

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE – 30/03/2023

The Members of the Public Audit Committee sought assurance that we have returned to the same rate of acceptance of a complaint to move to Stage 2, as compared with the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years.

Our office has examined the number of Councillors and Members complaints/cases that are accepted past Stage 1 and into Stage 2, then compared that number with previous years (starting with the 2017/18 financial year). To calculate this, we took the total number of completed complaints or cases in a given financial year and separated those closed at Stage 1 to those closed at Stage 2 to arrive at a total number of complaints/cases which reach and are closed at Stage 2. This provides the most accurate picture of complaint acceptance levels for the purposes of comparison.

From 2017/18 – 2018/19 financial years, around 29-34% of complaints or cases (depending on whether you are considering figures for complaints or cases) were accepted for and closed at Stage 2. This rate had decreased significantly over the tenure of my immediate predecessor, which showed that 15-17% of complaints or cases were accepted for investigation and closed at Stage 2 between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

However, this rate has now recovered since my appointment and the introduction of the Directions from the Standards Commission for Scotland. From 2021/22 to 2022/23 (up to January 2023), 30-36% of Councillors and Members complaints/cases were accepted for investigation and closed at Stage 2.

A table with the relevant figures for both complaints and cases is included as an appendix.

I would be happy to provide more detail to the Committee on this or any other matter relating to the work of our office.



Ethical Standards Commission for Scotland

Appendix – rates of acceptance for investigation

Per case

2022/23					2021/22			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	101	66	35	35%	88	62	26	30%
2020/21					2019/20			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	157	133	24	15%	143	118	25	17%
2018/19					2017/18			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	113	80	33	29%	90	59	31	34%

Per Complaint

2022/23					2021/22			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	170	116	54	32%	208	133	75	36%
2020/21					2019/20			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	277	228	49	18%	256	216	40	16%
2018/19					2017/18			
	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%	Completed	Closed at st 1	Closed at st 2	%
Cllr/M	162	114	48	30%	176	121	55	31%

