

Making a complaint

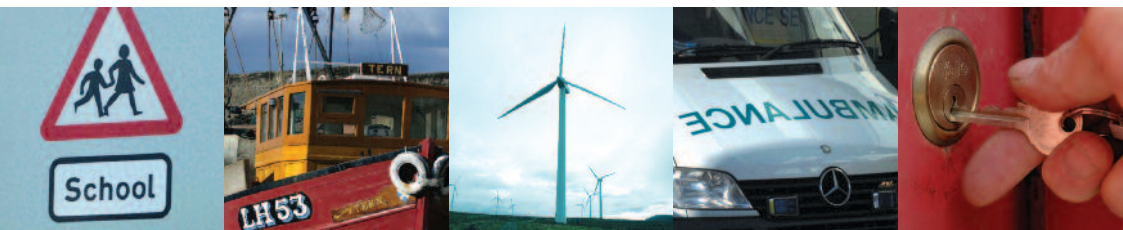
We provide a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about public services in Scotland. We deal with complaints after they have completed the complaints procedure of the organisation that delivered the service.

These include:

**Councils • the National Health Service • prisons
housing associations • most water and sewage providers
colleges and universities • the Scottish Government
Scottish Public Authorities**

This leaflet explains how to make a complaint.

SPSO Advice line freephone: **0800 377 7330**



Can I bring my complaint to the SPSO?

We are the final stage for complaints about most public services in Scotland. If you feel that an organisation has provided a poor service, delivered a service badly or failed to provide a service, you should first complain to them. We normally deal with complaints **after** they have completed the complaints procedure of the organisation that delivered the service.

What to do if you want to complain

Tell the public service you are unhappy with that you want to complain. This will give them a chance to put things right.

- 1 Contact the public service and ask for their complaints leaflet or complaints procedure.
- 2 Write a letter of complaint. Head your letter 'formal complaint' and keep copies of your letters and responses. There is an example of a complaint letter on the next page.
- 3 Make sure you write to the correct member of staff at the right address. Write to the Chief Executive or phone the organisation for advice if you are not sure who to write to.
- 4 Keep copies of your letters and the replies you get back. If someone from the public service responds to you by telephone, ask them to put their response in writing.
- 5 If you are unhappy with the reply you get from the public service, write to the person at the next stage of the complaints procedure. If you are not sure who this is, call them to find out.

It is important to follow all steps in the complaints leaflet or procedure.

Getting help

There are people who can help who can help you make a complaint. You could ask a friend, a relative, a Councillor, your MSP or an advocate. You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381 Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland Website: www.cas.org.uk

Or check your phone book for your local bureau.

Example of a complaint letter

Your name

Address

Date

Name

Job title

Public service address

Dear _____

FORMAL COMPLAINT

I would like to complain about your service.

- Give details of what has gone wrong and tell them what you think would resolve the problem? Make this clear and explain what you would like to happen.
- Are you looking for an apology, a change in policy, a service that should have been provided that was not?
- You can ask the public service to explain how they made their decision.
- Include information about what you have already done to try to sort things out. Try to make this clear.

Please write to me so that I know that you are looking at my complaint. I would also like to know when you will send me a full reply.

Yours sincerely,

Your name

If you are still unhappy

If you are still unhappy after the public service sends you their final letter, please tell us as soon as you can. We don't usually look at complaints if the matter you want to complain about happened more than a year ago. We also don't look at complaints that have been dealt with in court.

If you're not sure if we can look at your complaint please call us on our advice line freephone: **0800 377 7330**

Complaining to the SPSO

You can write to us at:

**4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS**

Or

**SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 OBR**

You can make a complaint online: **www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form**

Please send copies of relevant paperwork, in particular your first complaint letter and the final response you received from the organisation. Tell us what went wrong, and what you would like to happen to put things right.

You can fax us at: **0800 377 7331**

You can text us on: **0790 049 4372**

For information about what happens when we receive your complaint see Information leaflet 2. You can ask for copies of any of our leaflets by phoning us or going to our website: **www.spsso.org.uk/online-leaflets**

Contacting Us

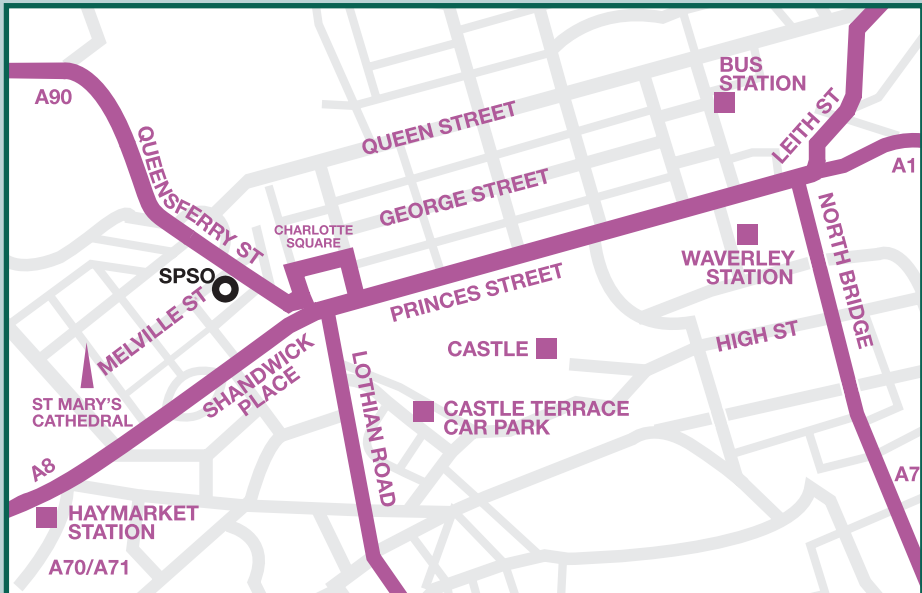
Once you have completed the formal complaints procedure of the public service, please call us on

Advice line freephone: 0800 377 7330

If appropriate, we will send you an SPSO complaint form and tell you what information we will need to consider your complaint.

One of our Complaints Reviewers is always available. If you would like to speak to them by telephone, just call our freephone advice line number. You can also visit our office at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS. You don't need to make an appointment. We are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, apart from Tuesday when we open at 10am.

Please feel free to get in touch with us at any time.





For further information and/or a complaint form please contact us:

SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Tel **0800 377 7330**
Fax **0800 377 7331**
Text **0790 049 4372**
Web **www.spsso.org.uk**
Mobile site **http://m.spsso.org.uk**

SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

This leaflet is available in other languages and formats.

Gàidhlig 中文 (简体字) اردو বাংলা العربية Polski