

Customer Service Complaints Report

2026-27 Quarter 1

Meeting Date	19 August 2026
Meeting name	LT Quarterly Performance & Governance Meeting
LT Responsible person	Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement
Dashboard link	260701 Customer Service Complaints Dashboard Q1 2026-27 (A56962243)
Linked reports	
Outcomes sought	1. Note the quarterly statistics: Statistics – 2026-27 Q1 2. Note the findings, learning and improvement actions taken: Findings, learning and actions 3. Note the future development and actions taken: Future development and actions
Executive summary	1. 28 cases closed during Q1 compared to 35 cases received, with the largest number of closure of cases at Stage 1. 2. 1 case at Stage 1 missed their target date. 3. 2,800 minutes were spent on Stage 2 cases, an increase on Q4 which was 1,980. Decreased minutes were spent investigating Stage 1 and 3 cases, with 855 spent on Stage 1 (compared with 1,120 in Q4) and 750 at Stage 3 (compared to 2,595 in Q4). 4. Most upheld cases were at Stage 1 (8 cases). Most not upheld cases were at Stage 2 (9). 5. “Give you the best estimate for how long things will take, and keep you updated” was the key learning for improvement this quarter.

1. This Customer Service Complaints (CSCs) performance report provides a summary of CSCs received and responded to by the SPSO in the previous quarter, including a summary of outcomes, trends, actions and key learning for SPSO, to promote continuous improvement of our service.

Statistics – 2026-27 Q1

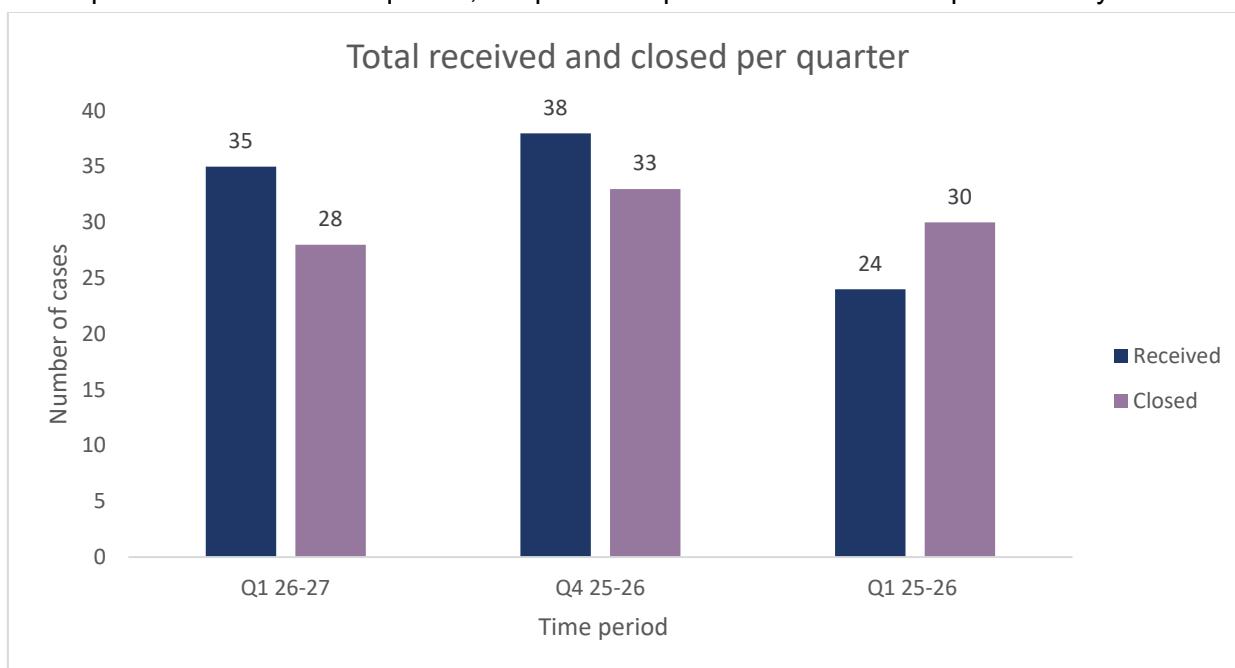
2. The table below shows the total received and closed cases in Q1 of 2026-2027. These are split by stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 cases are further separated into cases that were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2, and cases that surpassed stage 1 and escalated directly to stage 2.

Q1 headlines:

- At stage 1; we received 19 case and closed 14 cases
- At stage 2; including both stage 2 escalated and direct cases, we received 11 cases and closed 12 cases
- At stage 3; we received 5 cases and closed 2.

Customer Service Complaints	Received	Closed
Stage 1 - Frontline resolution	19	14
Stage 2 - Direct to stage 2	5	5
Stage 2 - Escalated from S1 to S2	6	7
Stage 3 - Independent Review	5	2
SPSO Total	35	28

3. A comparison of the current quarter, the previous quarter and the same quarter last year:



- Q1 2026/2027: closed 80% of cases received
- Q4 2025/2026: closed 87% of cases received
- Q1 2025/2026: closed 125% of cases received

Timescales

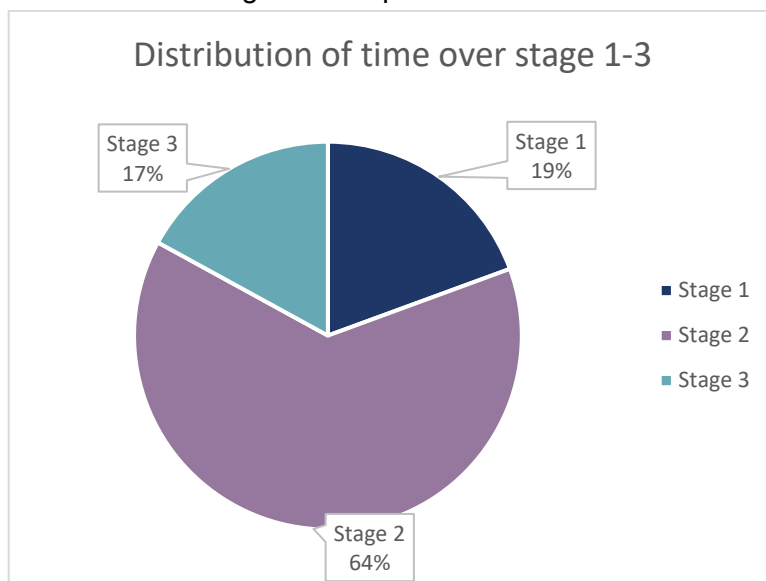
4. The timescales by which we measure our performance against the requirements of the complaints procedure are:
- 5 working days at stage 1
 - 20 working days at stage 2
 - 40 working days for independent review
5. The table below summarises the average timescales in working days to close service complaints at each stage, how many were closed on time and how many missed the target during Q1. Some targets were missed due to case complexity.

Average timescales	Average	On Time	Missed	Oldest Case
Stage 1	2	14	0	4
Stage 2	15	11	1	25
Stage 3 - Independent Review	15	2	0	15

6. The table below shows the time that all SPSO staff spent on the customer service complaints closed during Q1 for stages 1 and 2. The stage 3 time relates only to time spent by the Independent Customer Service Complaints Reviewer (ICSCR) on complaints at stage 3 to the end of June 2026.

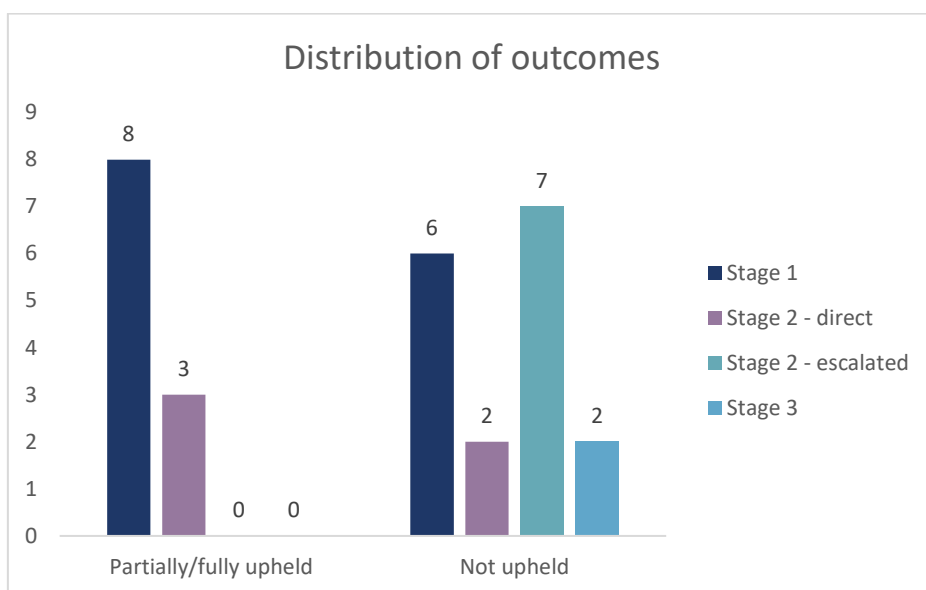
Stage	Total Time	Average Time	Range of Time
Stage 1	855	61	30-120
Stage 2	2,800	233	100-630
Stage 3 - Independent Review	750	375	270-480
Total	4,405		

- The total time spent on stage 1 cases decreased due to the decrease in case numbers although remains higher than Q1 2025-2026 which was 220 hours.
- The total time spent on stage 2 cases is higher than Q4 2025-2026 despite the same number of cases being closed.
- The total time spent on stage 3 is the lowest since Q2 2024-2025 and is likely due to the closed cases being less complex.



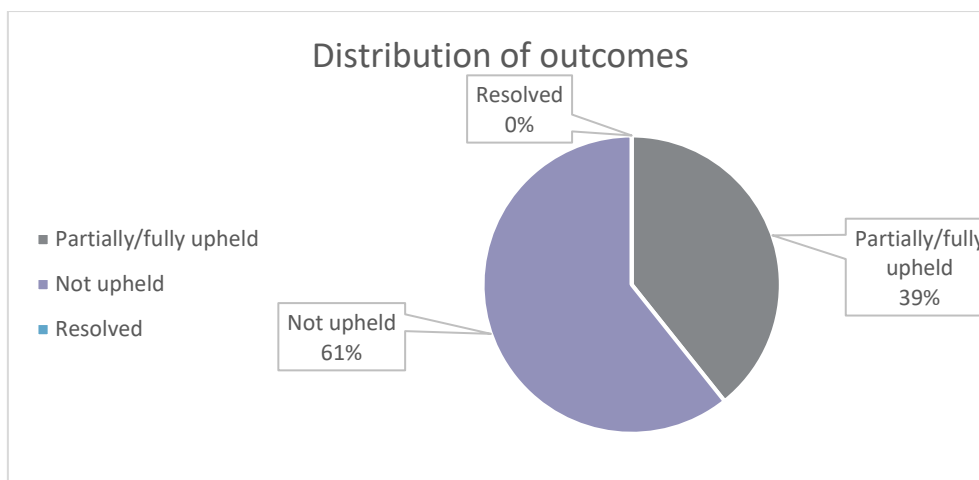
Outcomes and subject analysis

7. The number of service complaints remains very low in relation to the overall volumes of customer transactions delivered by SPSO each year. Nevertheless, upheld service complaints (and in some cases, not upheld service complaints) demonstrate that we take these complaints seriously and acknowledge when something goes wrong. The outcomes of these complaints help us to learn when things go wrong, so that we may improve our service provision in the future.
8. The table below covers complaints where a decision has been reached, or a resolution agreed. This does not include cases which were withdrawn. Note: resolved complaints are not included in the upheld calculation rate.



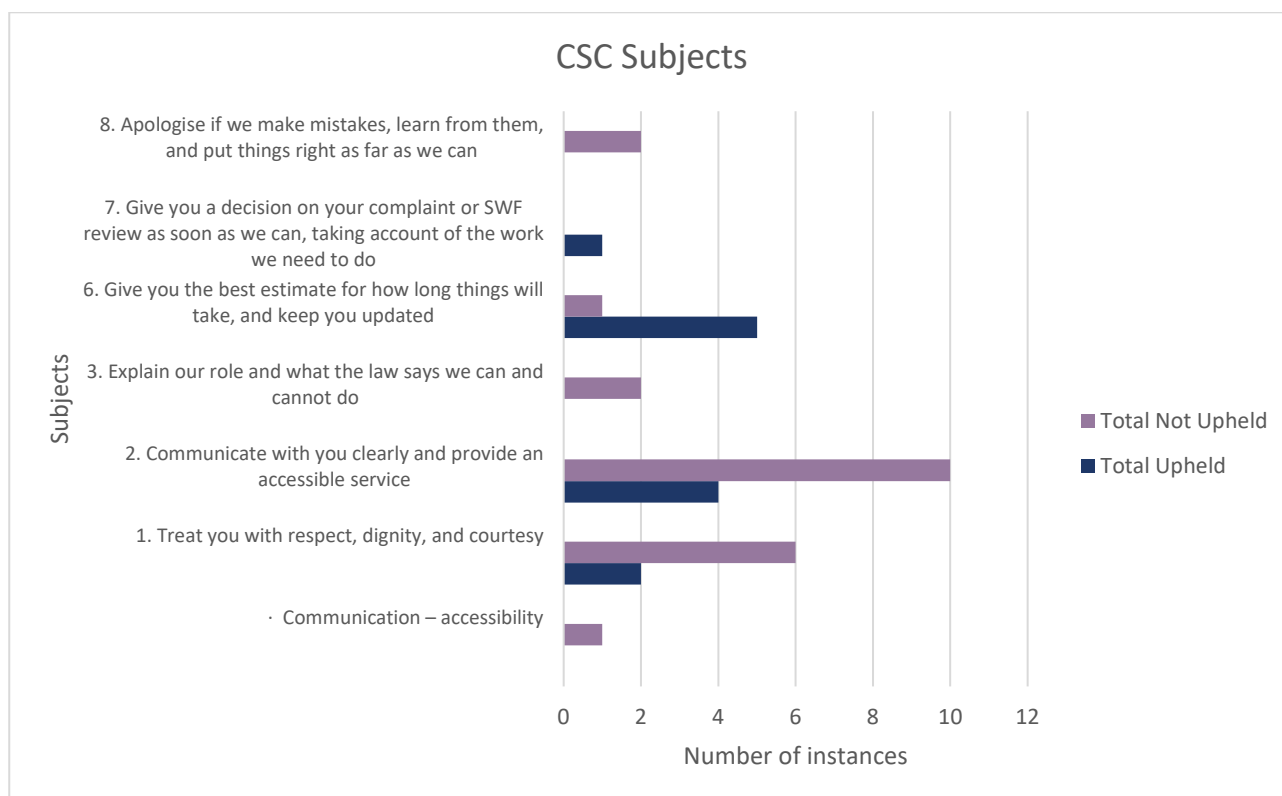
- The majority of partially or fully upheld complaints were at stage 1 (8 cases) and the majority of these cases were for the subject “6. Communicate with you clearly and provide an accessible service”
- 3 cases were upheld at Stage 2, 2 of which were for the subject “Give you the best estimate for how long things will take, and keep you updated.”

9. Highlights Q1 26-27:



- 61% of the outcomes across all stages were not upheld, which is slightly lower than Q4.
- 39% of the outcomes across all three stages were partially or fully upheld compared to 37% in Q4.

10. The table below illustrates the subjects which appear most frequently in Customer Service Complaints and their outcome.



11. There is some merit in considering the areas which appear most frequently in the subjects of complaints:

a. Give you the best estimate for how long things will take, and keep you updated

5 out of 6 instances within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

b. Communicate with you clearly and provide an accessible service

4 out of 14 instances within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

c. Treat you with respect, dignity, and courtesy

2 out of 8 instances within this service standard were upheld/some upheld.

12. The subjects upheld most often were “give you the best estimate for how long things will take, and keep you updated (5 instances) and “communicate with you clearly and provide an accessible service, (4 instances).

Distribution upheld subjects

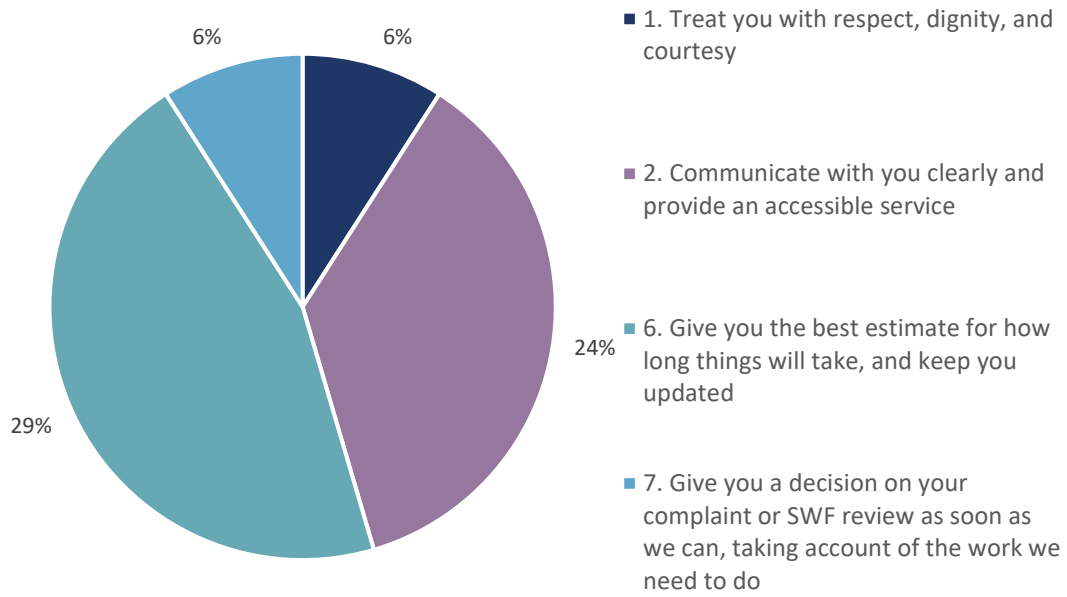


TABLE OF SUBJECTS, arranged by total frequency, and then by most upheld complaints	Stage 1 Upheld	Stage 1 Not Upheld	Stage 2 Upheld	Stage 2 Not Upheld	Stage 3 Upheld	Stage 3 Not Upheld	Total Upheld	Total Not Upheld	Total*
2. Communicate with you clearly and provide an accessible service	4	2	0	3	0	5	4	10	14
1. Treat you with respect, dignity, and courtesy	2	3	0	3	0	0	2	6	8
6. Give you the best estimate for how long things will take, and keep you updated	3	1	2	0	0	0	5	1	6
3. Explain our role and what the law says we can and cannot do	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2
8. Apologise if we make mistakes, learn from them, and put things right as far as we can	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
· Communication – accessibility	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
7. Give you a decision on your complaint or SWF review as soon as we can, taking account of the work we need to do	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

*Most cases have multiple subjects recorded; **this will therefore not add up to the total of CSC cases for this reporting period**

Findings, learning and actions

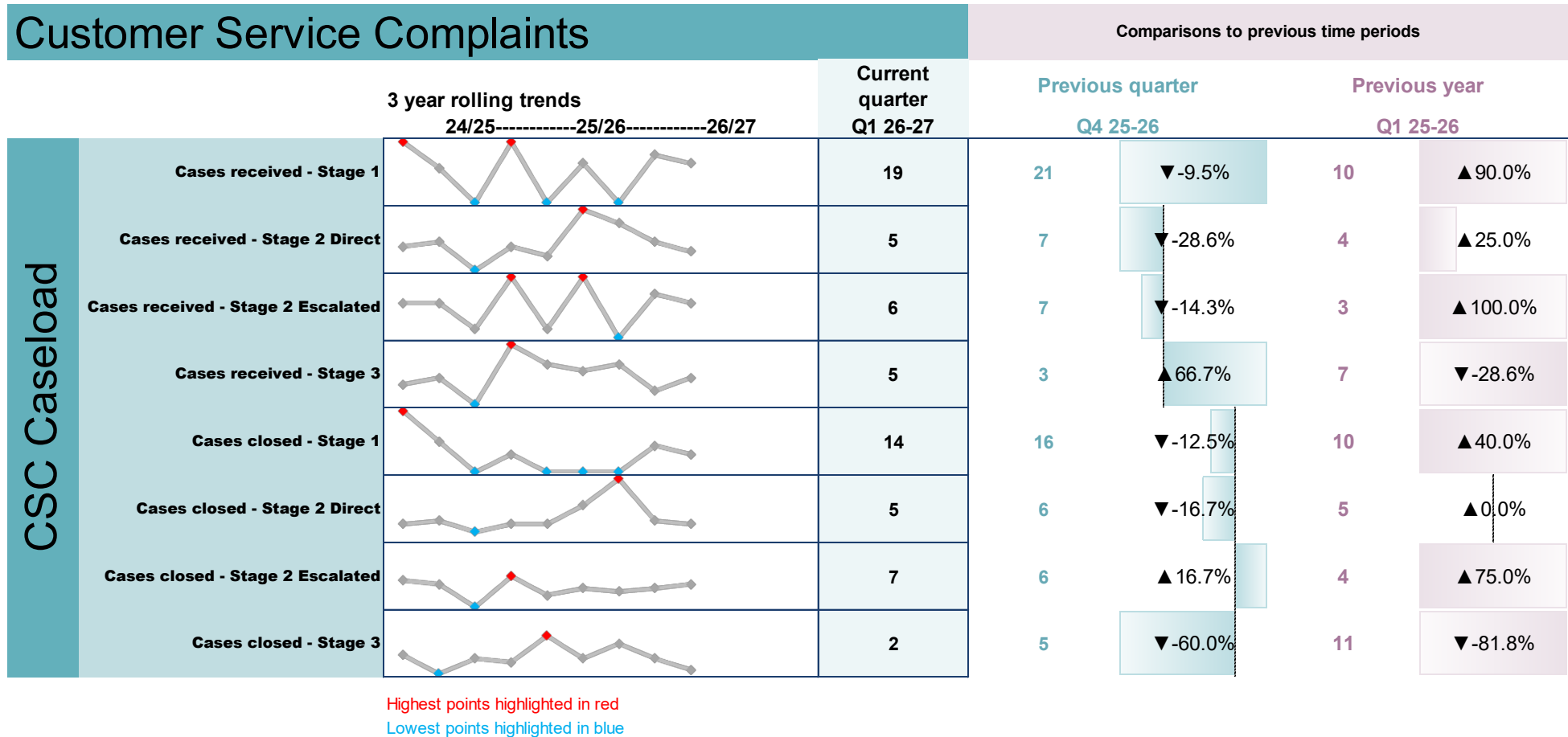
Case Ref:	Workflow Stage	Subject	Substance of complaint	Decision	Learning and improvement
CSC-202601125	Stage 1	(2) Communicate with you clearly and give an accessible service	LA not happy that quoted applicant verbatim in letter, said staff were aggressive and this was upsetting	Fully Upheld - Apology given and process change	Apology given, team reminded to be mindful of language and audience when communicating about third parties, including LAs and others
CSC-202602319	Stage 1	(1) Treat you with respect and dignity (7) Give you a decision on your complaint or SWF review as soon as we can - taking account of the work we need to do	Insulted and upset by how decision was communicated, in reference to mental health challenges and time bar special circumstances.	Some upheld – Apology given and other action	Ensure time bar is considered in full along with other jurisdictional checks
CSC - 202601795	Stage 1	(2) Communicate with you clearly and provide an accessible service	Complained that they were not informed their case was closed, as it was premature for our process. Signposted back to local process, and assisted to get a Stage 2 response, but looking to make a complaint regarding stage 2 outcome, and disappointed to be asked to make a new complaint as they had already done this in October 2025	Fully Upheld – Apology given and other action	Apology given and changes to be made to the letter templates to be explicit that the case is closed

Future development and actions

13. Refreshed Customer Service Standards were launched in October 2025, full details are available here: [Our customer service standards | SPSO](#)
14. A template letter was introduced during Q1 2026-27 and is now used to respond to CSCs where no customer service standard failure has been identified. Early indications suggest this has had a positive impact by reducing the number of complaints progressing through the

process that are not related to customer service. Historically, these cases were more likely to escalate to Stage 3.

Appendix 1: CSC Caseload Dashboard



Appendix 2: Standards and guidance

15. We publish this report to help ensure transparency in our complaints handling and to demonstrate to our customers that complaints can, and do influence our service. We also publish, on an annual basis, more detailed information on our performance in handling complaints. Published reports can be read here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)
16. Customer Service Complaints are made when a complainant feels we have not met our customer service standards. The standards that are covered by this process can be read here: [Our customer service standards | SPSO](#)
17. CSCs are recorded and tracked on SPSO's case management system and we publish the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response. We monitor and analyse CSCs for trend information to ensure that we identify areas where our service could be improved and take appropriate action.
18. CSCs may be closed at different stages of the procedure:
 - **Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution** refers to complaints closed at stage 1 of the procedure, with no escalation to the next stage
 - **Stage 2 - Investigation** refers to complaints handled and closed directly at stage 2 of the procedure (Frontline Resolution was not attempted)
 - **Stage 2 - Escalated Complaints** refers to complaints handled at Stage 1 and subsequently escalated to, and closed at stage 2.
 - **Stage 3 - Independent Review** is when the SPSO procedure has been completed and our final decision has been issued, but the service user remains unhappy with our response or the way we have handled the complaint. At that point, the service user can ask our Independent Customer Service Complaints Reviewer (ICSCR) to consider it. The ICSCR provides an annual report on these complaints and it is published on our website here: [Service standards performance | SPSO](#)