



# Customer Service Standards: our commitments to you

We are committed to offering you a high-quality service. Our Customer Service Standards describe how you can expect us to act.

**Commitment:** We will communicate effectively with you

## Standards

## Indicators

### Respect and Dignity

We will treat you with courtesy, respect and dignity.  
We will work with you without discrimination or prejudice.

### Keeping you informed

We will explain our investigation process to you.  
We will keep you informed of progress and tell you what needs to happen at each stage.  
We will always tell you who to contact if you have any questions.

### Timeliness

We will deal with your complaint in a timely manner, taking into account the complexity of the case.

### Clarity

We will be as accurate, plain and clear as we can in our communications.

### Accessibility

Our service will be easily available and accessible to you.  
We will work with you to meet your individual needs, including working with representatives to support you through our service.

### Understanding

We will listen to what you want from us and ensure we understand your complaint. If we cannot help you, we will direct you to an organisation who can.

# Customer Service Standards

## Commitment: We will work in an open and fair way

### Standards

### Indicators

#### Transparency

We will publicise information about the Ombudsman, who is in charge of decisions on complaints.  
We will give you information about how we handle complaints.

#### Fairness

We will consider all information provided to us before we reach a decision.  
Our decisions will be based on all of the relevant evidence.

#### Impartiality and independence

We will make decisions on cases on the independent evaluation provided to us by all relevant parties alone.

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## Commitment: We will carry out our duties competently and responsibly

### Standards

### Indicators

#### Expertise

We guarantee that the Ombudsman (or the most senior officeholder in charge of your case) has the relevant skills and knowledge to make the decision on your complaint.

#### Explaining our scope

We will clearly explain what we can look at, any restrictions that apply and what we can and cannot achieve.

#### Reaching sound outcomes

We will clearly explain our reasons for our decisions.  
We will ensure remedies are proportionate, appropriate and fair.  
We will make sure remedies are put in place, as far as we can.

#### Ensuring impact

We will use the outcomes of complaints and the learning from them to promote improvement and learning in the service and sector you complained about.

#### Handling information

We will ensure our record-keeping is accurate, that we hold data securely and share it appropriately.

#### Putting things right

We will acknowledge and apologise for any mistakes we make, put them right quickly and ensure lessons are learned to improve our service.

## What we expect from you

We are committed to dealing with you in line with our Customer Service Standards. Our staff have the same rights to be treated with respect and dignity as our users, and we must provide a safe working environment for them. We must also provide a service to all our customers.

This means we need to handle any situation or actions which could have a negative impact on our staff or our ability to work. We may need to speak with you about this or we may need to change the way we engage with you. If this happens, we will explain what we are doing and why. Details of our policy about this can be found at [www.spsso.org.uk/engagement-policy](http://www.spsso.org.uk/engagement-policy), or we can send you a copy of this policy on request.

## Are you happy with the service you received from us?

If something goes wrong or you are not satisfied with our service, please tell us. You have the right to complain if you feel we are not meeting our Customer Service Standards. We take complaints about our service very seriously and have a special procedure for dealing with them. You can get more information about how to complain from our website or by contacting us. Please ask for a copy of our **customer service complaints procedure** and **service complaints form**.

[www.spsso.org.uk/customer-service-standards](http://www.spsso.org.uk/customer-service-standards)

If you are happy with the service you received from us, please let us know. And we are always interested to hear suggestions on how we can improve our service.

### Your information

We are committed to protecting your privacy. We use information given to us about you and your complaint for its intended purpose and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the SPSO Act 2002. We may need to collect and share information with a number of sources to carry out our investigation and we may do this orally, in hard copy or by email. We may report on the outcome of the investigation. When we do so we do not name individuals. We may also use information we collect to compile statistics and undertake research and analysis. There may be public interest benefits in reusing information for these purposes. Information is completely anonymised.

Your views are valuable to us, and we may contact you again to invite you to take part in our surveys for research purposes.

To find out more about how we handle your information and your rights, see our website [www.spsso.org.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.spsso.org.uk/privacy-notice) or ask us for a copy.

If you have any concerns about what we do, please let us know straight away.

## How to contact the SPSO



A freepost envelope can be supplied if this is required



**SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh EH7 4NS**

Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9am – 5pm,  
Tuesday 10am – 5pm

If you would like to visit our office in person, you must arrange an appointment first by phoning 0800 377 7330 or using our online contact form.



Freephone **0800 377 7330**

This line is open during the following hours: Mon, Wed & Fri 9am-1pm,  
Tues & Thurs 1pm-5pm

Calls outside of these hours can be arranged by appointment using our online contact form.



Website **[www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)**



Online contact form **[www.spsso.org.uk/contact-form](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-form)**

You can fill in our complaints form online at **[forms.spsso.org.uk/spsso](http://forms.spsso.org.uk/spsso)**

Calls to and from SPSO phone lines may be recorded to check the quality of our service and help us do our job to help you. More details are in the privacy notice: **[www.spsso.org.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.spsso.org.uk/privacy-notice)**. Please ask if you want to confirm if a call is or is not being recorded or if you would like to know what options may be available to you if you do not wish to be recorded.

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