



What to do if you have a complaint about the Care Inspectorate

We provide a free, independent and impartial service for dealing with complaints about public services in Scotland. You may feel that an organisation provided a poor service, delivered a service badly or failed to provide a service. If this has caused you hardship or injustice, we may be able to look into your complaint. We can normally only deal with complaints if you have already gone through the complaints procedure of the organisation that provided the service.

This leaflet tells you what you can do if you have a complaint about the Care Inspectorate. It also explains what we can and cannot do.

Information about the Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate regulate a wide range of services for adults and children. They inspect and report on registered care services and look at complaints about care services. Although they look at complaints about care services, you cannot appeal their decisions about these complaints through us. We explain this in more detail on the next page.

What should I do if I am unhappy with the service provided by the Care Inspectorate?

You should report the problem to them. They will consider your concerns and they should try to deal with them.

I reported the problem and am still unhappy. How do I complain?

You should normally complain to the Care Inspectorate if they have still not dealt with the matter after you reported it. This doesn't just mean telling staff about the problem. It means making a formal complaint telling them that they have not sorted it out.

You should approach them direct and ask for details of their complaints procedure. If you have internet access, you can find this on their website: **www.careinspectorate.com**

We usually expect you to have completed the Care Inspectorate's complaints procedure before we will look at your complaint. This gives them the chance to try to put things right. If you're still unhappy after going through their complaints procedure, or if the time they're taking to look into your complaint is unreasonable, you can complain to us. But if your complaint was about a decision that the Care Inspectorate made, we can't look at the decision, only at how they handled the complaint itself.

You should make your complaint to us within twelve months of realising that you think the Care Inspectorate have done something wrong.



SPSO freephone 0800 377 7330

What we can look into

We may be able to look at a complaint that the Care Inspectorate:

- took an unreasonably long time to answer your complaint
- didn't do something that they said they would do
- didn't follow their own procedures when considering your complaint about a care service or about the Care Inspectorate
- were biased in the way they considered a complaint about a care service or about the Care Inspectorate
- didn't stick to their own standards (for example the Code of Conduct for Care Inspectorate Employees)
- didn't take into account relevant rules and regulations
- didn't explain their decisions clearly

It's worth bearing in mind that when we look at a complaint, we consider the **process** by which the decision on the issue was reached, rather than the specific issue that you complained about to the Care Inspectorate.

However you should note that:

We can investigate complaints about the Care Inspectorate itself, but we're not part of the appeals process about care services or about inspections that the Care Inspectorate have carried out. You can't appeal to us about a decision that they took on a complaint about a care service and we can't change their decisions. We also can't enforce action against any individual or employee although we can recommend that the Care Inspectorate take steps to address any failure identified. And we can't have anyone sacked.

Other issues that we can't look into include:

- the quality of care given by a care service
- the competence, or fitness to practice, of employees of a care service
- the Care Inspectorate's decisions about inspections, or inspection reports
- the relationship between a care service and its employees, even if these have been affected by the Care Inspectorate's actions
- whether a care service should or should not be registered
- National Care Standards
- personnel issues

We understand that this can be complicated so please call us if you want to ask whether your complaint is one that we're likely to be able to look at.

How we put things right

If we find that something's gone wrong, then as well as putting things right for you we want to try and stop the same thing happening to someone else. That's why some of our decisions and reports also have recommendations. These may include recommending that the organisation apologise or change their procedures. We may ask them to return the situation to what it would have been if they'd acted correctly in the first place. We will look carefully to see what happened and how you have been affected. We will check to make sure that the organisation carry out our recommendations.

We also make some of our investigations public. We do this to share what we have learned from complaints and to help improve how public services are delivered in Scotland.

How to complain to SPSO

- Write to us and tell us what happened. It's best to use our complaint form if possible. You can find this on our website at **www.spsso.org.uk** where you can fill it in online or print it off to complete. Or phone our freephone helpline number **0800 377 7330** and we will send you one.
- Tell us what went wrong, and what you would like to happen to get things put right.
- Send us copies of the main paperwork about your complaint. Please make sure you include the final response you received from the organisation after you complained. It also helps if you send us your original letter of complaint to them.

Can someone else make a complaint for me?

Yes, if you give them written permission. Phone us on **0800 377 7330** and ask for a consent form.

You can get help from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, where an adviser can help you fill in a complaint form or complain for you. Your Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), councillor, Member of Parliament (MP), or a friend or relative may also be able to help.

More help, advice and information

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Scotland may be able to give you further advice and guidance. You can discuss your concerns with your local Citizens Advice Bureau. To find your nearest bureau please visit **www.cas.org.uk**, or look in the phone book.

Carers Scotland

Carers Scotland is part of Carers UK, and is a charity set up to support people who care for elderly, sick or disabled family members or friends. They provide information, advice and support for carers. You can call their helpline, or look at the helpful information on their website. Telephone: **0808 808 7777**
Website: **www.carersuk.org/scotland**

Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate have a helpline for enquiries and there's information on their website about how to complain. Telephone: **0845 600 9527**
Website: **www.careinspectorate.com**

Law Society of Scotland

You may also wish to seek advice about whether there is a legal route for your concerns. The Law Society of Scotland may be able to help you find a solicitor. Telephone: **0131 226 7411**
Website: **www.lawscot.org.uk**

We can give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print or Braille) if you ask.

Contacting us

If you're not sure whether we can look at your complaint, please contact us. You can also call us if you're not sure whether you have gone through the complaints procedure of the organisation you are unhappy with. If appropriate, we'll guide you through that.

You can contact us by phone, in writing or by visiting our office. Visits are by appointment only and can be arranged by calling the number below.

Our address is:

SPSO

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh

EH7 4NS

A freepost envelope can be sent to you. Please call us if you need one.

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

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**

Online contact form: **www.spsso.org.uk/contact-form**

Complaints form: **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. 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.

