

How to Complain



What we do at the SPSO

At the SPSO, we look at complaints about most public services in Scotland.

Public services include:

- councils
- the National Health Service
- housing associations
- prisons
- water providers
- colleges and universities
- other Scottish public bodies.

We can usually look at complaints after they have been looked at by the public service first.

This leaflet shows you how to make a complaint. It also tells you what we will do about your complaint.

How you feel is important to us and we take all complaints seriously.

We want to give everyone a chance to have their say and we want to make sure everyone can understand us.

We want to be fair to everyone so we won't take sides.

We keep your complaint private and only tell the people who need to know.

Our service is free.



What to do if you want to complain

Please tell the public service you are unhappy with, that you want to complain. This will give them the chance to put things right. There is an example of a complaint letter on the next page which might help you.

Contact the public service and ask for their complaints leaflet.

Write a letter of complaint. There is an example on the next page.

Write to the Chief Executive if you don't know who to write to.

Keep copies of your letters and the replies you get back.

If someone from the public service telephones you, ask them to put what they say in writing.

If you are unhappy with the reply you get from the public service, call them to find out who to write to next.

Make sure you follow all the steps in the complaints leaflet.

There are people who can help you make a complaint. You can read about them on page 5.



Example of a complaint letter

Your Name
Address
Date

Who you are complaining to:

Name
Job Title
Public Service address

Dear _____

FORMAL COMPLAINT

I would like to complain about your service.

Clearly explain what has gone wrong and how you have suffered.

Clearly explain what would fix the problem.

Please write to me so 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

Getting help to make your complaint

There are people who can help you make a complaint. For example, you could ask a friend or a relative, your Councillor or your Member of the Scottish Parliament. They can listen to what you have to say and help you complain.

You could also get help from someone called an advocate. An advocate will listen to what you have to say and help you tell it to someone else. You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

Here is their address and their telephone and fax numbers:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Melrose House
69 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2JG

Tel: **0131 260 5380**
Fax: **0131 260 5381**

This is their website:
www.siaa.org.uk



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Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau may also be able to help you make your complaint. Their contact details can be found in the phone book or by visiting their website which is www.cas.org.uk

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 thing 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.

You can telephone us on **0800 377 7330**.

You can write to us or visit us at:

SPSO

4 Melville street
Edinburgh
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Or write to us at:

SPSO

Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

You can fill in our complaints form online at:

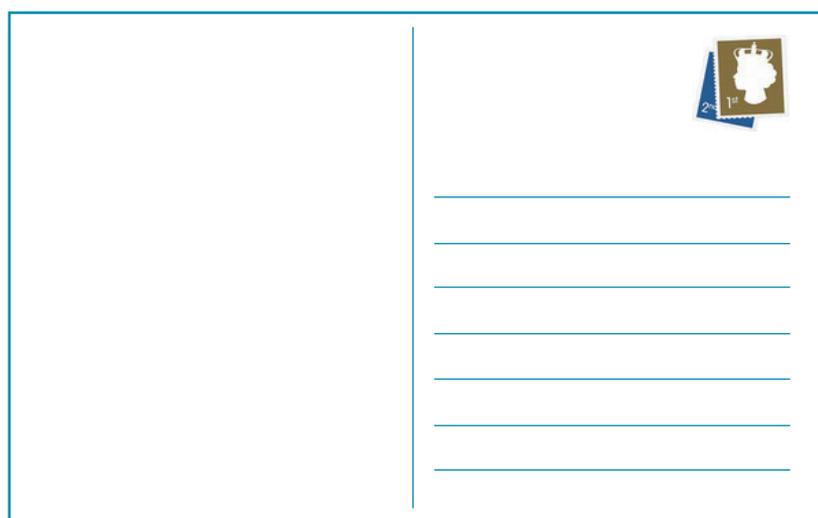
www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form

You can fax us on **0800 377 7331**.



This is what happens when you make a complaint to the SPSO

1. We will send you a postcard to let you know we've got your complaint.
2. The postcard will have a reference number which you can use when contacting us.
3. We won't take more than three days to send you the postcard.
4. The person who is looking at your complaint will contact you within two weeks.
5. We will look at your complaint and find out what has happened.
6. We will try to sort out your complaint as quickly as we can and will keep you up to date with what is happening.
7. When we have finished looking at your complaint we will let you know what we have decided.



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

SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Tel 0800 377 7330
Fax 0800 377 7331
Web www.spsso.org.uk

SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

We can give you this leaflet in another language or format if you ask.

Polski **Gàidhlig** 中文(繁體字) اردو বাংলা العربية