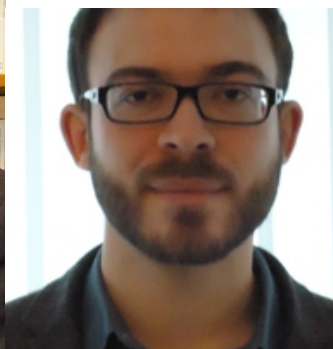


Scotland's Model Complaint Handling Procedures: Exploring Recent Developments and the Usefulness of Complaints Data for Administrative Justice Research

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1. Brief summary of what the research is about.

The project involves small-scale exploratory case study research into Scotland's newly simplified complaints handling and reporting landscape. The research will describe the changes that have taken place and provide an initial analysis of newly available complaints data. The research aims to explore the potential benefits of recent changes and, particularly, to advance administrative justice

	research by investigating how this data might be used in future research. Here is some more detailed background to the changes which the research will explore: The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act) contains measures to simplify and standardize complaint handling procedures across Scotland's public services. The Act gives the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) new powers in relation to the development and monitoring of model complaints handling procedures (model CHPs). The SPSO has created a small internal unit called the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) to deliver its new responsibilities. The CSA has now established model CHPs in most areas of Scottish public service and has also issued guidance on reporting requirements and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The CSA is working with partners including Audit Scotland to monitor complaint handling performance and is empowered to report instances of non compliance with a model CHP to the Scottish Parliament.
2. What are the research questions?	The proposed research <i>aims</i> to: 1) Describe the changes that have taken place and explore their potential benefits with key stakeholders; <i>and</i> 2) Collect, and provide an initial analysis of, complaints data reported by Scottish local authorities. The proposed research will focus on the local authority sector since this is where the model CHPs were first introduced and where the system is most likely to be well established. The research <i>objectives</i> are to:

	a) Compare how model CHPs are operating across Scottish local authorities; b) Evaluate the usefulness of reported data for administrative justice researchers; c) Highlight areas for further investigation in future research; d) Draw lessons for wider administrative justice policy and practice from the model CHP approach.
3. What, if any, outputs so far?	N/A
4. What outputs are planned?	A policy focused report will be published in summer 2017. This will be followed by a journal article, which we hope to have published in 2018. We also hope to hold an event to disseminate the outcomes of the research.
5. What is the anticipated impact?	The proposed research will be of value to: • The CSA, by providing an initial analysis of complaints data and considering issues of data quality; • Scottish local authorities by exploring patterns, variations, themes, and trends in complaints data across Scotland; • Services users and other stakeholders who are affected by, or interested in, the operation of public service complaint handling procedures; • Policymakers and ombuds schemes in other jurisdictions, who may be considering adopting a CSA-type role; • Other parts of the administrative justice system, which may be able to learn

	from the approach used in relation to complaints; <i>and</i> • Administrative justice researchers with an interest in complaints procedures, administrative data, and empirical methodologies.
6. Comments / additional information / requests for data or input from the broader administrative justice community	N/A