



# CAA Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023

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## Executive Summary


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1. This report provides information on the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA's) performance on complaints against a set of Key Performance Indicators for the period of April 2022 – March 2023.
  - 1.1. It includes a summary of complaint volumes and themes, escalations, remedies taken to resolve, lessons learned and next steps, as well as findings from the Independent Complaint Assessors (ICA) and the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) reviews.
  - 1.2. The total number of complaints received has decreased from 270 in 2021/22 to 199 in 2022/23, which equates to a 26% reduction, with the average number being 168. Whilst a reduction was not anticipated due to coming out of the pandemic and the aviation industry opening up again, and certainly does not match other government agencies, contributing factors include the completion of licence applications associated with the UK's exit from the EU at the end of 2022. However, we should be mindful that internal challenges or new initiatives can sometimes generate complaints.
  - 1.3. The majority of stage 1 complaints related to poor service (43%) and lack of CAA action (30%). In terms of business areas, the majority of our complaints related to our Shared Service Centre (SSC), a total of 107 (53%). However, this can be attributed to the type of work they do, i.e., processing licence applications (12,129) and aircraft registrations (19,072), amongst others.
  - 1.4. Of the 199 complaints a total of 28 were escalated to stage 2 (see [Appendix D for the process detail](#)), which is a slight increase compared to the 26 escalated in 2021/22. In most cases complainants felt there was a lack of investigation, accountability, and detail in the stage 1 response. Escalations beyond the CAA equate to a 71% increase, a total of 12 referred to the ICA in 2022/23, compared to 7 in 2021/22, with one case accepted by the PHSO, a 50% reduction on 2021/22.
  - 1.5. Overall, our performance on responding to complaints has been within tolerance at stage 1, a total of 92% responded to within timescale. This is a slight decrease from the 97% achieved in 2021/22, which can be attributed to extension requirements for more complex complaints.
  - 1.6. With the introduction in August 2022 of a process to identify, track and monitor learning from complaints, this has provided us with an opportunity to use learning and recommendations put forward by the ICA and PHSO to transform complaints into intelligence to determine service improvements. A total of 109 lessons have been identified from complaints and 27 improvements have been made to services, including process changes within licencing, improved communication internally and externally, to ensure better collaboration, and updates to our website. In addition, the ICA & PHSO made 29 recommendations with 15 resulting in service improvements relating to improvements to policies and communication.


## Key Headlines 2022-23


2. Highlights of complaint performance against key performance indicators and comparing 2022/23 performance to 2021/22 performance.


 **199 complaints received**  
Fewer complaints received - 270 in 2021/22, a 26% reduction


 **100% acknowledgement rate**  
Higher acknowledgement rate - 97% in 2021/22 (stage 1)


 **92% response rate**  
Lower response rate - 97% response rate in 2021/22, a 6% reduction (stage 1)


 **131 or 64% upheld**  
Fewer complaints upheld - 207 or 77% upheld in 2021/22 (stage 1)


 **28 or 14% Stage 2 escalations**  
More complaints escalated - 26 or 10% escalated in 2021/22


 **100% acknowledgement rate**  
Higher acknowledgement rate - 96% in 2021/22 (stage 2)

 **96% response rate**  
Higher response rate - 81% response rate in 2021/22, a 15% increase (stage 2)

 **15 or 54% Upheld**  
Fewer complaints upheld - 18 or 75% in 2021/22 (stage 2)

 **12 ICA Reviews requested**  
More requests received - 6 in 2021/22, a 50% increase

 **1 PHSO case**  
Fewer PHSO cases - 2 in 2021/22

 **ICA costs £9,988.20**  
Total ICA costs - £4,118.78 in 2021/22 (incurred by the CAA)

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

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3. The following section details our performance against the set of CAA complaint KPIs.

### **KPI 1:** Total number of complaints received (stage 1)

Description	Number
Total number of complaints received	199

### **KPI 2:** Number of complaints escalated at each stage

- 3.1. If a complainant is unhappy with the the handling of their complaint they have the option to escalate to a stage 2 review, which is a higher-level internal review stage normally conducted and signed off at senior management level.
- 3.2. If after a stage 2 review they remain unhappy they can request a referral to the Independent Complaint Assessor (ICA) for a review. If they remain unhappy after an ICA review, the final escalation stage would be to request a Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) review via their MP.

Description	Number
The number of stage 2 requests received	28
The number of ICA requests received	12
The number of PHSO referrals received	1

### **KPI 3:** Percentage of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days at each stage

Description	Percentage
Percentage of stage 1 complaints acknowledged within 5 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	100%
Percentage of stage 2 complaints acknowledged within 5 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	100%

**KPI 4: Percentage of draft response received from the business areas within 15 working days at each stage**

Description	Percentage
Percentage of stage 1 draft responses received from the business area within 15 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	84%
Percentage of stage 2 draft responses received from the business area within 15 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	74%

**KPI 5: The average time in working days for the business areas to provide a draft response at each stage**

Description	Working Days
The average time in working days for the business area to provide a stage 1 draft response	5.75
The average time in working days for the business area to provide a stage 2 draft response	12.3

**KPI 6: Percentage of complaints responded to within 20 working days at each stage**

Description	Percentage
Percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within 20 working days	92%
Percentage of stage 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days	96%

**KPI 7: The average time in working days for a full response to a complaint at each stage**

Description	Working Days
The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 1	15
The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 2	13.7



**KPI 8:** Number and percentage of complaints where an extension has been authorised  
 3.3. There are times when an extension to the response timescale is necessary.

Description	Number	Percentage
Number & percentage of stage 1 complaints with an authorised extension	5	2.5%
Number & percentage of stage 2 complaints with an authorised extension	1	3.6%

3.4. Of the 5 stage 1 complaints where an authorised extension was applied, they were extended for the following reasons:

Reason for extensions	Number
Complexity of issue(s)	3
Workload priorities	2

Table 1: Reasons for authorised extensions

3.5. The one stage 2 complaint that had an authorised extension, was due to the complexity of the complaint.

**KPI 9:** The outcome of complaints at each stage (upheld / not upheld / partially upheld)

4. Of the 206 stage 1 complaints closed a total of 131 (64%) were upheld (in full or part). This is fewer than 2021/22, where a total of 207 (77%) were upheld.

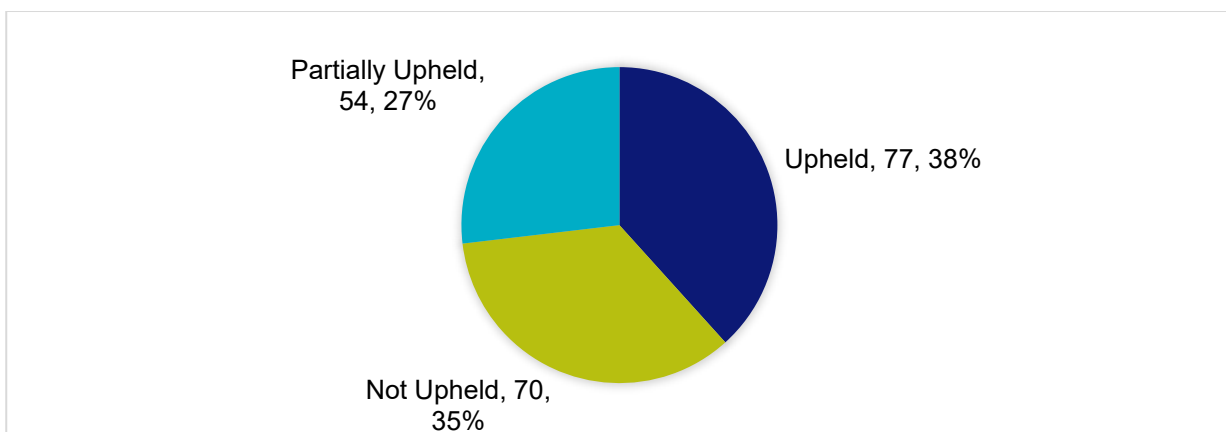


Figure 1: Stage 1 complaint outcomes (numbers & percentage)

5. Of the 28 stage 2 complaints closed, 15 (54%) were upheld (in full or part), and one complaint did not have an outcome as it was re-directed to the Regulation 6 process. Compared to 2021/22, this is a reduction in the upheld rate, which was 18 (75%).

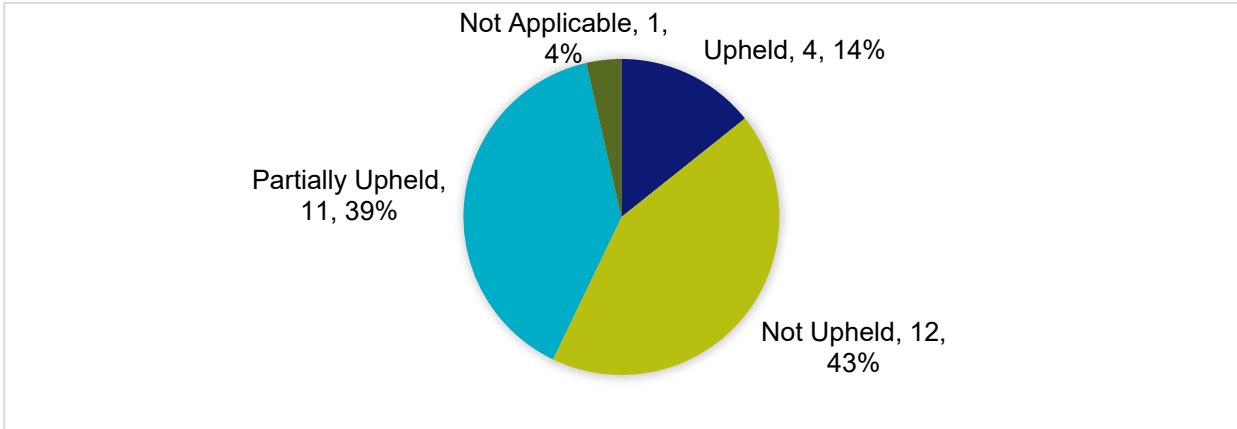


Figure 2: Stage 2 complaint outcomes (numbers & percentage)

**KPI 10: Percentage of ICA referral requests acknowledged within 15 working days**

Description	Percentage
Percentage of ICA referral requests acknowledged within 15 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	100%

**KPI 11: Percentage of ICA referral requests referred to the ICA within 15 working days**

Description	Percentage
Percentage of ICA referral requests referred to the ICA within 15 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	100%

**KPI 12: The average time in working days for a complaint to be referred to the ICA**

Description	Working Days
The average time in working days for a complaint to be referred to the ICA (target 15 working days)	1

# Complaint Performance & Themes Summary

4. The following section provides a more detailed analysis on our complaint received, performance, themes, and outcomes.

## Complaints received

- 4.1. Compared to 2021/22 (270 received), the number of complaints received between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 (199), is a 26% reduction.

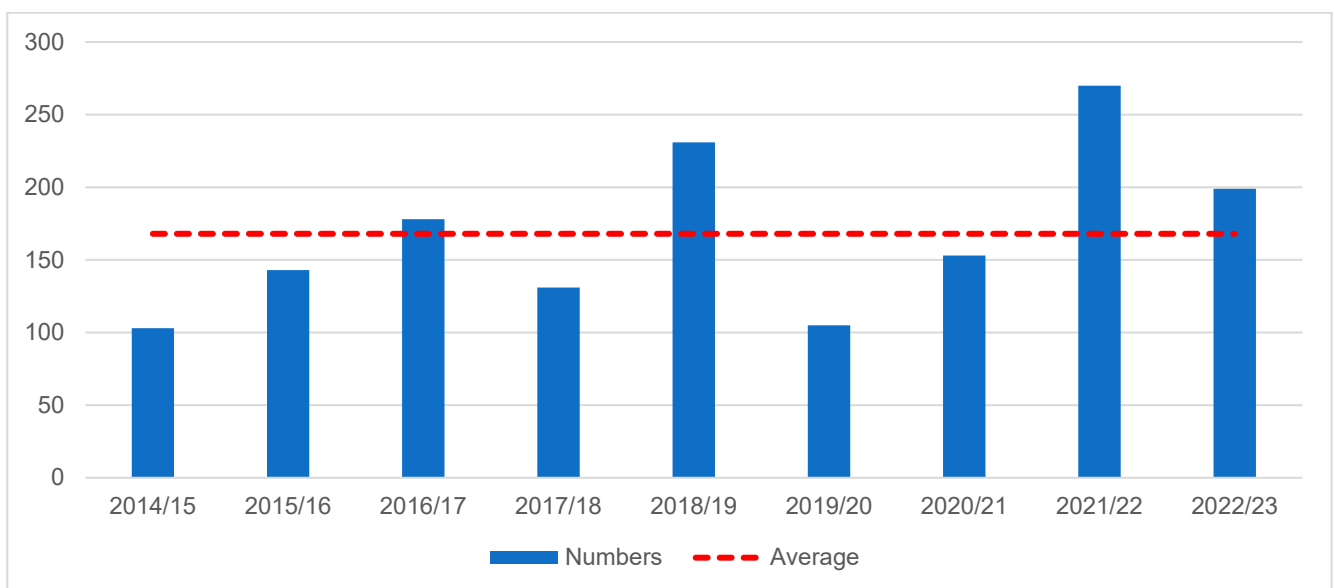


Figure 3: Number of stage 1 complaints received by financial year, the red dotted line reflects the average which is 168, although worth noting that the COVID years were probably not typical

- 4.2. Peaks were noted in May & June, with a majority being logged as poor service relating to application processing delays and failure to response to enquiries, followed closely by 'lack of CAA action' relating to issues of a lack of processing actions or a lack of response. This was the start of a return to normal life following the COVID pandemic, which could go some way to explaining these peaks. The peaks in 2021/22 were in June & September reflecting similar matters, with a majority related to application processing delays.

## Escalations

- 4.3. Compared to 2021/22 (26 escalated), the number of complaints escalated to stage 2 between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 (28), equates to an 8% increase.
- 4.4. Our overall escalation rate based on the number of stage 1 complaints that have escalated to stage 2 in 2022/23 was 14%, which compared with 2021/22, is a 4% increase.

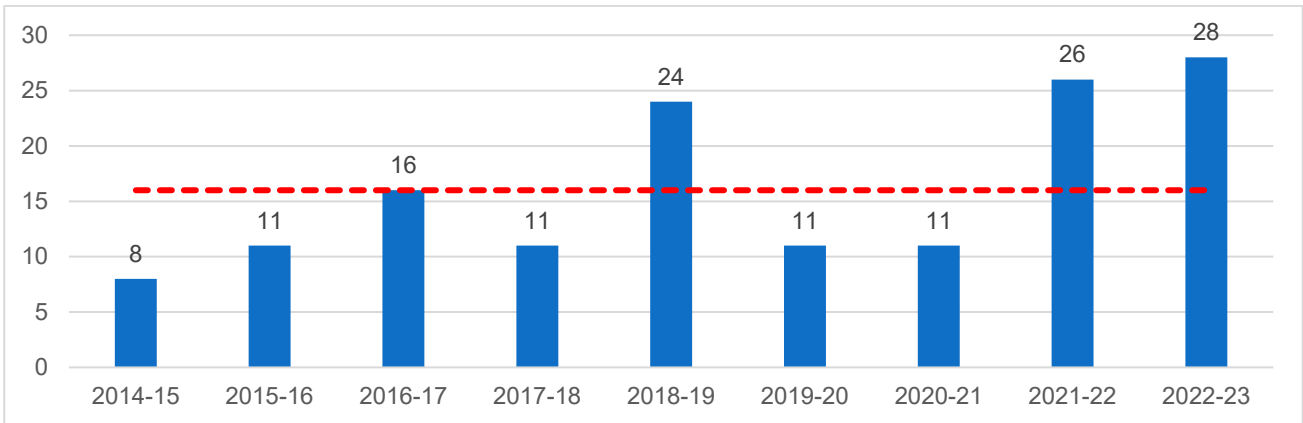


Figure 4: Number of stage 2 escalation requests by financial year, with the red dotted line reflecting the average which is 16

- 4.5. Peaks were noted in July, August, October & November 2022, with a majority related to poor service and incorrect advice, similarly to stage 1’s relating to application processing delays, with the July & August peaks matching with the stage 1 peaks as complainants have 28 days to escalate. The 2021/22 peaks were in May & July 2021 and whilst mainly related to poor service, there is no similarities between the complaints, all very different matters.
- 4.6. Comparing the number of stage 1 complaints received with ICA referrals, it equates to 6% being escalated to the ICA, and compared to the number of stage 2 complaints, this equates to 43% being escalated to the ICA.

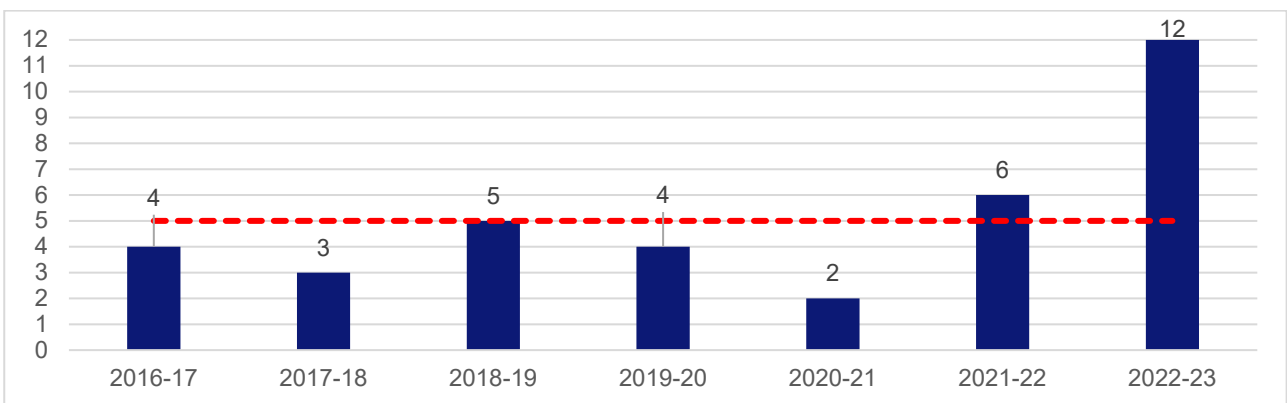


Figure 5: Number of ICA referral requests by financial years, with the red dotted line reflecting the average which is 5 **Please note:** we did not join the ICA scheme until 2016

- 4.7. In 2022-2023, a total of 12 ICA referral requests were received, equating to a 50% increase this year compared to 2021-2022. Whilst there was no theme to the categories, other than 50% relating to poor service, a majority cited that a lack of detail in the responses from the CAA was the reason for referral to the ICA. We are looking at ways we can improve our complaint reviews and responses.
- 4.8. One case was accepted by the PHSO between April 2022 – March 2023, a reduction on 2021/22, where two cases were accepted. The PHSO continue to record any preliminary reviews of complaint files as investigations in their annual figures, as opposed to only those cases that went on to be formally investigated.

## Complaint Themes and Trends

5. Each complaint is assessed and logged under a category based on which one is it more weighted to and the appropriate CAA business area, allowing us to identify and analyse the types of complaints being received and any trends.

### Stage 1 complaints

5.1. Between April 2022 – March 2023, the top 3 complaint type categories were Poor service, Lack of CAA action, and Over Regulation / Gold plating.

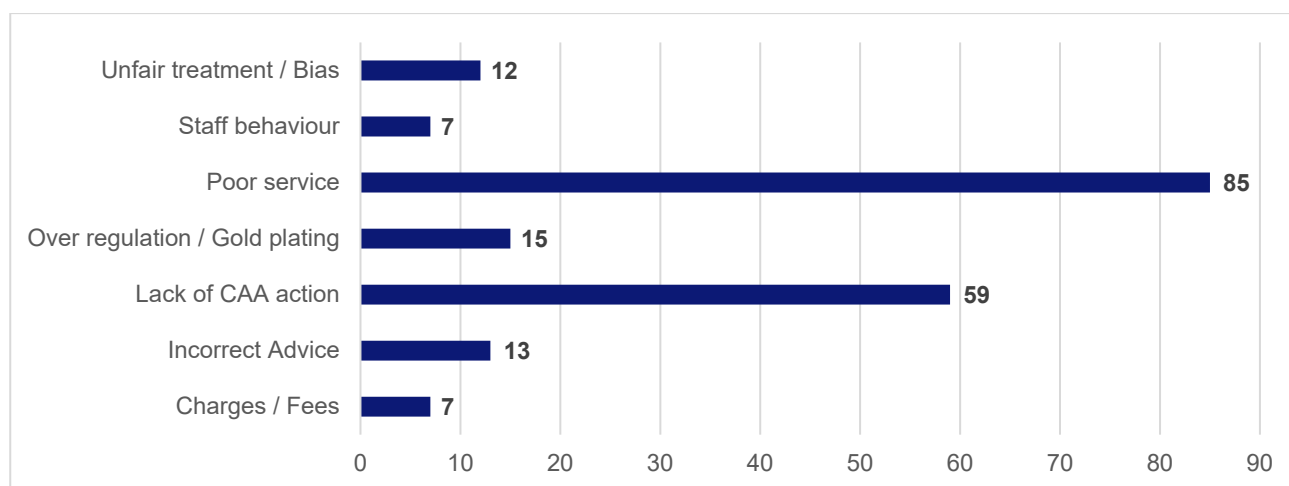


Figure 6: Complaints received by category (stage 1)

5.2. An analysis of the top 3 categories for stage 1 complaints has identified the following types of complaints:

Category	Type	Number of complaints
Poor Service	Application processing delays	39
	Failure to respond to enquiries	27
	Other (Quality & systemic issues)	19
Lack of CAA action	Lack of processing actions	33
	Lack of response	20
	Lack of information	5
Over Regulation / Gold Plating	Decision making process	8
	Poor execution of policy / regulation	6
	Poor guidance	1

Table 2: Types of complaints for top three themes (stage 1)

5.3. The 199 new complaints received during April 2022 – March 2023 related to the following CAA business areas:

<b>Business Area</b>	<b>Number Received</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
AvSec	1	0.5%
CMG	14	7%
IET	4	2%
OGC	1	0.5%
SARG – AAA	6	3%
SARG – AW	7	3.5%
SARG – S&BD	2	1%
SARG – FO	6	3%
SARG – GA	8	4%
SARG – MED	24	12.1%
SARG – RPAS	10	5%
SSC – C Desk	107	53.8%
SSC – PACT	2	1%
CEO Office & COO	1	0.5%
COO Finance & SSC – C Desk	1	0.5%
SARG – AW & SARG – FO	2	1%
SARG – FO & SSC – C Desk	1	0.5%
SARG – MED & SSC – C Desk	2	1%

Table 3: Complaints received by CAA Business Area. Acronyms spelt out fully in [Appendix C](#)

5.4. The table above shows that the Shared Service Centre (SSC) receive the majority of complaints, which can be attributed to the numbers of applications they receive. In the next report we will be able to provide further analysis based on the different teams within SSC.

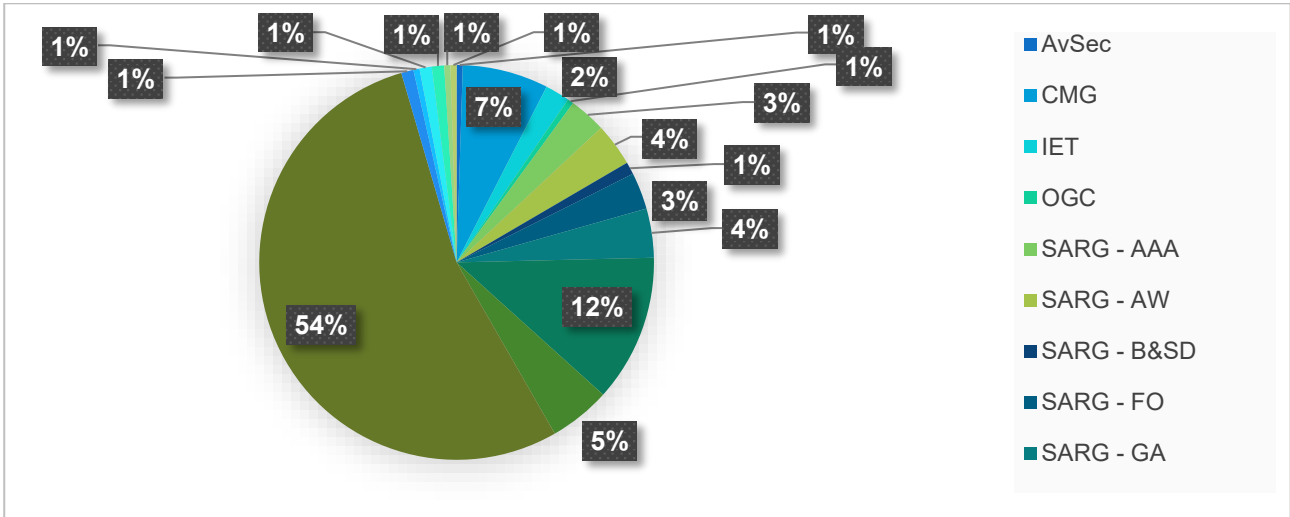


Figure 7: Complaints received by Business Area by percentage (stage 1). Acronyms spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

### Stage 2 complaints

5.5. The same list of complaint type categories is used to select from when a stage 2 review is logged, but this could change based on the reason the complainant wishes to escalate.

5.6. Between April 2022 – March 2023, the top 3 categories on stage 2 escalations were Poor service, Incorrect Advice, and Over Regulation / Gold plating, a slight variation on stage 1.

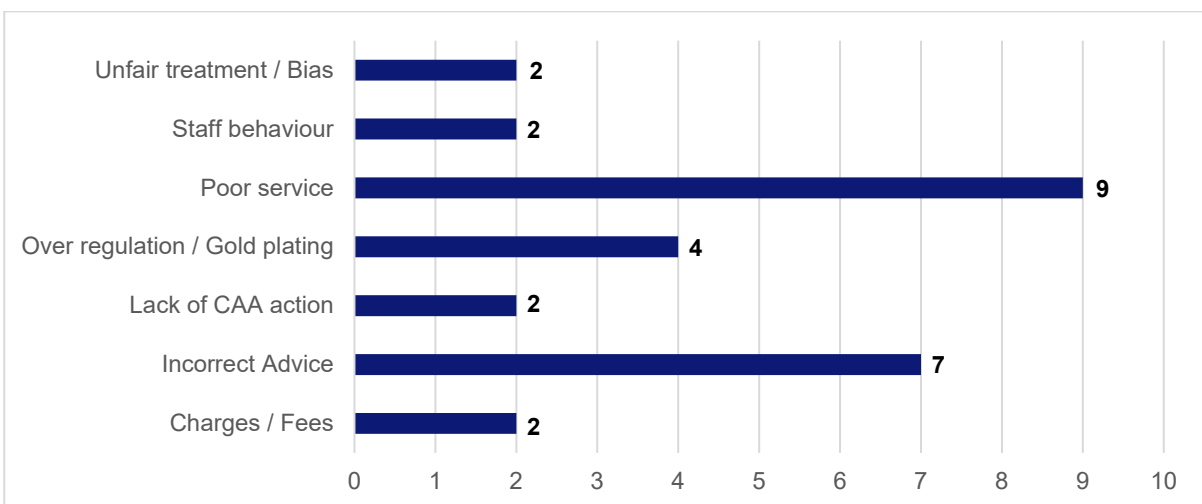


Figure 8: Complaints received by category (stage 2)

5.7. The 28 stage 2 complaints received during April 2022 – March 2023 related to the following CAA business areas:

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
CD – EIS & CMG	1	3.6%
CMG	2	7.1%
SARG – AAA	2	7.1%
SARG – AW	1	3.6%
SARG – S&BD	1	3.6%
SARG – FO	5	17.9%
SARG – GA	2	7.1%
SARG – RPAS	3	10.7%
SSC – C Desk	11	39.3%

Table 4: Stage 2 complaints received by CAA Business Area. Acroymns spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

5.8. The table above shows that SSC receive the majority of stage 2 complaints, again this can be attributed to the work they do, i.e., number of applications they process.

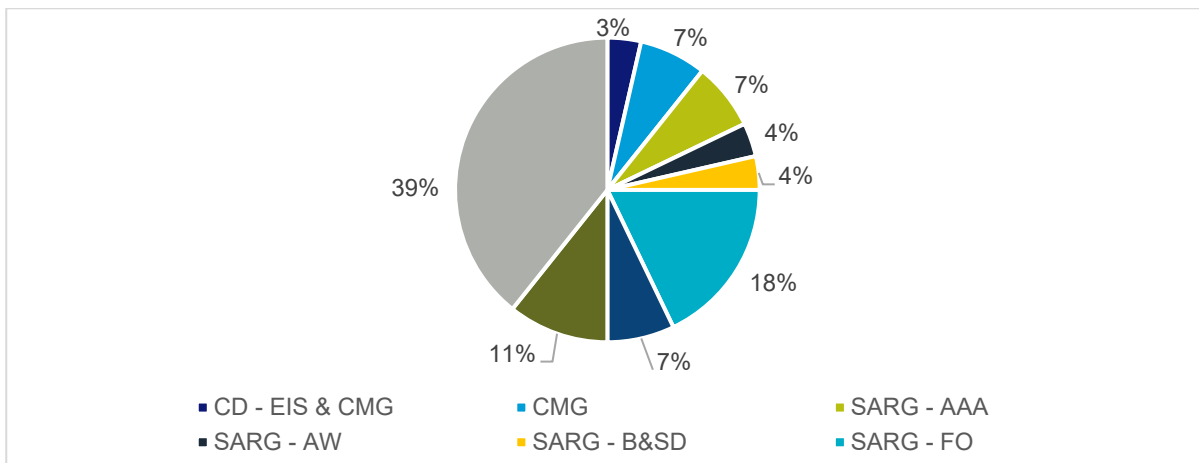


Figure 9: Complaints received by Business Area by percentage (stage 2). Acroymns spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

### ICA & PHSO Referrals

5.9. The same list of complaint type categories is used to select from when an ICA review is logged but may again change due to why the complainant wishes to escalate.



5.10. Between April 2022 – March 2023, the top 3 categories on ICA escalations were Poor service, Staff Behaviour, and Unfair treatment / bias, again a slight variation from stage 1 & 2, although poor service remains constant.

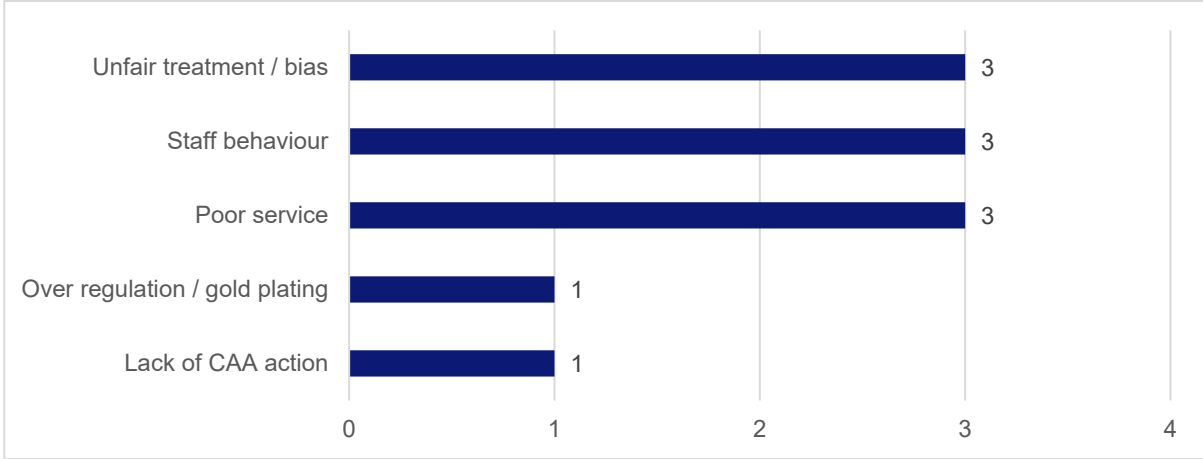


Figure 10: ICA Referrals received by category

5.11. The one PHSO case related to Unfair treatment / bias but is also important to note that it was a re-open of a case from 2021 and not a new complaint from 2022/23.

5.12. The 12 ICA referrals received during April 2022 – March 2023 related to the following CAA business areas:

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
AvSec, CD – EIS & CMG	1	8%
CD – EIS, CE Office & SARG – AAA	1	8%
IET & OGC	1	8%
SARG – AAA & SARG – S&BD	1	8%
SARG – FO	2	17%
SARG – GA	2	17%
SARG – RPAS	1	8%
SSC – C Desk	3	25%

Table 5: ICA referrals by CAA Business Area. Acroymns spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

5.13. Again, this demonstrates a majority are with SSC, followed by SARG – FO & SARG - GA closely behind. The one PHSO case related to business area SARG – AAA.

## Complaint Response & Outcomes

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6. Once a complaint is allocated to the relevant business area, they have 15 working days to provide the complaints team with a draft response, and all CAA complaints must be responded to within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

6.1. Where a business area is unable to meet the draft response deadline, they can request an extension from the Complaints team and would normally be due to a timely and / or incomplete investigation rather than due to staff absence or availability.

### Stage 1 draft response performance

6.2. A total of 203 draft stage 1 responses were provided between April 2022 – March 2023. Overall, **84%** of those draft responses were received from the business within the agreed timescale, which is **below our tolerance level of 90%**.

6.3. A total of 32 stage 1 complaints did not meet the draft response deadline of 15 working days, of which 5 had authorised extensions, following requests from the business areas.

### Stage 2 draft response performance

6.4. A total of 27 draft stage 2 complaint responses were provided between April 2022 – March 2023. Overall, **74%** of those draft responses were received from the business within the agreed timescale, which is **below our tolerance level of 90%**.

6.5. There was one stage 2 complaint where the business areas requested an extension to the draft response deadline.

### Stage 1 response performance

6.6. A total of 206 stage 1 complaints were responded to between April 2022 – March 2023. Overall, **92%** of those responses were sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale, which is **within our tolerance level of 90%**. In 2021-22 the response rate was above target at 97%, equating to a 5.2% reduction on last year. This can be attributed to the delayed drafts / extensions required by business areas to complete their reviews.

**Please note:** the closed figure will be a different figure to the number of complaints received due to a cross over with previous months.

6.7. The above graph shows a dip in performance between October – December, which can be attributed to the late draft responses / extension requests.

## Stage 2 response performance

- 6.8. A total of 28 complaints were responded to between April 2022 – March 2023. Overall, 96% of responses were sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale, which is above target.
- 6.9. Only one stage 2 complaint did not meet the agreed response deadline of 20 working days, due to waiting for a suitable date for the reviewer to speak with the complainant. However, this is a huge improvement on 2021-22, where the response rate was below tolerance at 81%. This can partly be attributed to additional resource dedicated to stage 2 responses within the External Information Services team.

## Remedial Actions

- 6.10. Most complaints can be resolved by apologising for the poor level of service or delays incurred and assurances of any learnings. On other occasions additional actions may be necessary like expediting or re-assessing applications, dispatching licences, or medical certificates, explaining processes if there are misunderstandings and explaining decision making processes on more complex complaints. A number of complaints require time-consuming investigations involving third parties and can be challenging to identify remedial actions, and reaching an impasse is the only solution.
- 6.11. There may be some occasions where it is appropriate to refund fees paid, agree to waiver fees and if there is evidence of financial loss being suffered we may consider offering compensation in accordance with guidelines. During this reporting period for stage 1 complaints a total of £1,107.00 has been refunded and £156.00 charges waived, but no compensation payments have needed to be made.



Figure 11: Refunds and waived fees (stage 1 complaints)

- 6.12. The same principles apply to stage 2 complaints. A total of £2,096.26 was refunded and £260.00 charges waived at stage 2 review, but no compensation payments made.



Figure 12: Refunds and waived fees (stage 2 complaints)

### Root causes

6.13.A learning from complaints mechanism was introduced in August 2022 which involves the recording of the root cause of complaints. As part of the process a list of root causes were developed that complaint handlers could select from as part of their learning from complaints. This classification allows us to identify any trends, learning and potential improvements to services.

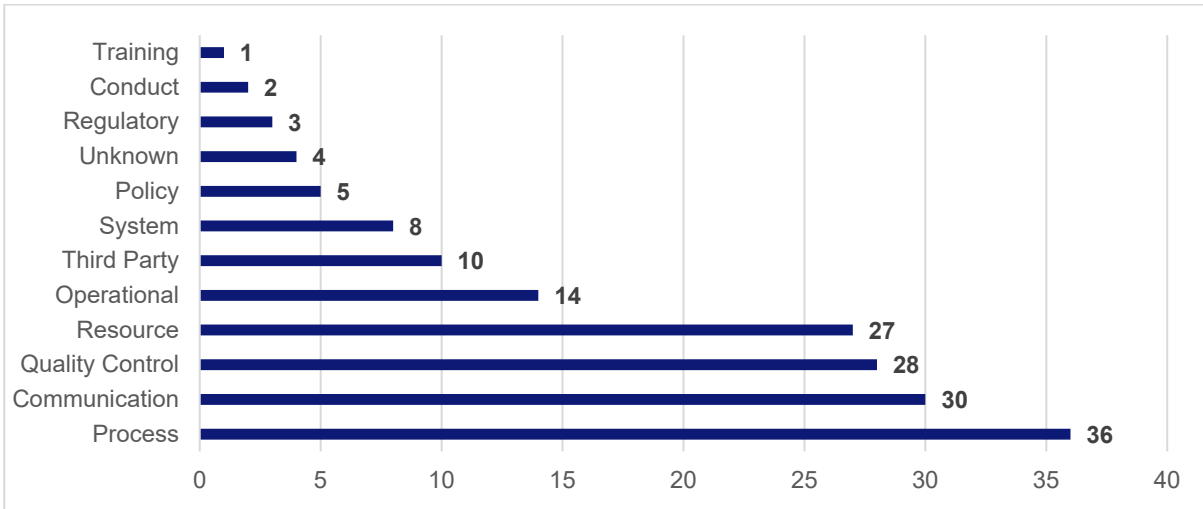


Figure 13: Root causes identify (stage 1 complaints)

**Please note:** a variation in number of root causes compared to upheld complaints is due to some complaints having more than 1 root cause

6.14.Key themes of stage 1 complaint root causes are process, communication, quality control & resources.

6.15.The same principles apply for stage 2 complaints.

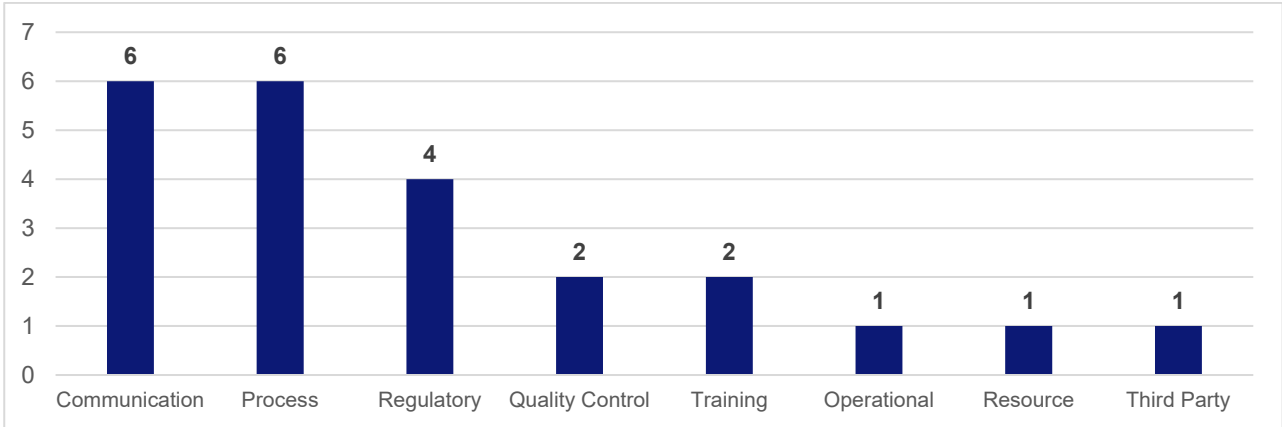


Figure 14: Root causes identify (stage 2 complaints)

**Please note:** a variation in number of root causes compared to upheld complaints is due to some complaints having more than 1 root cause

6.16. Key themes of stage 2 complaint root causes are communication, process and regulatory. Demonstrating similarities with stage 1 complaints.

## ICA & PHSO Reviews

6.17. The following section provides a more detailed analysis on the ICA & PHSO reviews outcomes, costs and recommendations.

### Closed ICA referrals

6.18. A total of 11 ICA reviews were closed by the ICA between April 2022 – March 2023.

**Please note:** the closed figure will be a different figure to the number of ICA referrals due to a cross over with previous months, the time period allowed for reviews, and the complexity of a complaint.

### ICA Review outcomes

6.19. The ICA will also advise of their outcome, based on the same principles we use for stage 1 and 2 complaints. Of the 11 closed ICA reviews 5 (42%) were upheld (in full or part).

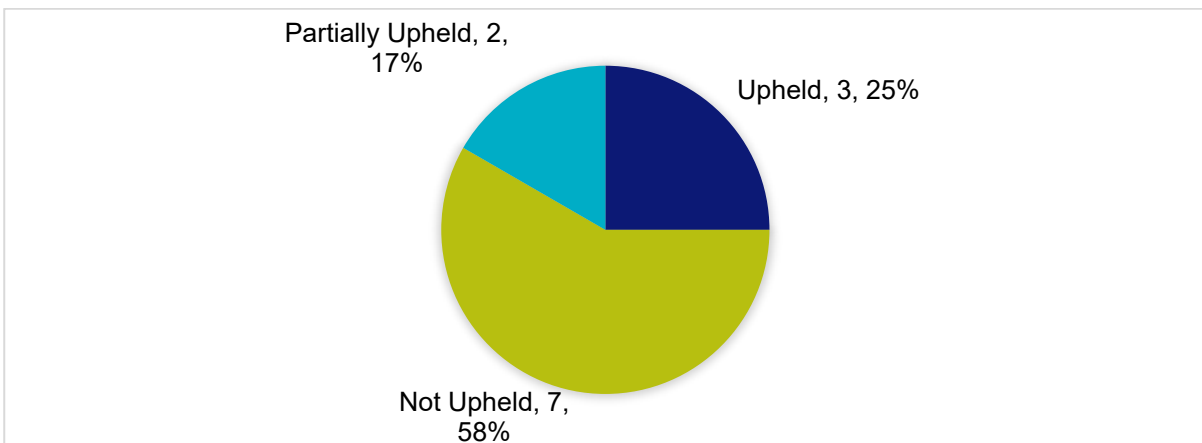


Figure 15: ICA referral outcomes (numbers & percentage)

## ICA Recommendations

6.20. The ICA recommended ex-gratia payments, totalling £450.00, on two occasions for the delays and poor service experienced.

## ICA Referral costs

6.21. All ICA reviews incur costs to the CAA via the DfT. The total cost incurred between April 2022 – March 2023 was **£9,988.20**. This is an increase of 59% on 2021/22, where totals costs were £4,118.78.

## Closed PHSO cases

6.22. One PHSO case was closed.

## PHSO outcomes

6.23. The PHSO will also advise of their outcome, based on the same principles we use for stage 1 and 2 complaints. The one PHSO case closed this year was partially upheld.

## Learning from complaints

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7. With complaints being a valuable insight tool to learn more about the experiences of people using our services, in August 2022 we reviewed our internal process to track and monitor any trends and pinpoint any recurring issues. Our revised process now provides us with an opportunity to reflect, analyse and transform complaints into learning and intelligence to determine areas for improvement.
  - 7.1. There are currently three ways to identify learning, with a 4th planned for 2023/24. These options are:
    - Case by Case learning
    - Root Cause Analysis
    - ICA & PHSO Recommendations
  - 7.2. Overall, a total of 139 lessons have been identified from our complaints since August 2022, which equates to 81% of the 113 complaints received between August 2022 – March 2023 had learning identified. More details are below based on the form in which it was identified.

### Case by Case Learning

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- 7.3. Several service improvements have been identified and made, with some logged prior to August 2022 whilst we piloted options for identifying and tracking.
- 7.4. A total of 84 lessons have been identified as a result of complaints received. A total of 25 service improvements have been made since we introduced the learning from complaints process in August 2022.

### Root Cause Analysis Learning

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- 7.5. In addition to learning being identified when handling a complaint, a root cause analysis of all upheld / partially upheld stage 1 complaints is carried out monthly to identify any additional or missed learning. Any learning identified is reviewed by senior managers to decide if there is a potential to take forward or not. This is to be extended to other complaint stages in 2023/24.
- 7.6. Following a root cause analysis, an additional 25 lessons have been identified, with a total of 2 service improvements being made as a result.
- 7.7. The same principles apply in identifying the root cause of the learning, allowing us to identify any trends in the learning.

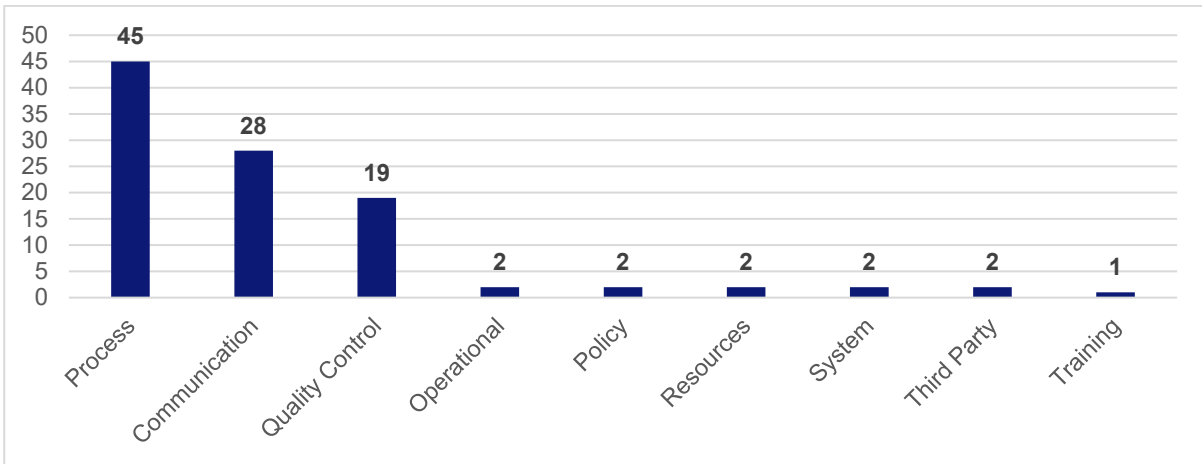


Figure 16: Learning from complaint root cause themes (all complaint stages)

7.8. Key themes of root cause analysis learning are process, communication, and quality control.

### Learning outcomes

7.9. We have also developed a list of learning outcomes, which allow us to identify the overarching learning outcome themes from the service improvements identified from the root cause of the complaints. Key themes of learning outcomes are the same as the root cause, which are: process, communication, and quality control.

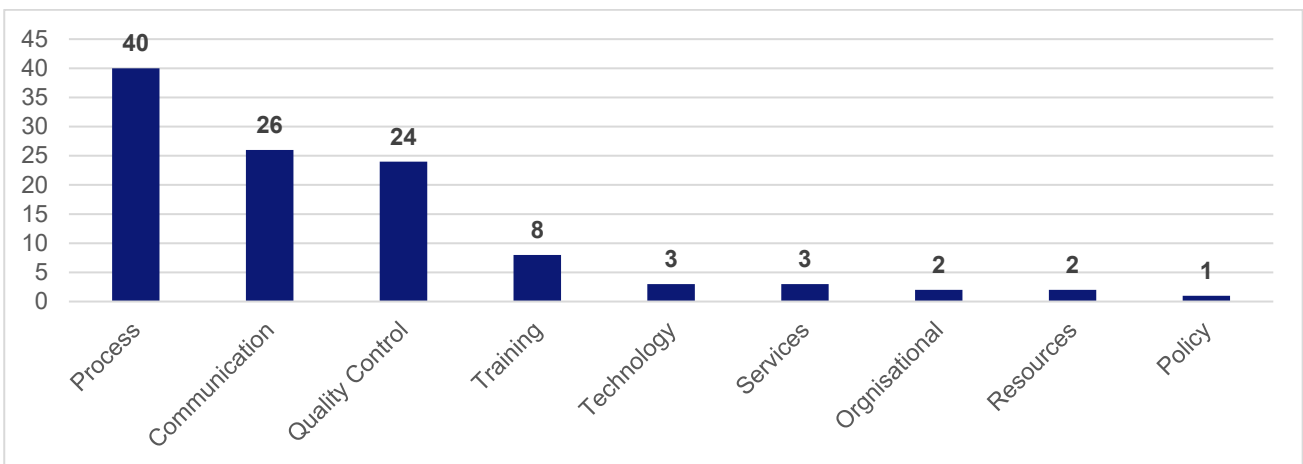


Figure 17: Overarching learning outcomes (all complaint stages)

### ICA Learning Recommendations

7.10. When the ICA completes a review of a complaint, they may make recommendations for learning or suggested actions to take, and these are all logged as part of our learning from complaint process. Any recommendations or actions must be agreed by the business area before the ICA send their final response.

7.11. A total of 25 recommendations were made by the ICA following completed reviews. A total of 11 recommendations have resulted in service improvements or actions taken.



7.12. The same list of root causes is used when logging recommendations from the ICA, to allow us to identify any trends.

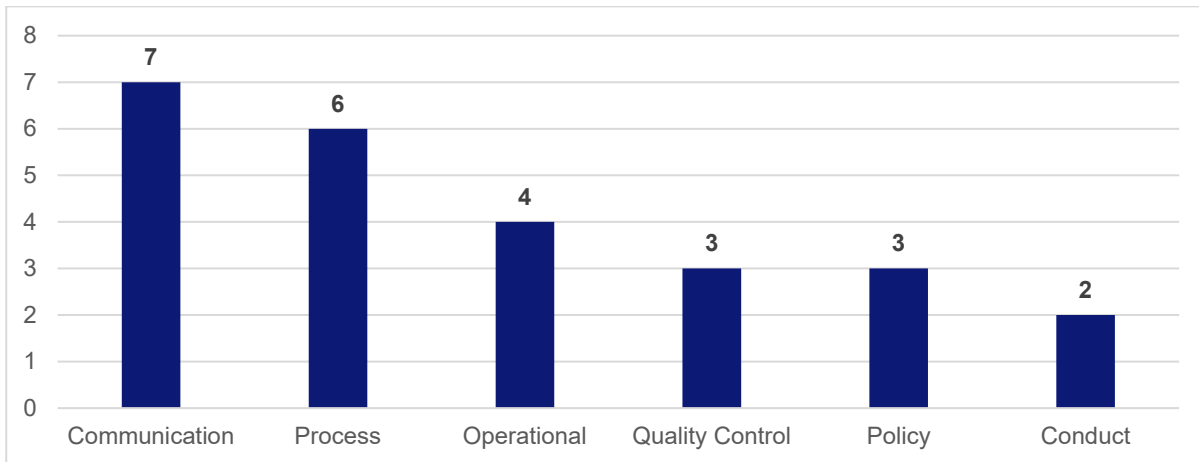


Figure 18: Learning from complaints root cause themes (ICA cases)

7.13. Key themes of ICA case root causes are communication, process and operational.

## PHSO Learning Recommendations

7.14. When the PHSO completes their investigation, they may make recommendations for learning or suggested actions to take, and these are all logged as part of our learning from complaint process. Any recommendations or actions must be agreed by the business area.

7.15. A total of 5 recommendations have been logged following a PHSO investigation, which includes 4 recommendations made by the PHSO & one added by us to monitor the process improvement through to implementation. A total of 4 recommendations have resulted in service improvements or actions taken. The status on the final 1 is pending a review to ensure the process improvements implemented have had the desired impact.

7.16. The same principles apply with the root cause when logging recommendations from the PHSO, to allow us to identify any trends.

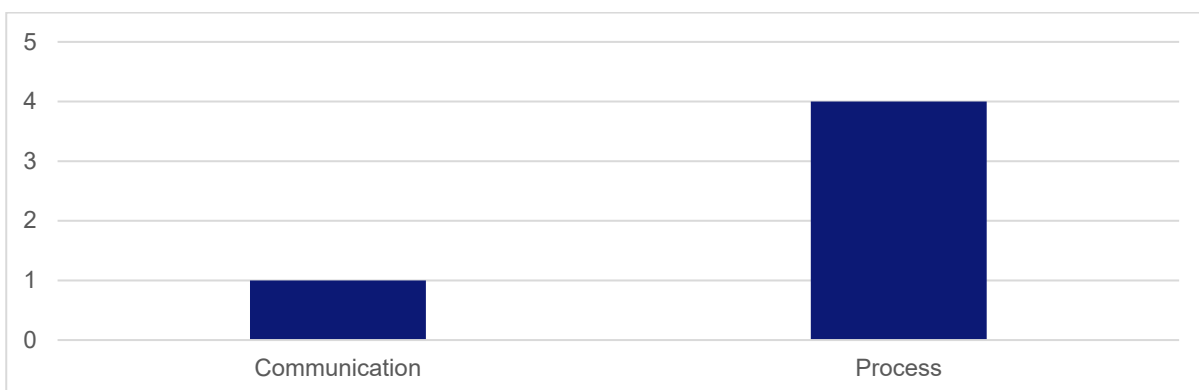


Figure 19: Root cause themes on PHSO cases

## Actions taken through learning from complaints

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7.17. The examples below demonstrate service improvements and / or changes that have been made to CAA services as a result of learning from the key themes of complaints.

### Service Improvements

7.18. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) guidance has been updated to ensure staff fully understand the ICAO requirements, which will reduce timelines, reduce the chance of pending duplications, and improve the customer experience.

7.19. A clear process on how to handle informal complaints within SSC has been implemented. The process includes a review by a manager of any correspondence received in the team mailbox where someone is unhappy with the service, so they can identify if should be passed to the complaints team to be formally logged or if could be dealt with locally, where it will be allocated to a team member to review and provide a response.

7.20. Our procedures relating to issuing refunds has been updated and it has been reiterated to all licensing officers that they must email a customer when issuing a refund to confirm the refund has been requested and advise the time frame for when it should be completed.

7.21. A process has been introduced to ensure that all ATOL claims on the portal that involve payment made by Amex are not classed as a credit card, therefore eliminating rejections.

7.22. The ATOL website has been updated to ensure the information relating to claims is clear and concise.

7.23. A review of our web publications and how we publish and control updates has been completed, resulting in the consolidation of Air Operation Regulation, AMC & GM and now published on the CAA Regulations website to improve clarity, understanding and satisfaction of UK aviation regulation requirements. The complainant has seen the new material and advised us:

“I noticed that regulatory publications have been extensively updated. This is a great step forward”

7.24. Regular quarterly meetings have been introduced by our Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Team to improve engagement and ability to communicate with the community, with the first meeting held in March 2023.

7.25. Regular meetings have been set up with the Airspace Regulation & Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) teams to align the work of the teams & create better collaborative working to address any issues / concerns.

## Conclusion

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8. In conclusion, this year, there has been a reduction in stage 1 complaint numbers of 26%, with an increase of 8% on stage 2 complaints. Escalation outside of the CAA has seen ICA cases double, but a 50% reduction on PHSO cases.
  - 8.1. We have fully met our target of acknowledging all stage 1 & 2 complaints within 5 working days, whilst our stage 1 responses within timescale is at 91%, within tolerance, and Stage 2 responses is at 96%, which is above target.
  - 8.2. The Complaints policy & process have both been reviewed and revised to support our customers in making complaints, with an easy to navigation web page signposting our customers to the various CAA complaint functions. These have also introduced clear complaint handling governance and standards to guide colleagues, including the recording and monitoring of informal complaints.
  - 8.3. A new learning from complaints process has been introduced to assist in identifying service improvements from complaints, with a total of 139 lessons learned since August 2022. To help embed this process awareness / training sessions were delivered to key colleagues and a quarterly Complaints & Lessons Learned forum has been introduced for key colleagues to meet and share knowledge and best practice amongst each other.
  - 8.4. Over the next year we plan to:
    - Continue responding to complaints within the agreed timescale.
    - Identified knowledge gap throughout the CAA on complaint handling, investigation and responding to complaints and provide tailored training.
    - Embed the use of an Internal Complaints' form to record complaints made over the phone or in person
    - Continue to learn from complaints to improve our service delivery and customer experience.

## APPENDIX A

## Definitions

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**Complaint** = an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by us, affecting an individual or group of customers / stakeholders.

**Stage 1** = Initial stage of the CAA complaints process.

**Stage 2** = Escalated complaints as customer were dissatisfied with the stage one response.

**ICA** = Escalated complaint to an external agency as the customer remains dissatisfied following the outcome of a stage 2 escalation.

**PHSO** = Escalated complaints to the Ombudsman as the customer remains dissatisfied following the outcome of an ICA review.

**Upheld** = The service did not reach the standard that is expected. (*Something has gone wrong*)

**Partially Upheld** = This would be used where we have found that there was evidence of service failure in one or more elements of the complaint, even if other parts of the complaint were not upheld.

**Not Upheld** = The service provided was of a standard that is expected.

## APPENDIX B

## Key Performance Indicators

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**KPI 1:** Total number of complaints received = This indicator records all stage 1 complaints received at the CAA.

**KPI 2:** Number of complaints escalated at each stage = This indicator records all complaints that were escalated beyond stage 1 to stage 2, an ICA and / or PHSO review.

**KPI 3:** Percentage of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days at each stage = This indicator records the percentage of complaints at stage 1 & 2 acknowledged within 5 working days, which is measured from the date of receipt.

**KPI 4:** Percentage of draft responses received from the business area within 15 working days at each stage = This indicator records the percentage of complaints at stage 1 & 2 where a draft response was received from the business area within 15 working days.

**KPI 5:** Average time taken in working days for the business areas to provide a draft response at each stage = This indicator represents the average time in working days for a draft response to be provided to the complaints team by the business area.

**KPI 6:** Percentage of complaints responded to within 20 working days at each stage = This indicator represents the percentage of all stage 1 & 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days, which is measured from the date of the acknowledgment.

**KPI 7:** Average time taken in working days to respond to a complaint at each stage = This indicator represents the average time in working days for a full response to be provided to the complainant at stage 1 & 2.

**KPI 8:** Number and percentage of complaints where an extension has been authorised at each CAA stage = This indicator represents the number & percentage of complaints where an extension has been authorised at stage 1 & 2.

**KPI 9:** The outcome of complaints at each stage (upheld / not upheld / partially upheld) = This indicator represents the number & percentage of complaints at each stage where the outcome has been recorded as upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.

**KPI 10:** Percentage of ICA referral requests acknowledged within 15 working days = This indicator records the percentage of ICA referral requests acknowledged within 15 working days, which is measured from the date of receipt.

**KPI 11:** Percentage of ICA referral request referred to the ICA within 15 working days = This indicator records the percentage of ICA referral requests referred to the ICA within 15 working days, which is measured from the date of receipt.

**KPI 12:** The average time in working days for a complaint to be referred to the ICA = This indicator represents the average time in working days for an ICA referral request to be referred to the ICA.

## APPENDIX C

## Abbreviations

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AvSec	Aviation Security
CD – EIS	Communications Department – External Information Services
CEO Office	Chief Executive Officer office
CMG	Consumers & Markets Group
COO	Chief Operating Office
COO – Finance	Chief Operating Office - Finance
IET	Investigation & Enforcement Team
OGC	Office of General Council
SARG - AAA	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes
SARG – AW	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Airworthiness
SARG – FO	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Flight Operations
SARG – GA	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – General Aviation
SARG - MED	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Medical
SARG - RPAS	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Remotely Piloted Aircraft System unit
SARG – S&BD	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Safety & Business Delivery
SSC – C DESK	Shared Service Centre – Centre Desk
SSC – PACT	Shared Service Centre – Passenger Advice & Complaints Team

## APPENDIX D

## Complaint handling quick guide

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### Raising concerns

We would also encourage you to contact the relevant business area in the first instance if you have any queries, concerns, challenges or issues, who will aim to respond quickly.

However, if it is clear that the matter needs a more detailed investigation you can raise a complaint and we have a two-stage complaint procedure.

### Stage 1

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days, and aim to respond within 20 working days, we will tell you if more time is required.

There are some complaints that have alternative routes and we will tell you if this is the case.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can request to escalate to stage 2 within 28 days of receiving our stage 1 response.

### Stage 2

A review of the handling of our stage 1 complaint will be conducted by a senior manager, not previously involved.

We will acknowledge within 5 working days and aim to respond within 20 working days, we will tell you if more time is required.

### Independent Complaint Assessors (ICA)

If, having followed all stages of our internal complaint process, you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the CAA's Corporate Complaints Specialist and request a referral to the ICA.

The ICA will respond directly with their findings and recommendations to the complainant and the CAA.

### Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

If, following an ICA review, you do not agree with the outcome, you can contact your Member of Parliament (MP) and ask for your complaint to be referred to the PHSO.