

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

2023/24 YEAR

Foreword

HSC Business Services
Organisation
Karen Hunter
Director of SP&CE



As the Director responsible for the feedback received into the Business Services Organisation, I am pleased to present the BSO Annual Complaints Report for 2023/24.

In the BSO, the pursuit of excellence is something we aim for and while we deliver high quality services, we recognise there can also be room for improvement. It is through the valuable feedback that we receive from our service users, especially when critical, that we are afforded the opportunity to not only put things right, but to learn and grow as an organisation.

This report serves as a testament to our commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

As we explore the concerns that are of paramount importance to our service users, we approach them as catalysts for positive change. Together, we will navigate these challenges with empathy, integrity and a shared dedication to fostering a culture of excellence, providing better outcomes for those that use and rely on our services.

Facts & Figures

In the year 2023/24:

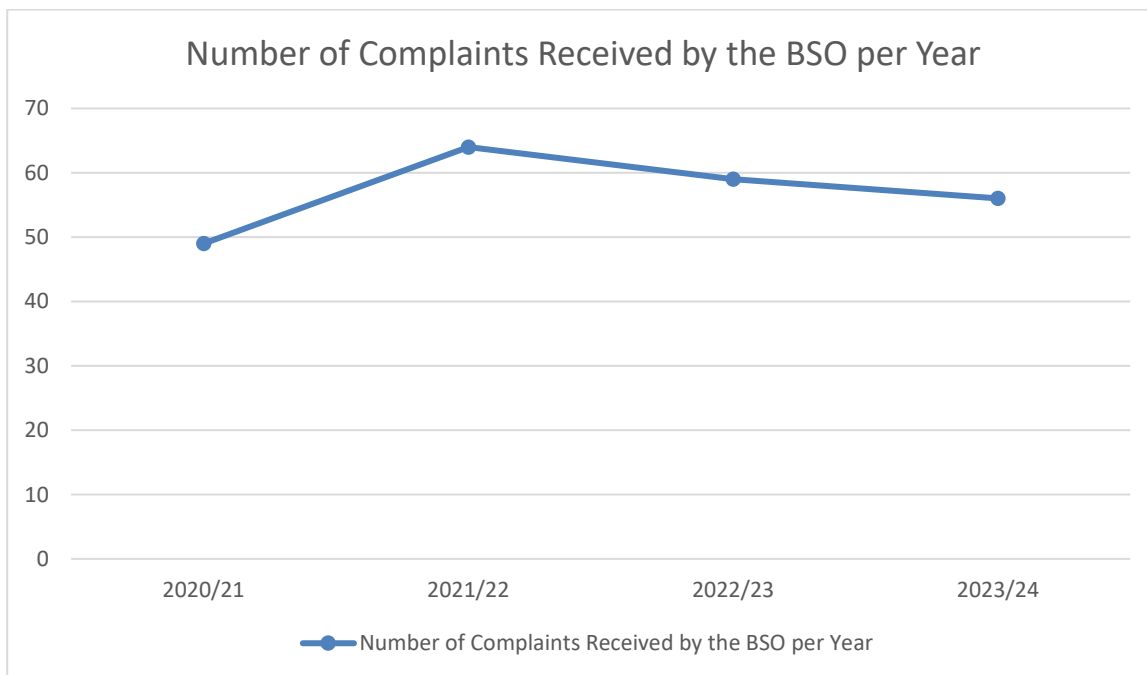
- 56 notifications of complaints were received
- 45 progressed under formal procedure of which 43 have been fully processed
- 11 addressed directly by service area
- 2 still remain under investigation
- 100% of complaints received by the complaint's office were acknowledged within 2 working days
- 66% of formal complaints processed were responded to within 20 working days
- The top 3 issues of complaint were pay related issues, Interpreter conduct & issues with the registration/de-registration at GP Surgeries.

Complaints

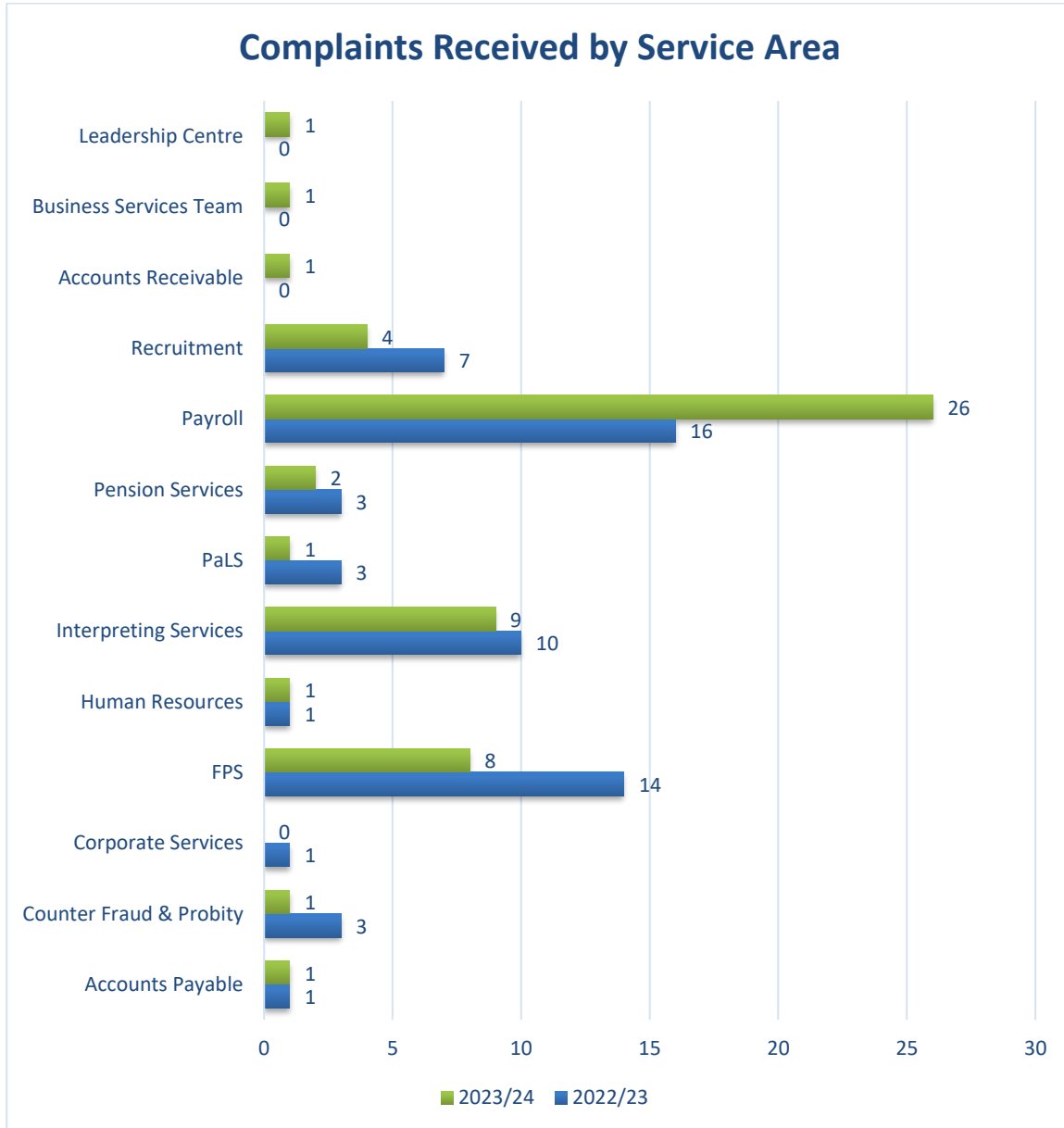
The number of formal complaints continues to be low considering the wide range of services that the BSO provides and the number of interactions BSO staff have with service users on a daily basis. The BSO:

- Provides a broad range of regional business support functions and specialist professional services to Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland
- Serves the entire population of Northern Ireland
- Has 2000 staff members
- Interacts daily with thousands of service users

There has been a slight decrease in the number of complaints received in 2023/24 (56) compared to 2021/22 and 2022/23 when 64 and 59 complaints respectively had been received. This can be seen from the graph below:



The chart below shows the breakdown by service area of formal complaints for 2023/24 in comparison to the previous year.



What people complained about

The table below shows the number of complaints by subject for the past year (2023/24) in comparison to the previous year.

The top 3 subjects of complaint in 2023/24 are Pay related issues, Interpreter Conduct & GP Registration/De-registration issues.

In 2022/23, Pay related issues was the top subject of complaint followed by issues with the conduct of interpreters. Pay related matters has seen a slight increase this year while concerns raised around the conduct of interpreters has seen a decrease.

| Subject | 2022/23 | | 2023/24 | |
|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Count | Percentage | Count | Percentage |
| Dental Refund Payment | 0 | - | 1 | 1.81% |
| Interpreter Conduct | 10 | 17% | 9 | 16.36% |
| Conditional Job Offer | 0 | - | 2 | 3.63% |
| GP Registration/De-Registration issues | 7 | 11.8% | 3 | 5.45% |
| Pay related issues | 12 | 20.4% | 26 | 45.45% |
| Recruitment Process | 6 | 10.2% | 2 | 3.63% |
| Delay in issue of medical card | 0 | - | 1 | 1.81% |
| Accessing Health Care | 2 | 3.4% | 0 | - |
| Staff Issues / conduct | 6 | 10.2% | 1 | 1.81% |
| GDPR/Data Breach | 2 | 3.4% | 0 | - |
| Tone of Correspondence | 2 | 3.4% | 1 | 1.81% |
| Incorrect details on correspondence | 1 | 1.7% | 1 | 1.81% |
| Lack of response | 1 | 1.7% | 0 | - |
| Out of date website guidance | 1 | 1.7% | 0 | - |
| Pension Application | 1 | 1.7% | 2 | 3.63% |
| Transfer of medical records | 3 | 5.1% | 2 | 3.63% |
| Decision to no longer correspond | 1 | 1.7% | 0 | - |
| Interview process | 1 | 1.7% | 2 | 3.63% |
| Handling of an overpayment recovery | 0 | - | 1 | 1.81% |
| Recall to Cervical Screening Programme | 1 | 1.7% | 0 | - |
| Recurrence of issues from previous complaint | 2 | 3.4% | 0 | - |
| Lack of discretion when delivering medical products | 0 | - | 1 | 1.81% |
| Handling of a counter fraud investigation | 0 | - | 1 | 1.81% |
| Total | 59 | 100% | 56 | 100% |

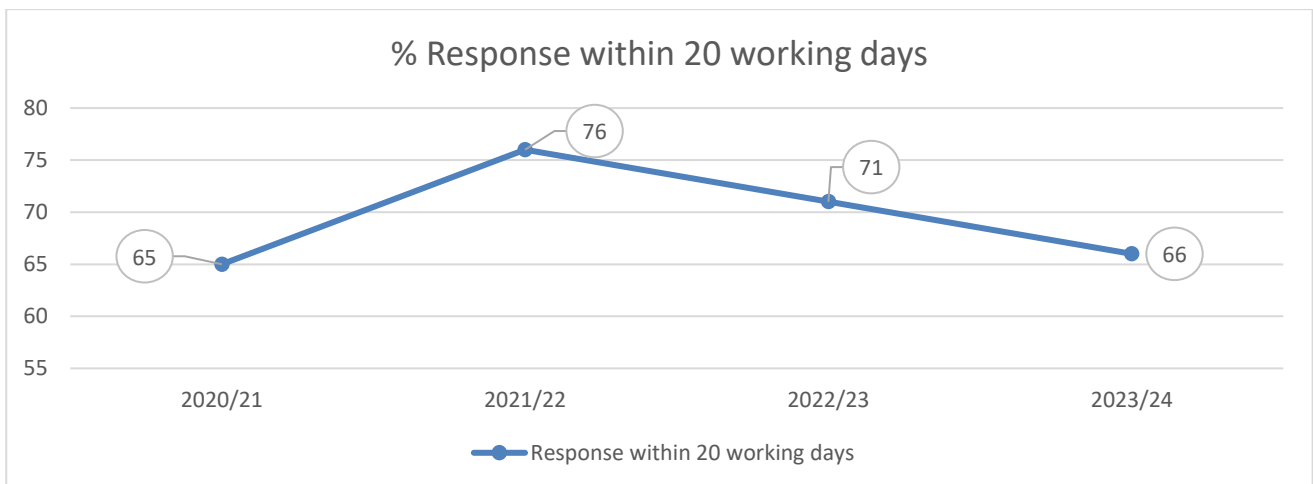
Response Times to Complaints

100% of formal complaints received were acknowledged within the target of 2 working days, this has increased from 98% in 2022/23.

Of the formal complaints that were fully processed (39) 66% were responded to within the target of 20 working days. This is a decrease of 5% from the previous year (71%). This is shown in the graph below.

The BSO Complaints Team continue to monitor timescales to ensure complainants are provided with timely updates and is actively working with service areas across the organisation to ensure the responses are relevant to the issues raised and provide resolution to the complainant.

In addition to this, going forward, compliance rates will be raised and discussed at the Service Area Customer Forum. Appropriate Directors will also be notified on a regular basis of compliance rates for the service areas under their remit and asked to add this to the agenda for discussion at their respective senior team meetings.



If people remain dissatisfied

On occasion, complainants remain unhappy with the outcome of the investigation into their concerns. We encourage people to let us know if they remain unhappy and we consider other options to attempt to resolve their complaint. We offer the opportunity for an internal independent review to be conducted into the handling of complaints.

In 2023/24 the BSO received 6 requests for an internal independent review to be conducted, this was a decrease from 8 in the previous year. Of the 6 independent reviews conducted, the panel upheld the original complaint response that was issued on 3 occasions and offered additional apologies in the remaining 3 cases.

Ombudsman

Following an internal independent review, should a complainant still remain dissatisfied they have the option to approach the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) and request that they consider the complaint.

In 2023/24 there were no complainants who approached NIPSO for investigation of their complaint following exhaustion of the internal BSO process. This was a decrease from 3 in 2022/23.

This improvement demonstrates the work being carried out within the BSO to ensure that the concerns of our service users are being resolved to a satisfactory level using our internal processes.

Lessons Learnt / Improvements as a result of complaints

The BSO welcome complaints so that we can learn lessons and improve our services. Complaints are discussed with the staff concerned and often the issues are brought to staff meetings for discussion as to how services can be improved. Lessons that have been learnt from the complaints received are also disseminated across the organisation at our Service Area Customer Forum. This enables other service areas to enhance the service they provide by implementing the lessons that have been learnt by others.

A number of improvements have been put in place over the year 2023/24 following the feedback we have received from service users. Improvements include:

- Additional staff training provided to improve on communication with our service users
- Additional staff training and reminders provided on the processes in which they use to improve the service provided
- Staff reminders of the expectations surrounding their conduct
- Review and update to processes and procedures to streamline workflows and enhance the user experience.