO website and tell us how many customers they have dealt with about Midlothian Council. Excerpt 1 shows the service area that their enquiry related to. Excerpt 2 highlights the different stages in which each case was dealt with, and the outcome at that stage.

Excerpt 1 – Number of Complaints to Areas (as determined by the SPSO) that were Handled by the SPSO in 2024/25

SPSO Received Cases by Subject for Midlothian Council 1/4/24 – 31/3/25

Subject	Midlothian Council
Building Control	0
Consumer Protection	0
Economic Development	0
Education	2
Environmental Health & Cleansing	1
Finance	2
Fire & Police Boards	0
Housing	22
Land & Property	2
Legal & Admin	1
National Park Authorities	0
Other	0
Personnel	0
Planning	2
Recreation & Leisure	1
Roads & Transport	5
Social Work	8
Subject unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	0
Valuation Joint Boards	0
Welfare Fund - Community Care Grants	0
Welfare Fund - Crisis Grants	0
Total	46

Excerpt 1 shows the number of complaints that have been received by the SPSO about Midlothian Council between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The main service areas have been given generic terminology by the SPSO since they deal with all local authorities in Scotland, and since each authority has locally named service areas/divisions.

Excerpt 2 – Outcome of Complaints determined by the SPSO about Midlothian Council in 2024/25

Excerpt 2 shows the outcomes of the complaints determined by the SPSO about Midlothian Council over the same period. Similarly to the council's statistics, the figures received (shown in excerpt 1) and the figures determined don't tally. This is because 1 of the figures received was determined to be outside of SPSO's jurisdiction so it didn't move to an outcome. Other reasons these figures might not match in other years could be due to the SPSO still working on a case after the business year has ended, or that cases were referred back to us to be revised.

The advice stage is the initial receipt stage where the SPSO will check if they have enough information, that the complainant has first of all complained to the relevant organisation, and that the matter is one that they are allowed to look at. There were 15 at this stage.

The early resolution stage, as seen in excerpt 2, is where the SPSO have confirmed that the complaint is mature (i.e. that the complaint has completed the organisation's complaint process) and is within their jurisdiction. The SPSO will then begin gathering the information needed for an investigation. Some cases are closed at this stage if they are able to be resolved with the organisation, or if they consider there would be no significant benefit, or achievable outcome from a full investigation. There were 29 complaints in total that reached this stage.

Excerpt 2 also shows the complaints that the SPSO investigated. Of the 44 complaint enquiries that the SPSO received, none reached the investigation stage.

Outcome of Complaints determined by the SPSO about Midlothian Council

STAGE	OUTCOME GROUP	MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL
Advice	A&G - Complaint submissions - mature	4
	A&G - Complaint submissions - premature	3
	A&G - Enquiries	8
	Unable to proceed	0
	Total	15
Early Resolution	Cause and impact test not met (s 5 (3))	1
	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	1
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	0
	Discretion – Good complaint handling	17
	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	6
	Discretion – Referred back	2
	Discretion – Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	0
	Member of the public test not met (s 5 (6))	0
	Premature	0
	Right of appeal to court/tribunal/Scottish ministers (s 7 (8))	0
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	0
	Time limit (s 10)	1
	Unable to proceed	1
	Total	29
Investigation	Fully upheld	0
	Not duly made or withdrawn	0
	Not upheld	0
	Some upheld	0
	Total	0
TOTAL		44

Next steps

- Maintain engagement with the Local Authority Complaint Handler's Network (LACHN) to ensure benchmarking is accurate to enable learning.
- Continue work on the development of the internal feedback system.
- Continue with ongoing training and support to services across the Council to ensure a robust and efficient arrangement
- Continue to review the process for gathering, aggregating, cleansing, consolidating and analysing the data, and implement new business intelligence approach and where possible, dashboards.
- Child Friendly Complaints (CFC) roll out: while individual support and guidance material is available to support officers dealing with CFC, there is still the need to integrate this fully into both service and system processes.



Your feedback counts

Whether you want to know more about our performance, have something to say about this report, or want to suggest an alternative way of receiving this kind of information in the future.

Please contact the Continuous Improvement Team:
0131 270 8926 or Continuous.Improvement@midlothian.gov.uk

Visit: www.midlothian.gov.uk

or follow us on social media

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Communicating clearly

We are happy to translate on request and provide information and publications in other formats, including braille, tape or large print.

如有需要我們樂意提供翻譯本，和其他版本的資訊與刊物，包括盲人點字、錄音帶或大字體。

Zapewnimy tłumaczenie na żądanie oraz dostarczymy informacje i publikacje w innych formatach, w tym Braillem, na kasecie magnetofonowej lub dużym drukiem.

ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਰੇਲ, ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ।

Körler için kabartma yazılar, kaset ve büyük nüshalar da dahil olmak üzere, istenilen bilgileri sağlamak ve tercüme etmekten memnuniyet duyarız.

اگر آپ چاہیں تو ہم خوشی سے آپ کو ترجمہ فراہم کر سکتے ہیں اور معلومات اور دستاویزات دیگر شکلوں میں مثلاً بریل (ناہینا افراد کے لیے) بھرے ہوئے حروف کی لکھائی میں، ٹیپ پر یا بڑے حروف کی لکھائی میں فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

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ContactCentre@midlothian.gov.uk