



Glasgow City Council

Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee

Report by Chief Officer, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership

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Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2025/26

Purpose of Report:

To report on complaints activity for social care complaints in Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026.

Recommendations:

Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) Note the content of the annual Social Care Complaints report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Summary of Main Findings

- 1.1 Appendix 1, accompanying this report covers complaints about social care services in the period April 2025 – March 2026 considered under the appropriate complaint procedure for Social Work Services. This consists of three stages of: Stage 1: 'Front-line resolution' (timescale 5 working days that may be extended to a maximum of 10 working days in certain circumstances); Stage 2: formal Investigation and written response (timescale 20 working days); Stage 3: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (independent review that may lead to formal investigation, decision and recommendations or to a decision not to take matters further).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present and summarise the main features of that fuller analysis across all three stages of complaint. An annual report will also be presented to Glasgow City IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 21st October 2026 which covers Health and Social Care Complaints Activity.
- 1.3 Figures are given separately for Social Work (including Homelessness) and Care Services Stage 1 complaints (primarily home care) as until 2026 these have been processed within two different recording systems. Stage 2 complaints relating to Care Services are incorporated into the Stage 2 totals, as these are all handled by the Complaints, FOI and Investigations Team (CFIT).
- 1.4 Development has now been completed on an integrated complaints recording solution, which ultimately went live on 21st January 2026, and the introduction of this new complaints system will have a significant impact in terms of improving management information around all complaints. For this reporting year, however, figures have been amalgamated from multiple sources – the previous complaints reporting system, C4; an interim backup spreadsheet used to log complaints information during a period of failure of C4 related to widespread IT issues in summer 2025; the new Contact Us system; and Care Services records.
- 1.5 Following the implementation of the new complaints system, in future reports we will be in a position to report fully on both complaint cases and complaint activities. The distinction between the two is that a complaint case may include multiple stages – for example, Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 activities – but should be classed only as a single complaint against the service. Complaints activities are the individual stages – these are handled in different ways and represent workload impact on different areas of the business, as Stage 1 complaint activities are handled by frontline services and staff, and Stage 2 and 3 complaint activities are handled by CFIT.
- 1.6 Volumes of Social Work complaint activities increased in 2025/26, rising by 16% from 769 in the previous year to 895. As it remains impossible to link Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints from the 2025/26 data available, it remains unclear how many complaint cases this represents, however from 2026/27 onwards our new recording system will allow for reporting on complaint cases

as well as complaints activities. The full report for 2024-25 remains available for comparison at:

<https://onlineservices.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNNT81Z3T1DX>, and demographic information is available at: <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/performance-and-demographics>.

- 1.1 Care Services Stage 1 complaints decreased by one from 290 to 289.
- 1.2 There has been no significant change in the distribution of Social Work complaints proportionately between the localities, although totals have gone up across every area. Within Centre, with the most notable increase in complaints activity relates to Subject Access Request delays, and complaints regarding Homelessness issues have decreased very slightly. Almost all Care Services complaints focus on Home Care, with more in South locality than the other localities, in line with the greater population and scope of services in South area.
- 1.3 Performance against timescale for Stage 2 complaint activities has improved in terms of volume, but has decreased in terms of percentage of the total number processed. In percentage terms, 58.5% of Stage 2 investigations were responded to on time during 2025/26, against 62% in the previous year, however the team completed 73 more complaints within timescale than in the previous year. While there has been a decrease in compliance, and the team remain below the target of 70% compliance, the current rate of compliance is primarily attributed to the high volume of Stage 2 complaints – in any previous year, the total number of complaints responded to in time would have well exceeded the 70% target. In addition to the impact of the ongoing challenges relating to Subject Access processing, one experienced Senior Officer left the team in early December 2025, reducing the pool of investigating officers for four of the 12 months.
- 1.4 Timescales for Stage 1 complaint activities were met for Social Work complaints in both Centre and North West areas, however there were reductions in compliance rates in both North East and South. The target was, therefore, not met for complaints across both stages, with only 59% of all responses being within deadline, broadly consistent with the previous reporting year but in the context of having received 16% more complaints.
- 1.5 Section 3.3 of Appendix 1 summarises the particular Social Work Services (SWS) client groups submitting complaints, with all areas seeing an increase. As in previous reports, the majority of complaints relate to Children and Families involvement – this is typical, and directly related to the general dissatisfaction that many complainants feel towards social work involvement in their family lives. Complaints from those in the Homelessness Client Group remain high, and have increased overall despite the reduction in Centre Homelessness Stage 1 activities. Older People complaints also continue to rise, and volumes are now comparable to Homelessness complaints.

- 1.6 Many of the significant number of complainants in the 'Not Known' client group are known to relate to complaints regarding delays to Subject Access Request processing – these complainants may not be current service users, or even where they are, any current SWS involvement is not ordinarily relevant to the matter complained about, and therefore these complainants will not generally be logged as belonging to one of the recognised client groups. Some complaints relating to Social Care Connect and Finance also fall within this grouping, as the complainants themselves may not be current service users.
- 1.7 Section 3.4 of Appendix 1 summarises the main issues raised by service users across social work complaints and across care services complaints.
- 1.8 For Care Services the top three issues were quality of service, competency of staff and staff attitude, which differs from previous years where late arrivals were the second highest area of concern. Complaints about failure to arrive have dropped noticeably again to only 4, having previously dropped from 112 in 2023/24 to 51 in 2024/25.
- 1.9 Care Services carried out over 4.2 million visits during 2024/25, so less than 0.01% of care visits generated any sort of complaint.
- 1.10 25% of Social Work complaints have been upheld or partially upheld in 2025/26, 5% lower than figures from the preceding year. Care Services complaints upheld or partially upheld have decreased slightly, from 65% to 62%.
- 1.11 31 cases were considered by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) at stage 3 of the complaints process. Outcomes are presented at section 3.6 of this report, alongside indicators for the classification of each complaint. None of the cases considered by the SPSO were upheld, although two await the final decision of the SPSO.
- 1.12 That each case that reached Stage 3 during 2025/26 and has been concluded was either not upheld, or not taken further by the SPSO following initial assessment, which equates to agreement with the stage 2 response issued to the complainant generally gives reassurance that the internal complaints process is functioning correctly, both in relation to the small percentage of complaints that reach the SPSO, and the small proportion of those that lead to any action by the SPSO.
- 1.19 For social work complaints that were upheld at any stage, there is good evidence that actions were then taken to offer redress to complainers and/or to improve services or processes, and available information relating to the areas of improvement is presented at section 3.8 of Appendix 1.
- 1.20 In addition to the detailed report on complaints performance, some additional context and information in relation to the development activity of the Complaints, FOI and Investigations team is summarised at Section 3.9 of Appendix 1.

2 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	There are no new financial implications arising from this report.
<i>Legal:</i>	This report raises no new legal issues.
<i>Personnel:</i>	There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.
<i>Procurement:</i>	There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

Council Strategic Plan:	As a long-standing reporting requirement, this report does not relate to a specific commitment under the Council's Strategic Plan, however in general terms the function of complaints handling relates directly to 'Grand Challenge 4: Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities. In particular, the investigation of and learning from complaints relate directly to the following Missions: – Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities – Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative council structure that delivers value for money
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Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.</i>	There are no proposals in this report having any relevant potential equality impacts.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	No significant impact
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-</i>	No significant impact

*economic
disadvantage.*

Climate Impacts:

*Does the proposal
support any Climate
Plan actions? Please
specify:*

There are no proposals in this report having
any relevant potential climate impacts.

*What are the potential
climate impacts as a
result of this
proposal?*

No significant impact

*Will the proposal
contribute to
Glasgow's net zero
carbon target?*

No significant impact

Privacy and Data

Protection Impacts:

There are no proposals in this report that have
any relevant privacy and data protection
impacts.

Are there any potential
data protection impacts
as a result of this report
Y/N

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the content of the annual Social Care Complaints report.