

SLC Conference

15 November 2023

Steven Pearson - Deputy Chief Ombudsman

Welcome

Agenda

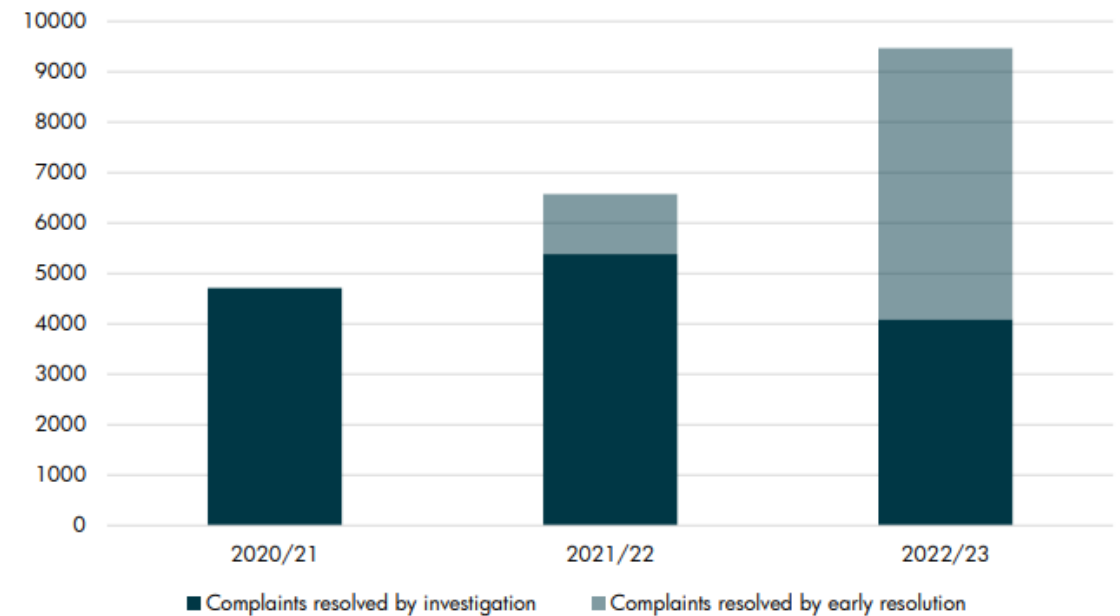
1. An update on LeO's journey
2. Office for Legal Complaints' strategy for LeO 2024-27
3. Conveyancing in our casework
4. Support we offer

An update on LeO's journey

An update on LeO's journey

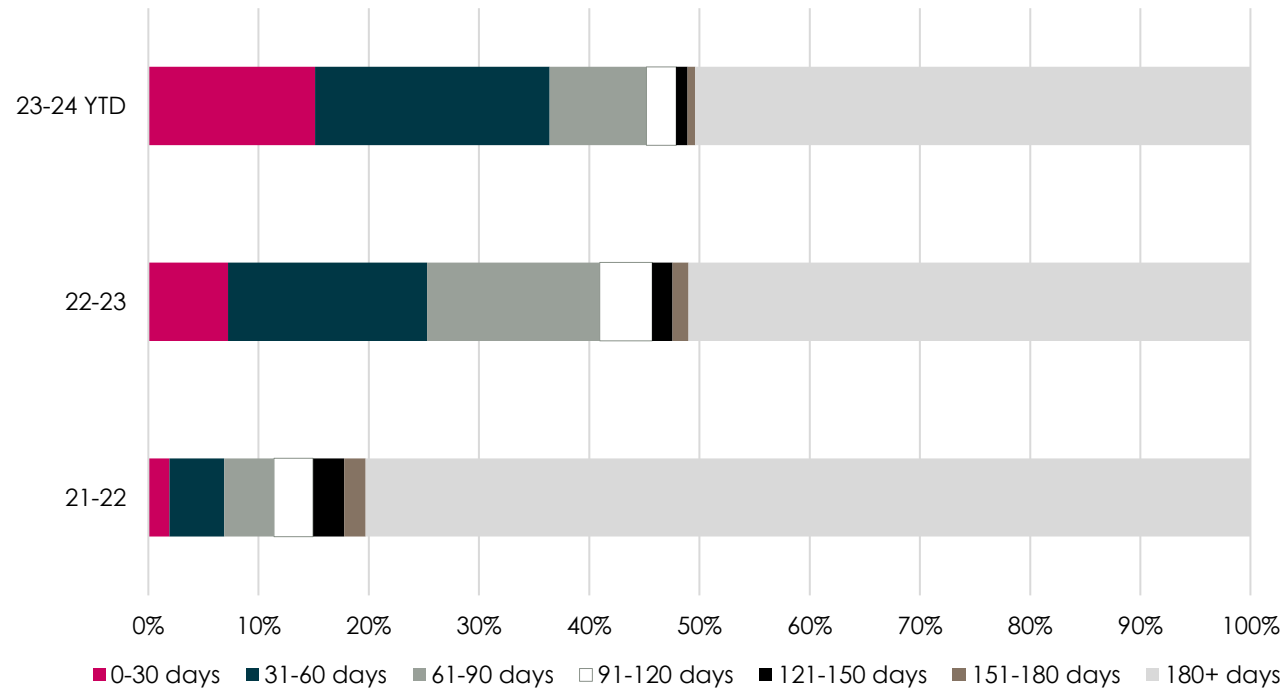
The impact of early resolution

- In 2022 we resolved over 9,400 complaints – 44% more than in 2021/22
- We now have a well-established front-end team who resolve cases without the need for a full investigation
- Pre-recovery, all complaints referred to LeO would have been put in a queue waiting to be assessed. In 2022, 57% of complaints were resolved using early resolution – approaches that previously didn't exist.



An update on LeO's journey

Waiting times



- LeO has made a sustained reduction in the number of people waiting for an investigation and anticipates a 30% reduction by the end of the year
- So far in 2023/24 44% of all cases have been resolved within 90 days. In 2021/22, 80% were taking more than 180 days
- The half of LeO's customers whose complaints have been resolved through early resolution could expect, on average, to get an outcome within 60 days
- LeO expects to end 2023/24 within its Business Plan forecast ranges for resolved complaints

An update on LeO's journey

Scheme Rules

- Scheme Rules changes went live on 1 April 2023 as planned
- We trained all investigators and ombudsmen on the application of these rules
- We updated resources both internally and externally to reflect the Scheme Rule changes
- We delivered training on the Scheme Rule changes to external stakeholders

An update on LeO's journey

Forward look

- LeO is seeing and absorbing a sustained increase in demand. New complaints accepted for resolution rose by 6.4% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. LeO has also seen a 13% year-on-year increase in early contacts and enquiries and a 6.1% increase in new complaints received.
- LeO expects to resolve 8,300 complaints in 2024/25. This is 200 (2.5%) more than the forecast for 2023/24, and will be delivered without additional operational resource.
- The queue will reduce by 40%, with around 1,650 cases remaining at the end of March 2025 – reflecting the balance LeO is aiming to strike between continuing to improve customers' experience and absorbing demand to minimise costs.
- By end of March 2025, half of complaints will still be suitable for early resolution, with no waiting time. Including all cases, the overall proportion resolved within 90 days will continue to increase over this time.

Office for Legal Complaints' 2024-27 strategy

Looking to the future

- Currently consulting on the strategy and business plan until 22 December – we welcome formal feedback, following significant pre-consultation engagement.
- New core objective around LeO's positive impact on the sector – a commitment to do more with our unique insight into legal complaints, and how service providers can prevent them or resolve them at first tier
- Support for an “invest to save” approach – ongoing engagement with the sector about what our priorities should be
- Collaboration with regulators and service providers with a shared focus on improving the services consumers receive

Overview

Purpose and what LeO is here to do

Resolving consumer complaints about legal providers, and sharing insight to improve legal services

Vision and where LeO is heading

A leading and trusted Ombudsman scheme where every complaint helps drive better legal services

Overview

Strategic objective for LeO's service			Strategic objective for LeO's impact		
LeO resolves complaints fairly and effectively, providing an excellent customer experience			LeO's independent voice and experience lead to improvements in legal services		
Aims			Aims		
We will deliver an efficient and proportionate service	We will give fair, high-quality outcomes that make a difference	We will be accessible to everyone who needs us	We will build LeO's profile and impact as an independent voice for improvement	We will share learning and insights that help lead to better legal services for consumers	We will use our experience to help legal providers improve their complaints handling

Insights into LeO's conveyancing casework

Conveyancing in our casework

Headlines

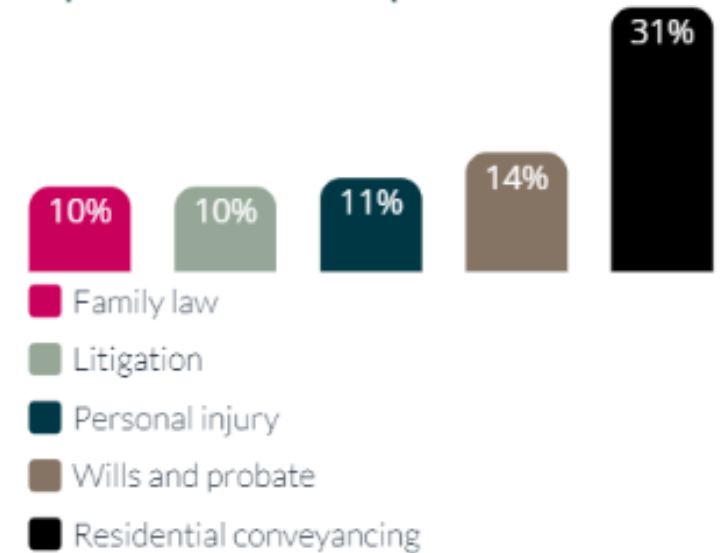
Residential conveyancing generates the most complaints at LeO

- One third of complaints we investigate annually
- The number of complaints we receive has increased each year since 2019

Significantly impacted by the pandemic and its aftermath

- Suffered issues faced by other areas of law such as the need to adjust and work remotely
- Experienced increased demand following the pandemic due to initiatives such as the stamp duty land tax holiday
- Experienced consequential delays due to those experienced by other organisations

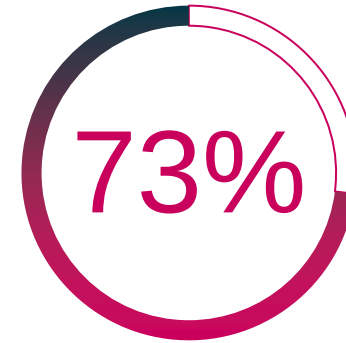
Top areas of law complained about



Conveyancing in our casework

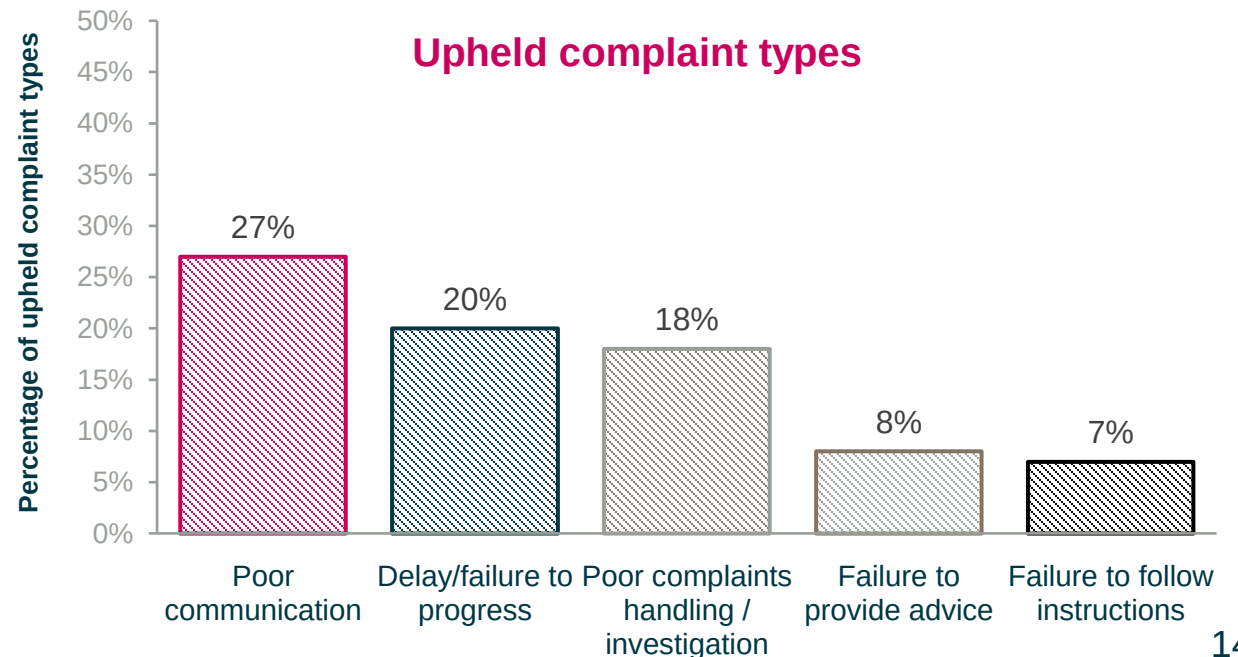
In 2022/23...

- We resolved 2265 residential conveyancing complaints
- We found evidence of poor service in almost three quarters of the complaints that required an investigation
- Complaints regarding communication (failure to keep informed and failure to respond) made up 27% of the complaint types we upheld



Evidence of poor service

We found evidence of poor service in 73% of complaints we investigated



Conveyancing in our casework

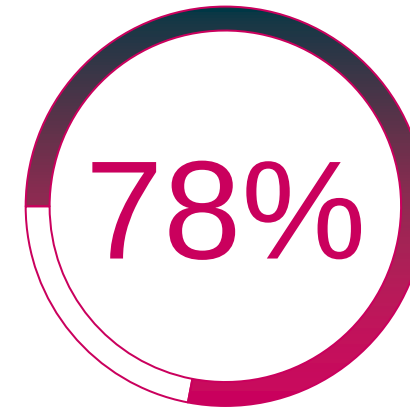
In 2022/23...

Issues with complaint handling at tier one included the failure to:

- Respond to all issues of complaint
- Provide the complaints procedure
- Inform customers of when and how complaints can be referred to LeO



Was the tier one process adequate?
43% Yes
57% No



Did we charge a case fee?
78% Yes
22% No

Resources and support

- **Technical advice** – opportunity to talk to an ombudsman about an issue or complaint before it comes to us for investigation
- Published **guidance** across areas of law and aspects of service and complaints handling
- **Training and events** – online and in person.
- **LeO News** – our newsletter can be subscribed to via our website

Thank you