

## Written evidence from HMRC (PHS39)

### Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman Scrutiny 2021-22

#### Introduction :

HMRC are the UK's tax, payments and customs authority, with a vital purpose to collect the money that pays for the UK's public services and help families and individuals with targeted financial support.

#### Evidence:

##### Stakeholder Engagement and UK Central Government Complaint Standards:

- HMRC have worked in partnership with the PHSO and other OGDs via the **Complaint Standards Working Group** over the last ten months to support the development and launch of the PHSO UK Central Government Complaint standards. Throughout this partnership HMRC have found the PHSO approach to be collaborative, encouraging open discussions whilst actively listening to constructive challenges and concerns.
- HMRC has a good working relationship with PHSO. At a senior level there has been active and positive engagement between Angela MacDonald, HMRC Deputy CEO, Second Permanent Secretary and Complaint Champion for UK Government and Rob Behrens the Ombudsman alongside Amanda Amroliwala PHSO CEO. This is supported by a strong relationship at working level.
- HMRC are supportive of the UKCG Complaint standards as they align with **HMRC Charter standards** and HMRC's vision and strategy for the future of complaint handling. Understanding the importance of the standards across government, HMRC have agreed to become a trailblazer for the UKCG Complaint standards. By becoming a trailblazer organisation, we will have a unique opportunity to lead the way for UKCG services, to ensure that the standards and the materials that support them work in practice and then, in turn, help support other organisations on their own journey.
- HMRC acknowledge that it has not been straightforward to create one set of complaint standards for all government organisations and departments. The PHSO have reassured HMRC that they will be flexible in their approach and HMRC will continue to work with the PHSO to make sure the Complaint standards and associated materials work for our organisation, our colleagues and our service users.
- The PHSO have regularly engaged with HMRC during the development and launch of their standards and whilst there have been times where **communications could have been clearer**, (particularly when explaining the intention behind some of the tools

and guidance), when clarity has been sought the PHSO have been quick to respond and reassure.

- The PHSO have engaged proactively with members of the **Cross Government Complaint Forum both at Working and Director levels** to build awareness and promote the complaint standards. The Cross Government Complaints Forum (CGCF) was set up to raise standards in complaints handling across government. The overall aim is to collectively advance customer service standards across government, improve the quality of complaint handling and encourage departments to value and maximise the use of insight and learning from complaints and wider customer dissatisfaction. Understanding the importance of these forums, PHSO have taken every opportunity to work with both senior and frontline members of the cross-government complaint community to ensure successful adoption of the complaint standards.

#### Casework:

- HMRC have an excellent working relationship with PHSO, and their caseworkers/investigators are professional, knowledgeable and easy to engage with. We appreciate that PHSO colleagues support a direct communication approach to resolve queries and issues to find and agree a way forward, whilst maintaining their independence.
- Our positive and constructive interactions with the PHSO have resulted in reciprocal learning opportunities, enabling a culture of learning lessons from complaints and wider customer dissatisfaction.

*November 2022*