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<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>With Effect from</b>	<b>Annual Net Impact</b>	<b>Virement From (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Other Comments</b>
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

**5.3 Legal/Risk**

There are no legal or risk implications arising from this report.

**5.4 Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

**5.5 Strategic**

This report will help deliver the outcomes in the Council Plan Theme 3 – Performance - high quality and innovative services are provided giving value for money.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on this report.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

**Inverclyde Council**  
**Annual Complaints Report**  
**1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024**

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. THE COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE BY INDICATORS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO) – RIGHT OF REVIEW.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>7. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>8. POSITIVE COMMENTS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9. TRAINING.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>10. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>20</b>



























### Indicator 6 - Extensions to Complaint Timescales

**3.18** The complaint handling procedure allows officers to seek an extension to the timescales permitted for stage one and stage two complaint investigations. The maximum period permitted to extend the timescale of a complaint is 5 days for both complaint stages. This indicator reports the number and percentage of complaints at each stage of the procedure, which were closed after an extension to the 5 days, or 20-day timescale was authorised.

<b>Complaint stage</b>	<b>No of extensions agreed</b>	<b>% as a total of all complaints</b>
<b>Stage 1 complaints</b>	10 extensions were agreed	5.3% of total complaints
<b>Stage 2 complaints</b>	4 extensions were agreed	5.4% of total complaints
<b>Escalated stage 2 complaints</b>	0 extensions were agreed	0% of total complaints



**6.2** The SPSO reviewed 12 complaints for Inverclyde Council of which 4 complaints were reviewed at the advice stage and these complaints was not taken forward. Eight complaints were reviewed at the early resolution stage of the procedure. The outcome of these reviews were as follows:

- 5 complaints were recognised as examples of good complaint handling;
- 1 complaints were reviewed and insufficient benefit would be gained from further investigation of the complaint;
- 2 complaints were where there existed a right of appeal to court/tribunal/ or Scottish Ministers.

**6.3** The SPSO reviewed 8 HSCP complaints of which 1 was conducted at early resolution stage and not taken forward. Seven complaints were reviewed at early resolution stage of their procedre. The outcome of these reviews were as follows:

- 5 complaints were recognised as examples of good complaint handling,
- 1 complaint was unable to be proceed.
- 1 complaint was under discretion and an alternative action was proposed.

**6.4** . The table below outlines the SPSO's published statistics for Inverclyde Council. This reflects a redudcation of 2 complaints being reviewed by the SPSO when comparing the data to the same period last year.





## **10 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1** The Council is committed to investigating, learning from and taking action as a result of individual complaints where it is found that standards have fallen below the level expected and where services could be improved. By listening to the views of service users who make a complaint, the Council can improve its services.
- 10.2** In the coming year, the key action for services to focus on is to reduce the time taken to respond to complaints at each stage of the complaint handling process. This is particularly relevant when the Council is seeing an increase in the complexity of complaints received by it. Balancing the need to deal with complex complaints timeously alongside all other priorities and challenges facing the Council will be essential whilst also managing the resources required to support this.
- 10.3** The Council will also be preparing for the implementation of the Child Friendly Complaint procedure, which will be included within the Model Complaint Handling Procedure. The principles of the Child Friendly Complaint Procedure will underpin how to handle and investigate complaints involving children in a way that respects their rights under the The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. A pilot involving local authorities who agreed to test the process and guidance materials is underway. Feedback arising from the pilot will be factored into the materials in preparation for the wider roll out which will be implemented in 2024. Training will be undertaken in preparation for this change. The Council will also be preparing for the new complaint handling system which will be introduced in late 2024.