

# CAA Annual Complaints Report 2024-2025

CAP 3130

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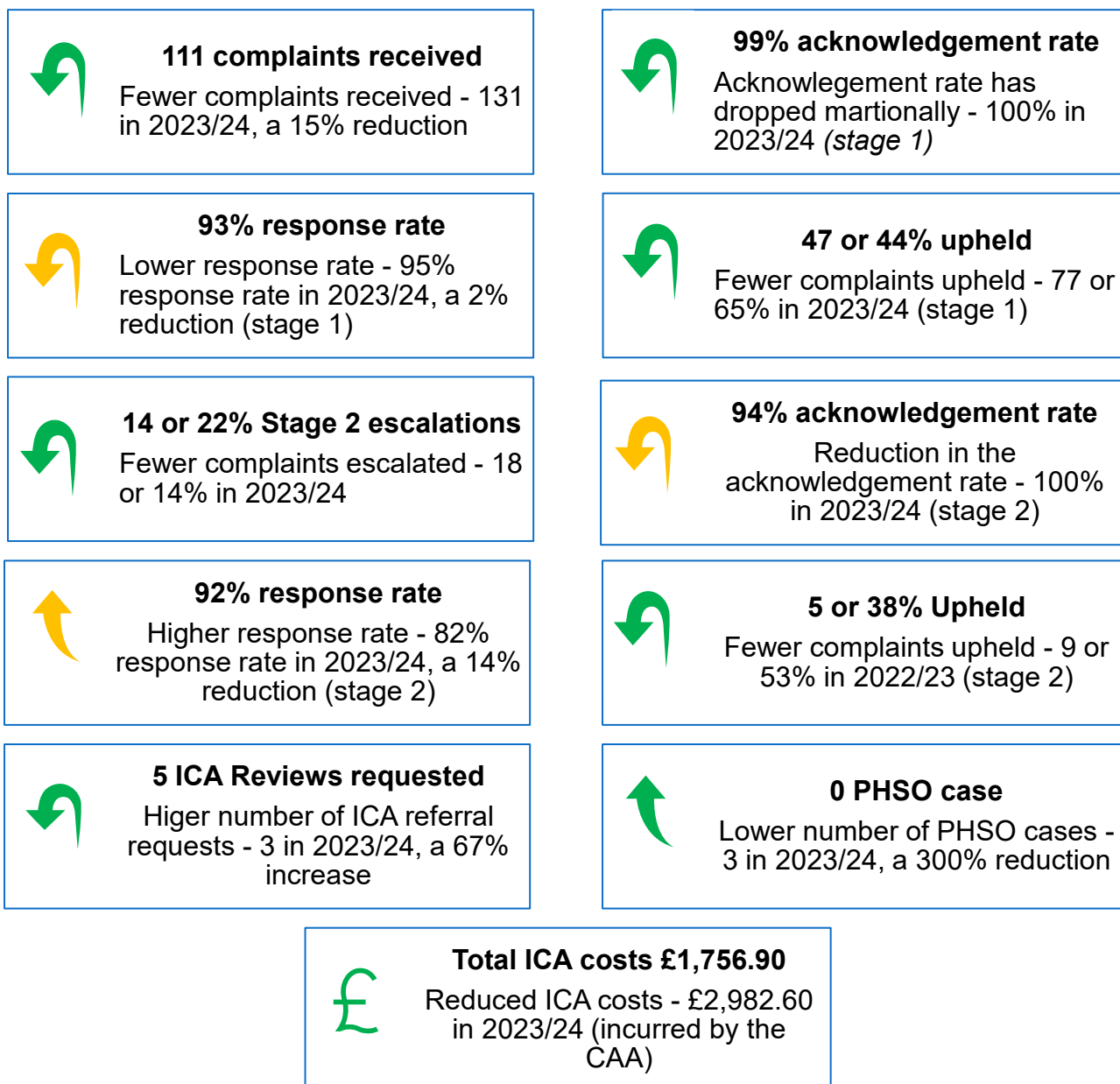
## Executive Summary

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1. This report provides information on the UK Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA's) performance on complaints against a set of Key Performance Indicators for the period of April 2024 to March 2025.
  - 1.1. This includes a summary of complaint numbers received and resolved, any themes, escalations, the remedies taken to resolve, lessons learned and next steps.
  - 1.2. The total number of complaints received has reduced from 131 in 2023/24 to 111 in 2024/25, which equates to a 15% reduction, with the average number over 10 years being 165. Whilst another reduction was not anticipated and it does not match other government agencies, it suggests that our learning from complaints is having a positive impact on the services we provide to our customers.
  - 1.3. The majority of stage 1 complaints related to poor service (44%), charges/fees (25%) and staff behaviour (10%). In terms of business areas, the majority of complaints related to our Shared Service Centre (SSC); a total of 35 (31.8%), which is a reduction on last year. The higher volume of complaints can be attributed to the extensive customer base served by this business area e.g. processing licence applications (11,484) and aircraft registrations (18,652).
  - 1.4. Of the 111 complaints a total of 14 were escalated to stage 2 (see [Appendix D for process details](#)); a 22% reduction compared to the 18 escalated in 2023/24. In most cases complainants felt there was a lack of accountability, key points were not addressed fully, or the stage 1 response was not factually correct. Escalations beyond the CAA to the ICA were 5 in total; a 67% increase, compared to 3 in 2023/24. There were no cases referred to the PHSO equating to a 300% (3) reduction on 2023/24.
  - 1.5. Our performance on responding to stage 1 complaints has dropped to 93%; a 2% reduction on last year but is still within tolerance. However, we have seen an improvement on our stage 2 responses within timescale, at 92%, which pushes it within our tolerance level. This can be attributed to a robust reminder process ahead of deadlines, which we will be replicating at stage 1.
  - 1.6. We continue to use the opportunity to learn from complaints to transform complaints into intelligence that will lead to service improvements. A total of 45 lessons have been identified from complaints and 47 improvements have been made to services, including changes to application processes, management, systems, guidance, website and forms as well as improved communications internally to ensure better collaboration, consistency and customer experience.

## Key Headlines 2024-25

2. Highlights of complaint performance against key performance indicators and comparing 2024/25 performance to 2023/24 performance. Results discussed throughout the report.



## 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	111

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

- 3.1. If a complainant is unhappy with 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	14
The number of ICA referral requests received	5
The number of PHSO cases	0

### 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%)	99%
Percentage of stage 2 complaints acknowledged within 5 working days (Target 95%, Tolerance 90%)	94%

**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%)	85%

**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	13
The average time in working days for the business area to provide a stage 2 draft response	13

**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	93%
Percentage of stage 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days	92%

**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	17



**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	11	10%
Number & percentage of stage 2 complaints with an authorised extension	2	15%

3.4. Of the 11 stage 1 complaints where an authorised extension was applied, this was due to the complexity of the issues and cross-departmental involvement.

3.5. Of the two stage 2 complaints where an authorised extension was applied, one was due to an offer of a meeting to discuss the matter and the other was extended due to internal resource challenges.

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

3.6. Of the 108 stage 1 complaints closed a total of 47 (44%) were upheld (in full or part). This is fewer than in 2023/24, where a total of 77 (65%) were upheld, this equates to a 21% reduction..

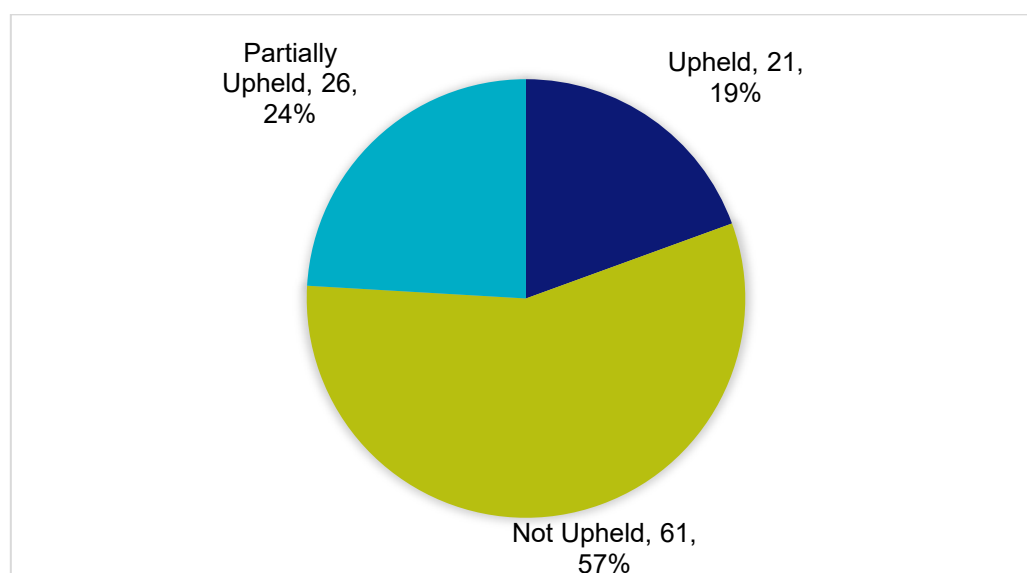


Figure 1: Stage 1 complaint outcomes (numbers & percentage), as discussed in paragraph 3.6

3.7. Of the 13 stage 2 complaints closed, 5 (38%) were upheld (in full or part). Compared to 9 (53%) in 2023/24, which is a 15% reduction.

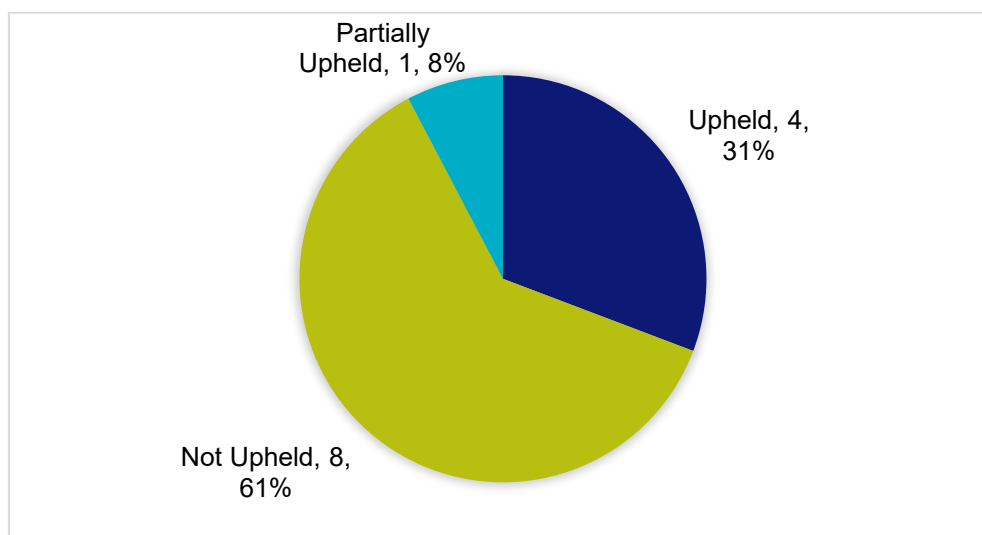


Figure 2: Stage 2 complaint outcomes (numbers & percentage), as discussed in paragraph 3.7

#### **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 acknowledged 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)	6

# Complaint Performance & Themes Summary

4. The following section provides a more detailed analysis on complaints received, performance against service level agreements (SLAs), themes, and outcomes.

## Complaints received

- 4.1. A total of 111 stage 1 complaints were received between April 2024 to March 2025, this is a 15% reduction compared to 2023/24 (131 received). It should be noted that three complaints were withdrawn, one relating to over regulation / gold plating and accepting that an airspace modernisation plan will take time, the other two related to poor service and application delays with the complainant advising submitted complaint in error and the other receiving their licence shortly after submitting the complaint.

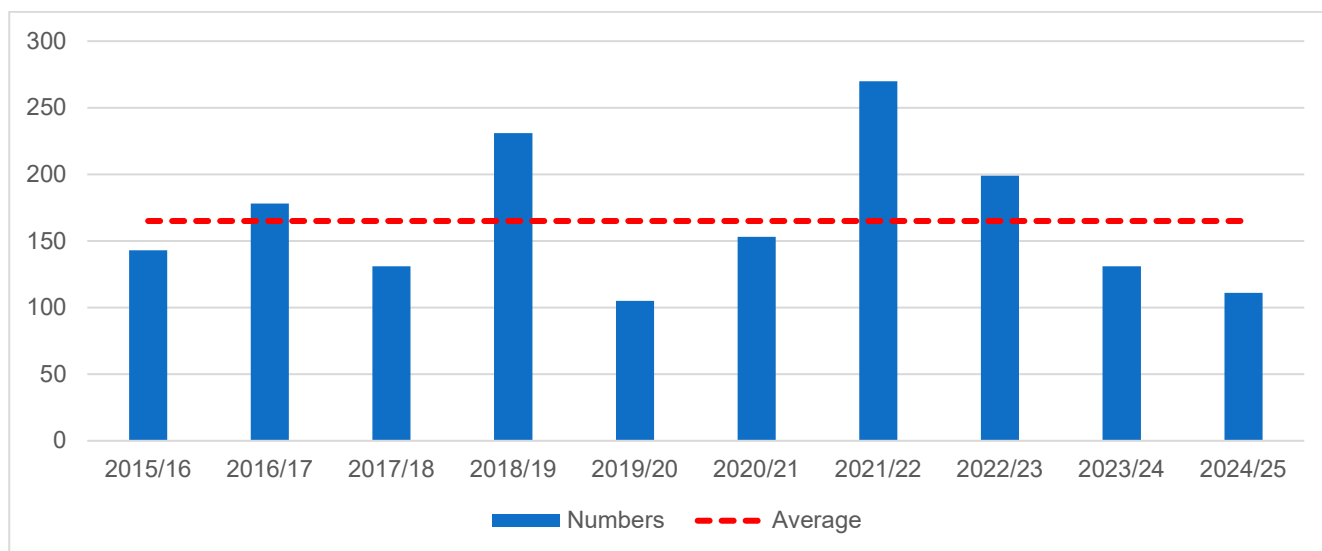


Figure 3: Number of stage 1 complaints received by financial year, the red dotted line reflects the average, which is 165, although worth noting that the COVID years were probably not typical. Results for 2024/25 discussed in paragraph 4.1.

- 4.2. For the year 2024/25 the main peak was 54 complaints received in the first three months of 2025 (January 13, February 30 & March 11), compared to 31 received in the same period in 2024. A notable number of these (26), many routed via Members of Parliament (MPs), were triggered by concerns over alleged misrepresentation of drone figures in the CAA Annual Report. This issue was amplified by social media, encouraging followers to write to their MPs. The other 28, a majority logged as 'Poor Service' relating to processing delays or lack of status updates.
- 4.3. Other peaks were noted in June 2023 (11) & September 2023 (10). A majority were logged as 'Poor service' & 'Lack of CAA action' relating to application processing delays and failure to respond to enquiries, with a small number in September of

complaints logged as 'Staff behaviour' relating to perceived attitude and lack of response. Compared to 2023/24 where peaks were noted in May, November & March, similar matters were reflected.

## Escalations

- 4.4. A total of 14 stage 1 complaints were escalated to stage 2 this reporting year, compared to 18 in 2023/24; a 22% reduction, suggesting an improvement in how we handle and resolve a complaint at stage 1.
- 4.5. Our overall escalation rate based on the number of stage 1 complaints that have escalated to stage 2 in 2024/25 was 13%, which is a 1% reduction on 2023/24.

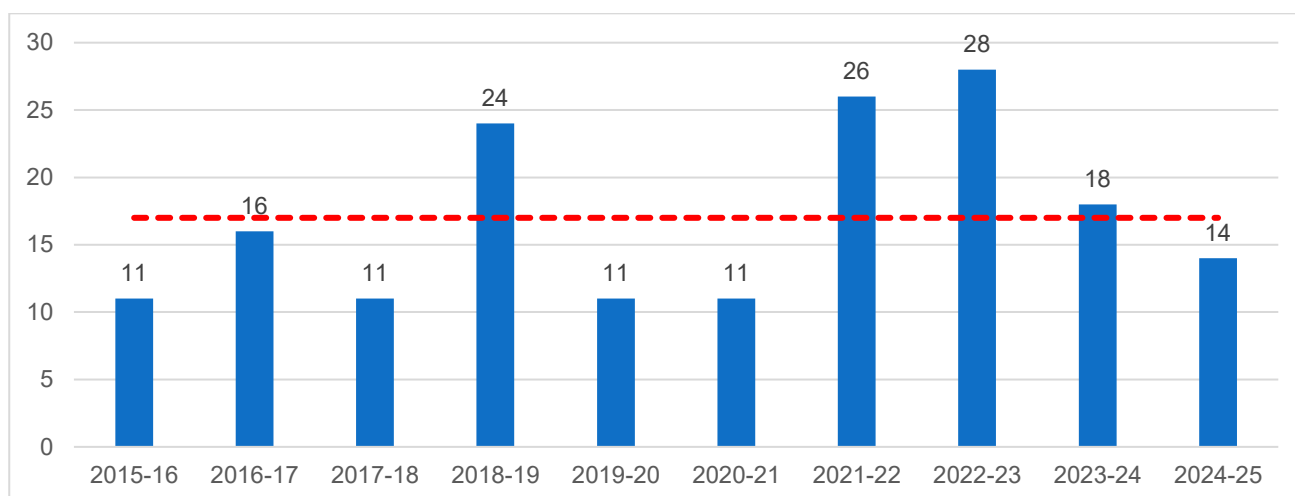


Figure 4: Number of stage 2 escalation requests by financial year, with the red dotted line reflecting the average which is 17. Results for 2024/25 discussed in paragraph 4.4.

- 4.6. In 2024/25, peaks were noted in April & October 2024, and March 2025 (3 each month), with six logged as 'Poor service', relating to application processing delays and quality & systematic issues, the remaining three were logged as 'Charges / Fees', 'Staff behaviour' and 'Unfair treatment / bias'. The 2023/24 peaks were in July & August 2023, and March 2024, with a majority logged as 'Poor service', relating to application processing delays.

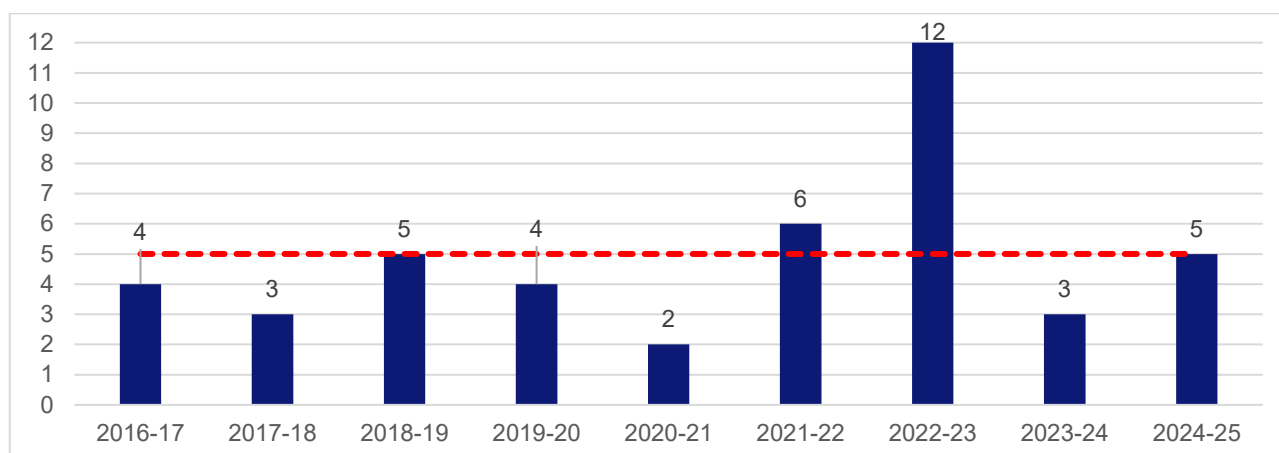


Figure 5: Number of ICA referral requests by financial years, with the red dotted line reflecting the average which is 5 **Please note:** we did not join the ICA scheme until 2016. Results for 2024/25 discussed in paragraph 4.6.

- 4.7. In 2024/25, a total of 5 ICA referral requests were received, equating to a 67% (3) increase compared to 2023/24. Whilst all related to various categories, 3 cited a lack of response to all issues raised and 2 felt they were unfairly treated, as reasons for referral to the ICA. It is worth noting that numbers of referrals to the ICA on average are low, the only exception to this was in 2022/23, which can be attributed to the standard of our responses at that time, which has improved.
- 4.8. No cases were received from the PHSO between April 2024 – March 2025, a 300% (3) reduction on 2023/24. 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 with us.
- 4.9. Comparing the number of stage 1 complaints received with ICA referrals, it equates to 5% being escalated to the ICA, which is a 3% increase on last year. Comparing the number of stage 2 complaints escalated to the ICA, this equates to 36%, which is a 19% reduction on last year. Factors here could relate to the small numbers of complaints received and better quality of responses.

## 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 2024 – March 2025, the top 3 complaint type categories were Poor service, Charges / Fees, and Staff behaviour.

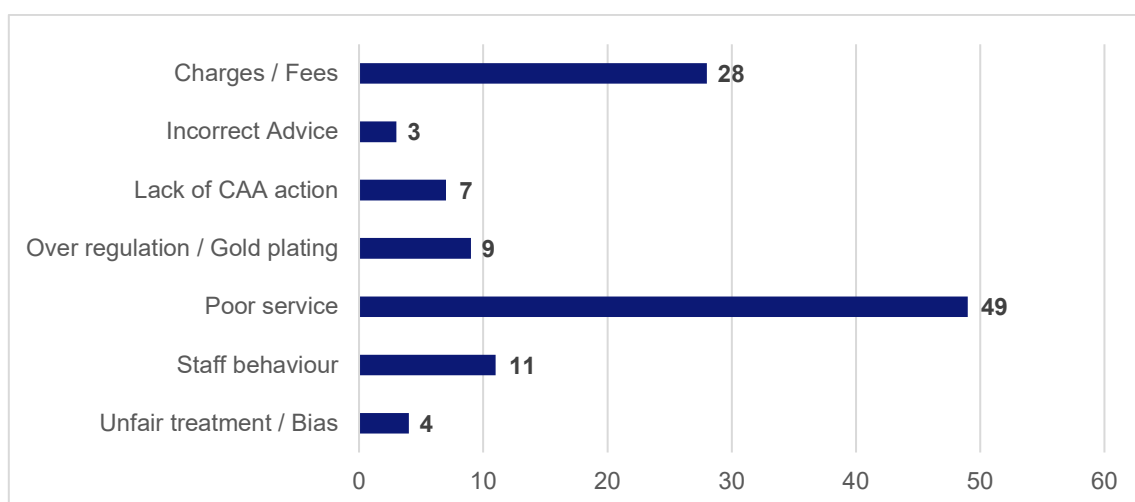


Figure 6: Complaints received by category (stage 1), as discussed in paragraph 5.1.

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

Category	Type	Number of complaints
Poor Service	Application processing delays	24
	Failure to respond to enquiries	6
	Other (Quality & systemic issues)	19
Charges / Fees	Lack of information	1
	Other (Quality & systemic issues)	27
Staff behaviour	Lack of processing actions	1
	Lack of response	2
	Poor execution of policy / regulation	2
	Attitude of staff	3
	Competency & Attitude of staff	3

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

5.3. A total of 13 staff behaviour complaints were responded to in this period, with only four being upheld (full or part), relating to a lack of response, attitude, and poor execution of policy / regulations.

5.4. Whilst the number of staff behaviour is notable especially as it features in the top 3 categories, the numbers are no different from 2023/24, other than they were concentrated within a 1–2-month period in 2024/25, as opposed to spread across the year in 2023/24 and did not feature in the top 3 categories analysis. However, these figures have increased by 57% since 2022/23. Our monitoring of the numbers has not identified any major concerns or any one business area standing out as having any re-occurring issues, and there is no suggestion of any campaigns. However, we will continue to monitor the data for any trends.

5.5. The 111 new complaints received during April 2024 – March 2025 related to the following CAA business areas:

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
Aviation Security (AvSec)	1	0.90%
Communications & Engagement Team (C&ET)	2	1.80%

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
CEO / Chairs Office	1	0.90%
Consumers & Markets Group (CMG)	3	2.70%
Investigation & Enforcement Team (IET)	1	0.91%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes (SARG – AAA)	2	1.82%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Airworthiness (SARG – AW)	6	5.45%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Flight Operations (SARG – FO)	5	4.55%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – General Aviation (SARG – GA)	4	3.64%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Medical (SARG – MED)	2	1.82%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Unit (SARG – RPAS)	3	2.73%
SARG – RPAS & SARG – SO	2	1.82%
Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Safety Operations (SO)	1	0.91%
Shared Service Centre – Centre Desk (SSC – C Desk)	35	31.82%
Shared Service Centre – Passenger Advice & Complaints Team (SSC – PACT)	5	4.55%
IET, OGC & SARG – AAA	1	0.91%
SARG – GA & SSC	3	2.73%
SARG - GA & SSC	1	0.91%

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
SARG – AAA & SARG – RPAS	1	0.91%
SARG - MED & SSC	2	1.82%
Corporate Enabling Services (CES) Finance, SARG - MED & SSC	1	0.91%
CES Finance, OGC & SARG – RPAS	26	23.64%
SARG – Airspace & –OGC	1	0.91%
Communications, Strategy & Policy (CSP), CSP-C&ET & OGC – Corporate Governance (CorpGov)SO	1	0.91%
Professional Services Group (PSG) – UK Airprox Board	1	0.91%

Table 2: Complaints received by CAA Business Area.

5.6. The table above shows that SSC received the majority of complaints, which can be attributed to the numbers of applications and enquiries they handle.

5.7. The high number against our CES Finance, OGC & SARG – RPAS reflects the same complaint, with identical wording, replicated 26 times.

5.8. The table below breaks the SSC complaints down to provide further analysis based on the different teams within SSC.

SSC Team	Number Received	Percentage
Aircraft Certification (SSC – AC)	4	10.0%
Aircraft Registration (SSC – AR)	2	5.0%
Contact Centre (SSC – CC)	6	15.0%
Consumer & Safety (SSC – C&S)	1	2.5%
Flight Crew Licensing (SSC – FCL)	9	22.5%
Licensing Assessment (SSC – LA)	11	27.5%



SSC Team	Number Received	Percentage
Licensing Support (SSC – LS)	2	5.0%
Passenger Advice & Complaints Team (SSC - PACT)	5	12.5%

Table 3: SSC Team split for complaints received.

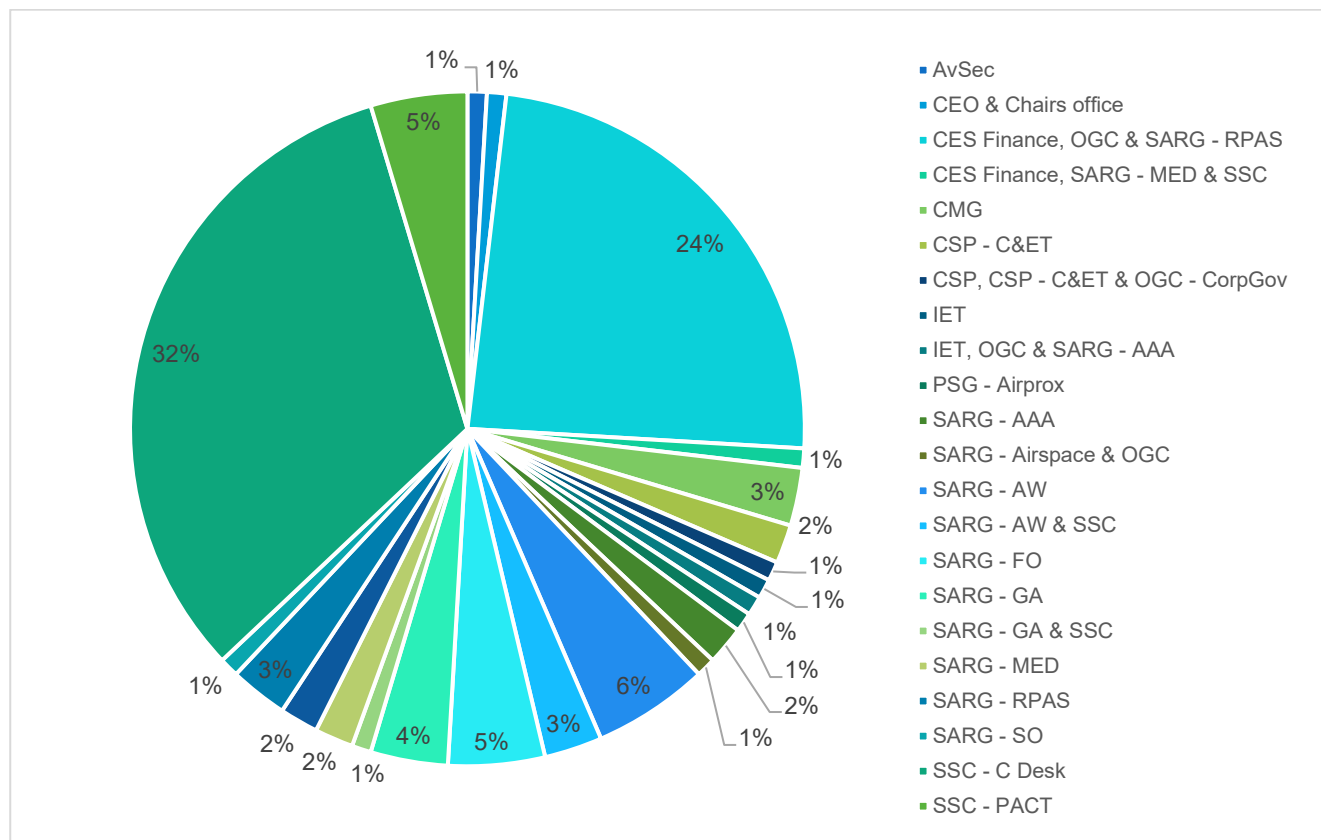


Figure 7: Complaints received by Business Area by percentage (stage 1), as highlighted in table 3.

Acronyms spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

## Stage 2 complaints

5.9. The same list of complaint type categories is used to select from when a stage 2 review is logged, which could be different to stage 1 depending on the reason the complainant wishes to escalate.

5.10. Between April 2024 – March 2025, the top 3 categories on stage 2 escalations were Poor service, Over regulation / gold plating and Staff Behaviour, a slight variation on stage 1 with only one Charges / Fees related complaint escalated and not related to the 26 duplicate complaints.

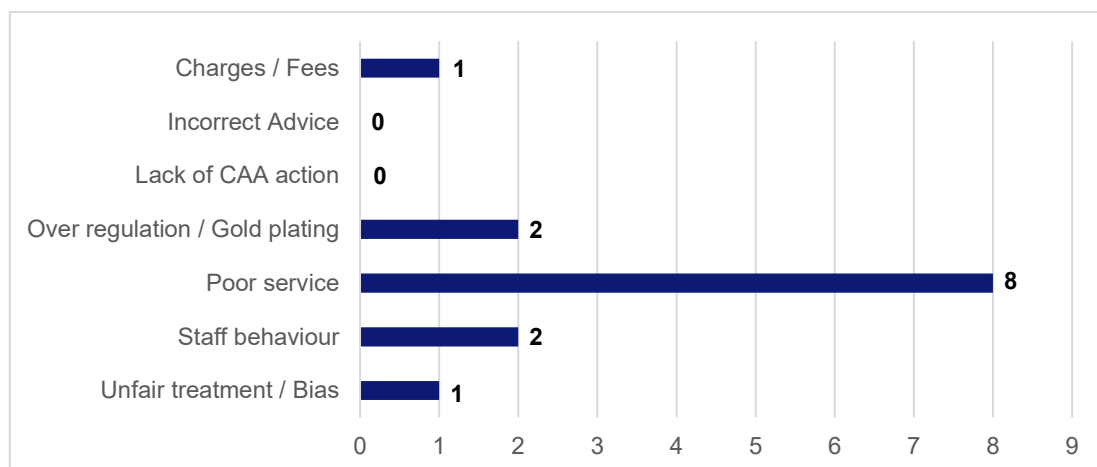


Figure 8: Complaints received by category (stage 2), as discussed in paragraph 5.10.

5.11. The 14 stage 2 complaints received during April 2024 – March 2025 related to the following CAA business areas:

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
CSP – C&ET & PSG – Airprox	1	7.14%
SARG – AW	1	7.14%
SARG – FO	1	7.14%
SARG – MED	2	14.29%
SARG – RPAS	2	14.29%
SSC	5	35.71%
SSC - PACT	2	14.29%

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

5.12. The table above shows that SSC received a majority of the stage 2 complaints, which can be attributed to the number of applications and enquiries they handle, with several others following with slightly lower but still notable volumes.

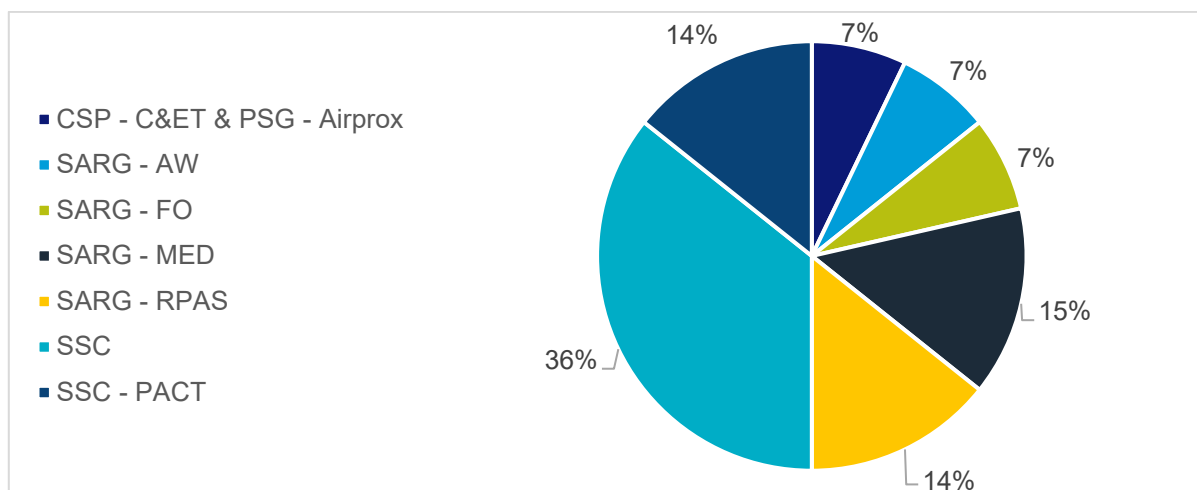


Figure 9: Complaints received by Business Area by percentage (stage 2), as highlighted in table 4.  
Acronyms spelt out in [Appendix C](#)

## ICA & PHSO Referrals

5.13. The same list of complaint type categories is used to select from when an ICA referral is logged, but again may be different to stage 1 or 2 depending on why the complainant wishes to escalate.

5.14. Between April 2024 – March 2025, poor service was the main reason for referrals, matching with all other stages.

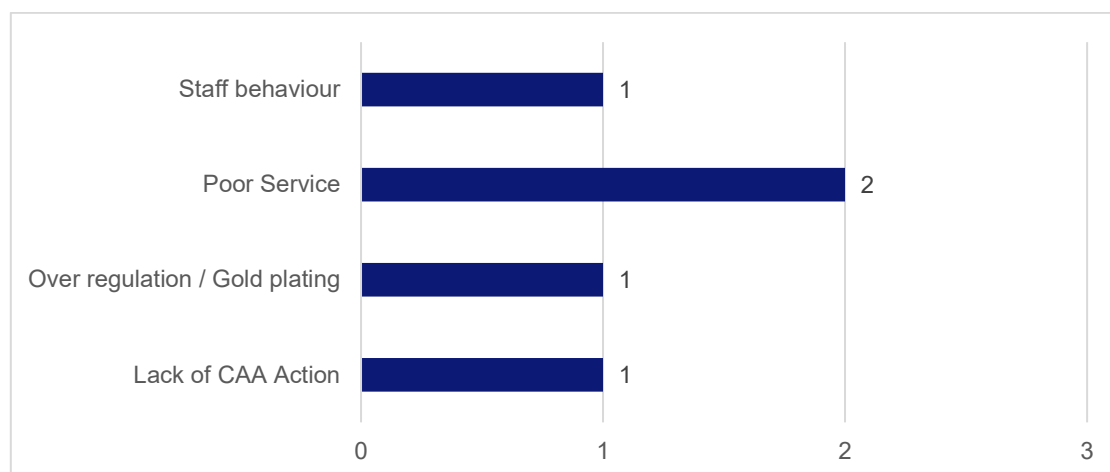


Figure 10: ICA Referrals received by category, as discussed in paragraph 5.14.

5.15. There were no PHSO cases logged between April 2024 – March 2025.

5.16. The 5 ICA referrals received related to the following CAA business areas:

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
CEO&Chair Office	1	20%

Business Area	Number Received	Percentage
SARG – MED	1	20%
SARG – RPAS	2	40%
SSC	1	20%

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

## Complaint Response & Outcomes

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 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 is usually only granted 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 112 draft stage 1 responses were due between April 2024 – March 2025. Overall, **85%** of the draft responses due were received from the business areas within the agreed timescale, which is below our tolerance level of 90%, and a 6% reduction on last year.
- 6.3. A total of 16 stage 1 complaints did not meet the draft response deadline of 15 working days, of which 11 had an authorised extension, following a request from the business area. This can be attributed to the complexities of the complaints concerned and we have seen a rise in complex complaint cases.

### Stage 2 draft response performance

- 6.4. A total of 12 draft stage 2 complaint responses were due between April 2024 – March 2025. Overall, **92%** of the draft responses due were received from the business areas within the agreed timescale, which is above our tolerance level of 90%, and an increase of 21% on last year.
- 6.5. A total of one stage 2 complaint did not meet the draft response deadline of 15 working days, an extension was requested, again this can be attributed to the complexities of the complaints.

## Stage 1 response performance

6.6. A total of 108 stage 1 complaints were responded to between April 2024 – March 2025. Overall, **93%** of those responses were sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale, which is just below our target of **95%**. In 2023-24 the response rate was at target, equating to a 2% reduction on last year.

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

## Stage 2 response performance

6.7. A total of 13 stage 2 complaints were responded to between April 2024 – March 2025. Overall, **92%** of responses were sent to the complainant within the agreed timescale, which is just below our target of 95%. In 2023-24 the stage 2 response rate was below tolerance at 82%, equating to a 10% improvement on last year.

6.8. Only one stage 2 complaint did not meet the agreed response deadline of 20 working days, due to the complexity of the case.

## Remedial Actions

6.9. 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 licence or medical applications, explaining decision making processes if there are misunderstandings or they are complex matters. A number of complaints require time-consuming investigations involving third parties and it can be challenging to identify remedial actions, with some cases ultimately remaining unresolved despite best efforts.

6.10. There may be occasions where it is appropriate to refund or waive charges and/or, in cases of demonstrated financial loss agreeing to compensation in accordance with guidelines. During this reporting period for stage 1 complaints a total of £476.00 in charges have been refunded and £435.00 charges waived.

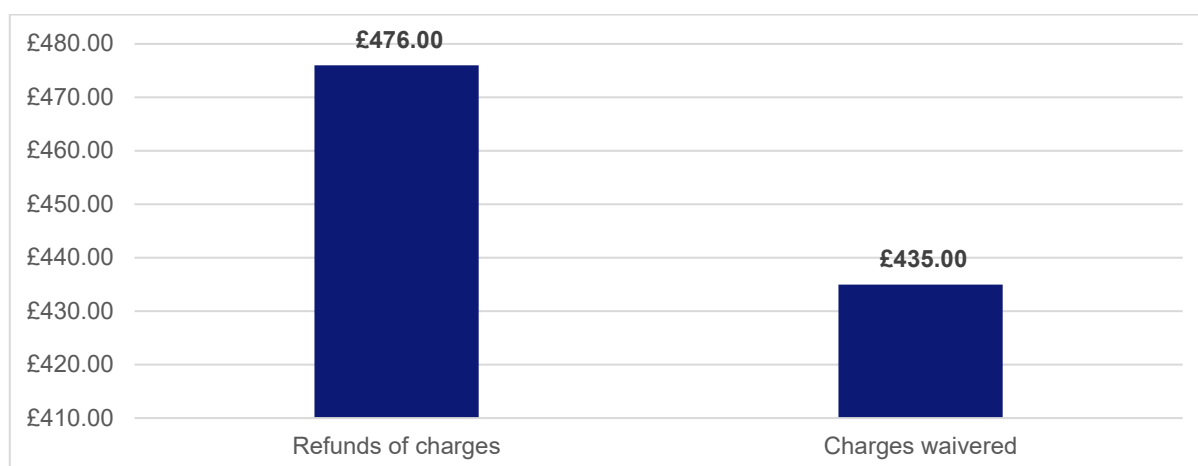


Figure 11: Refunds and waived charges (stage 1 complaints), as discussed in paragraph 6.10.

6.11. The same principles apply to stage 2 complaints. During this reporting period for stage 2 complaints a total of £670.00 in charges have been refunded, with no other charge waivers or compensation payments made.

## Root causes

6.12. The root cause of a complaint is an important aspect to help us understand why something happened or did not happen. We encourage all complaint handlers to identify the root cause, where possible.

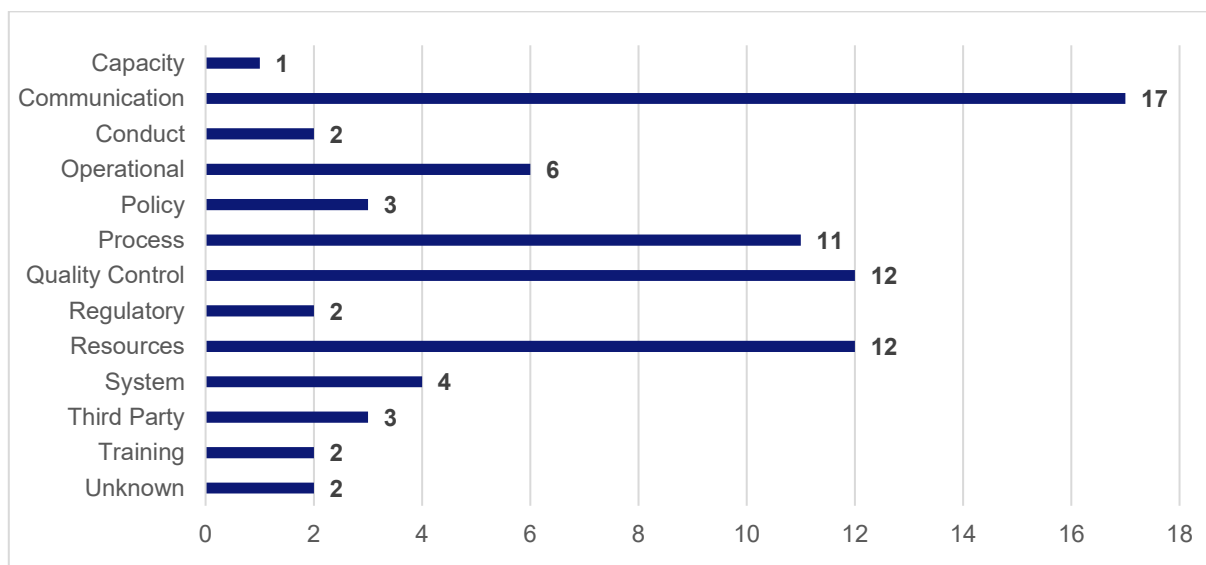


Figure 13: Root causes identify (upheld / partially upheld stage 1 complaints), as discussed in paragraph 6.13.

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

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

6.14. The same principles apply for stage 2 complaints for logging the root cause.

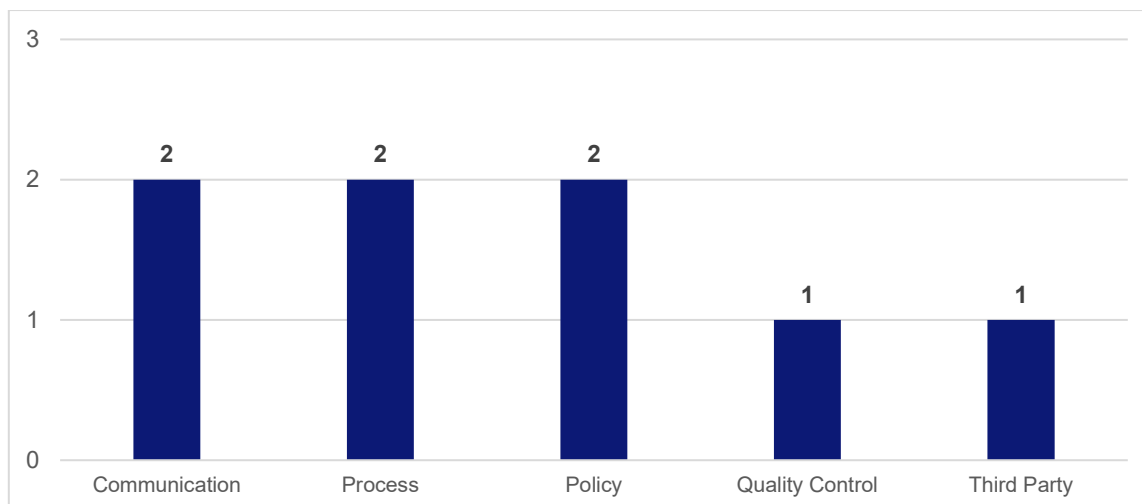


Figure 14: Root causes identify (stage 2 complaints), as discussed in paragraph 6.15.

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

6.15. Key themes of stage 2 complaint root causes are communication, process, and policy. Demonstrating some similarities with stage 1 complaints.

## ICA & PHSO Reviews

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

### Closed ICA referrals

6.17. A total of 4 ICA reviews were closed by the ICA between April 2024 – March 2025.

**Please note:** the closed figure may be different to requests received as it may reflect referrals from last year due to a cross over, the time period allowed for reviews, and the complexity of a complaint.

### ICA Review outcomes

6.18. The ICA will also advise of their outcome based on the same principles we use for stage 1 and 2 complaints. Of the 4 closed ICA reviews 3 (67%) were not upheld and 1 (33%) withdrawn. The withdrawn case was following no further correspondence from the complainant. The alignment between the CAA's outcomes and those of the ICAs indicates a consistent and fair approach to complaint resolution.

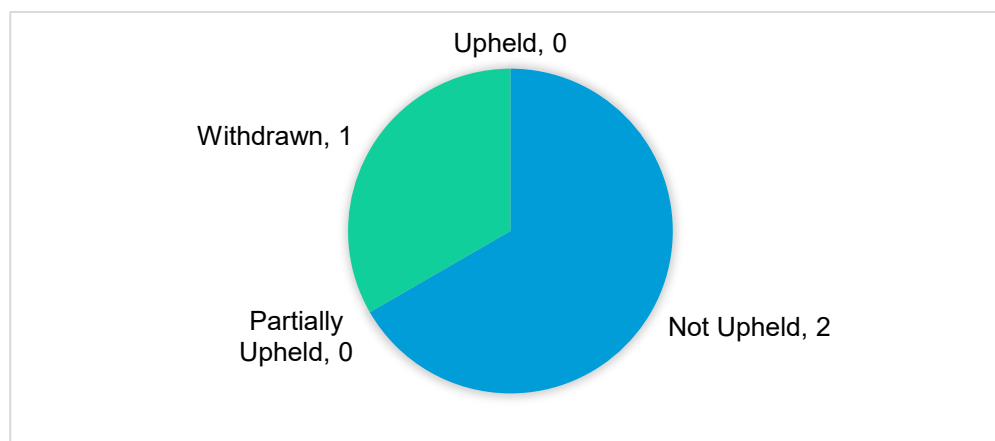


Figure 15: ICA referral outcomes (numbers & percentage), as discussed in 6.18.

### ICA Recommendations

6.19. As all ICA reviews were not upheld, the ICA made no recommendations to the CAA for any service improvements or ex-gratia payments.

## ICA Referral costs

6.20. All ICA reviews incur costs to the CAA via the Department for Transport (DfT). The total cost incurred between April 2024 – March 2025 was **£1,756.80**. This is a 41% reduction on 2023/24, where totals costs were £2,982.80.

## Closed PHSO cases

6.21. No PHSO cases closed.



# Learning from complaints

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7. Complaints are a valuable insight tool and in this section we focus on what we have learnt from complaints, ICA & PHSO recommendations, the root causes and the actions we have taken to improve services for customers and stakeholders. Complaints help us to learn more about the experiences of people using our services, identify any trends and pinpoint any recurring issues. It is an opportunity to reflect, analyse and transform complaints into intelligence and learning to determine areas for improvement.

7.1. There are four ways we identify learning from complaints, which are:

- **Case by Case learning**

For every complaint received, the complaint handler responsible for investigating the complaint is asked to identify the root cause and any learning that we should implement to avoid similar issues in the future.

- **Root Cause Analysis**

A root cause analysis is conducted monthly or quarterly (depending on numbers) of all upheld / partially upheld closed stage 1 complaints by the Communications Specialist to identify any potential or missed learning. Any potential learning is discussed with the relevant senior manager to decide if there is potential for service improvements to be taken forward or not.

- **ICA & PHSO Recommendations**

As part of the ICA or PHSO review, they will suggest recommendations for learning or suggested actions to take, which are reviewed and agreed by the business area before any responses are sent to complainant.

- **Quality Assurance Checks**

This is a quarterly check of randomly selected closed complaints to assess our centrally managed handling of our complaints against our governance and standards to identify if there are any process improvements required or training gaps.

7.2. Overall, a total of 45 lessons have been identified from complaints made between April 2024 – March 2025, which equates to 81% of the 47 upheld (in full or part) complaints.

7.3. Monitoring of improvements is conducted on a quarterly basis through regular progress update meetings and a total of 47 service improvements were implemented.

**Please note:** The service improvement number may be higher as this figure will include improvements completed on lessons learned from 2022 onwards.

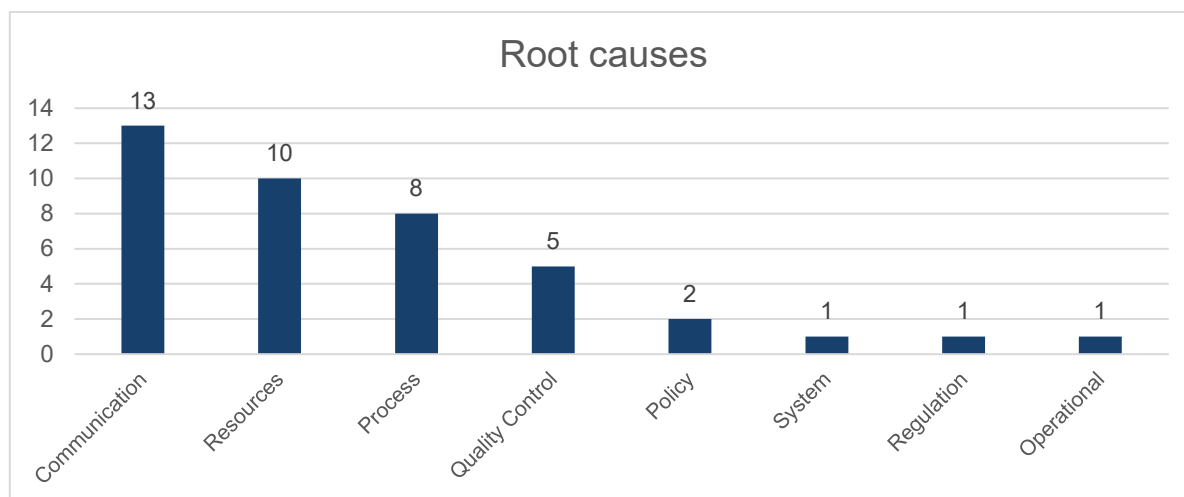


Figure 16: Learning from complaints root cause themes (stage 1 & 2), as discussed in 7.4.

7.4. Key root cause themes of learning identified are communication, resources, and process.

7.5. Analysing the top three root causes, the key themes are as follows:

Root Cause	Theme	Numbers
Communication	Improve communications with customers	7
	Improve internals communications between teams	2
	Improve information on our website	1
	Improve letter writing skills	3
Resources	Train additional staff	2
	Increase resources	5
	Provide additional guidance to colleagues	3
Process	Improve processes	3
	Improve website information	1
	Introduce new processes	1
	Improve compliance with processes	2
	Improve consistency in process delivery	1

Table 6: Themes relating to the learning root causes (stage 1 & 2)

## Learning outcomes

7.6. 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 process, quality control, and communication.

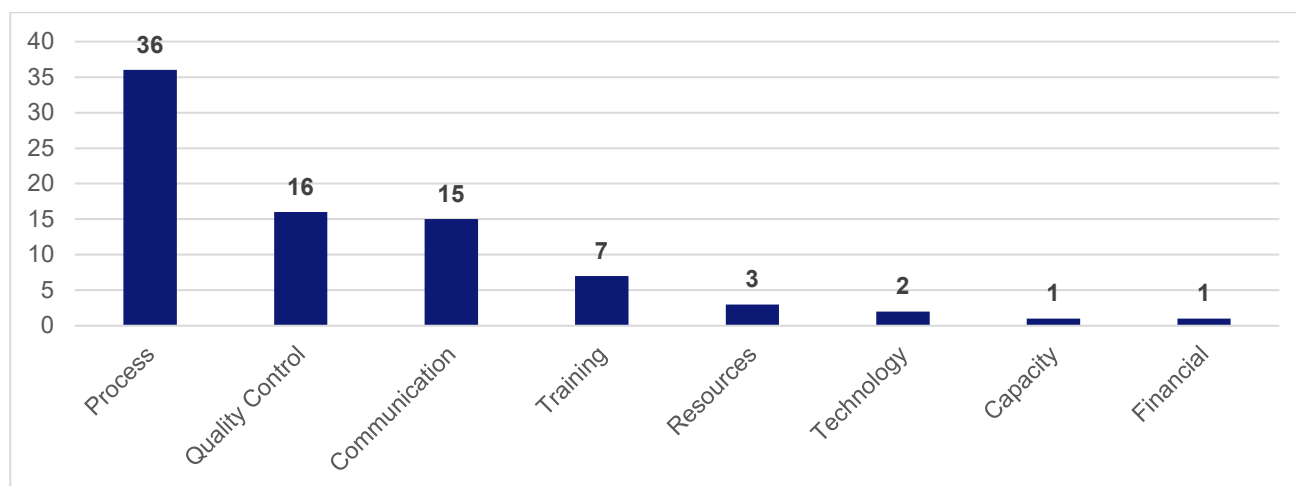


Figure 17: Overarching learning outcomes (all complaint stages & learning mechanisms), as discussed in paragraph 7.6.

## ICA Learning Recommendations

7.7. There were no 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' ICA cases this reporting year.

## PHSO Learning Recommendations

7.8. There were no PHSO cases this reporting year.

## Actions taken through learning from complaints

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

### Service Improvements

7.10. Introduced weekly medical case management meetings to ensure that customers receive consistent, fair and timely decisions, and they are kept informed with updates throughout the process.

7.11. In respect of our medical system (CELLMA), leads have been established within our Shared Services Centre to support more effective collaboration with the medical team. This ensures that high-level technical matters are integrated into a joined-up approach to handling cases.

- 7.12. Information on our website to better explain the process for changing contact details within the CELLMA portal to improve the customer experience.
- 7.13. CAP722 has been reviewed and revised to improve the support and guidance to customers applying for operating permissions.
- 7.14. Enhanced tracking of private licensing applications by introducing a more robust quality assurance process to ensure progress is monitored and applications are completed within service level agreements.
- 7.15. Broad improvements around systems and processes, including information on our website, better collaborative working between our Airworthiness and Shared Services Centre colleagues, and improved communication to the status of an application, to enable us to meet service levels relating to Certificate of Airworthiness (CofA) applications and reduce status enquiries.
- 7.16. Improvements to the Operating Safety Case (OSC) application management process with a better case management tool to ensure better communication with applicants on the status of the applications.
- 7.17. Amendment to our service level agreement for engineering technical assessments to more accurately reflect the process with the aim of delivering a clearer and more positive experience for customers.
- 7.18. Additional colleagues trained to process Aircraft Maintenance Licence (AML) applications to improve the management of applications and service times.
- 7.19. Increased the number of technical support colleagues, a duty rota and regular meetings to oversee and manage technical queries within the flight crew licensing team, resulting in improved case management, a faster process and peer learning and knowledge sharing among the team.

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## Conclusion

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8. In conclusion we have seen a further reduction in complaints received, alongside a reduction in escalations to stage 2 and the PHSO. However, there has been a small increase (2) on last year in referrals to the ICA.
- 8.1. We are delivering on our SLA to acknowledge all stage 1 and 2 complaints within 5 working days. However, we have seen a slight decline on meeting our target for acknowledging within 5 working days due to having to seek advice, although we are still above target on stage 1 complaints, and within tolerance for stage 2
- 8.2. Whilst we have seen a slight decline in meeting our stage 1 response target of 95%, we are still within tolerance at 93%, and we have seen an increase on our stage 2 responses, now within tolerance at 92%, which is a huge improvement on last year's figure of only 82% within SLA.
- 8.3. There are continued signs of improvement in the way we are managing complaints, and additional reporting mechanisms have been created to report to senior managers with further insights on respective team performance.
- 8.4. With our complaints learning process fully embedded we continue to learn from complaints to use insights to improve service delivery and the customer experience.

### Our plan for improving complaint handling at the CAA

- 8.5. There is still a lot of work to be done to continue to improve our approach to complaint handling including:
- Assessing ourselves against the Regulators Code.
  - Continue to increase visibility of valuable insights and ensure they are shared, and colleagues continue to be supported with training.
  - Ensuring our responses are thorough, thoughtful and we share any learning with customers directly.
  - Aim to gather valuable feedback from our customers to better understand their views and identify any opportunities for improvements.

## 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 A

## 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 B

# Abbreviations

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AvSec	Aviation Security
CE Office	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) / Chairs office
CES - Finance	Corporate Enabling Services - Finance
CMG	Consumers & Markets Group
CSP	Communications, Strategy & Policy Team
CSP – C&ET	Communications, Strategy & Policy Team – Communications & Engagement Team
IET	Investigation & Enforcement Team
OGC	Office of General Counsel
PSG – Airprox	Professional Services Group – UK Airprox Board
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 – SO	Safety & Airspace Regulation Group – Safety Operations
SSC – C DESK	Shared Service Centre – Centre Desk
SSC – PACT	Shared Service Centre – Passenger Advice & Complaints Team

## APPENDIX C

## Complaint handling quick guide

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### Raising concerns / Informal Complaint

We would always 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.

If you are dissatisfied with our stage 2 review response, you can request a referral to the ICA within 3 months of receiving our stage 2 response.



### 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 copy in 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.