

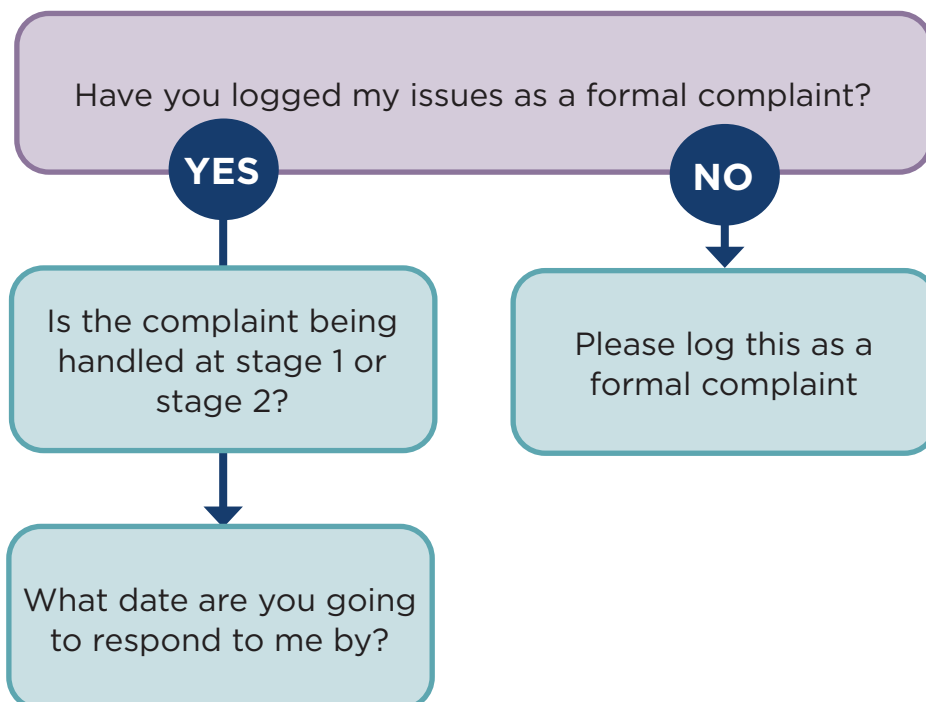


Difficulty and delays in the complaints process

If you have already complained to a public service and are struggling to progress your complaint, follow this advice:

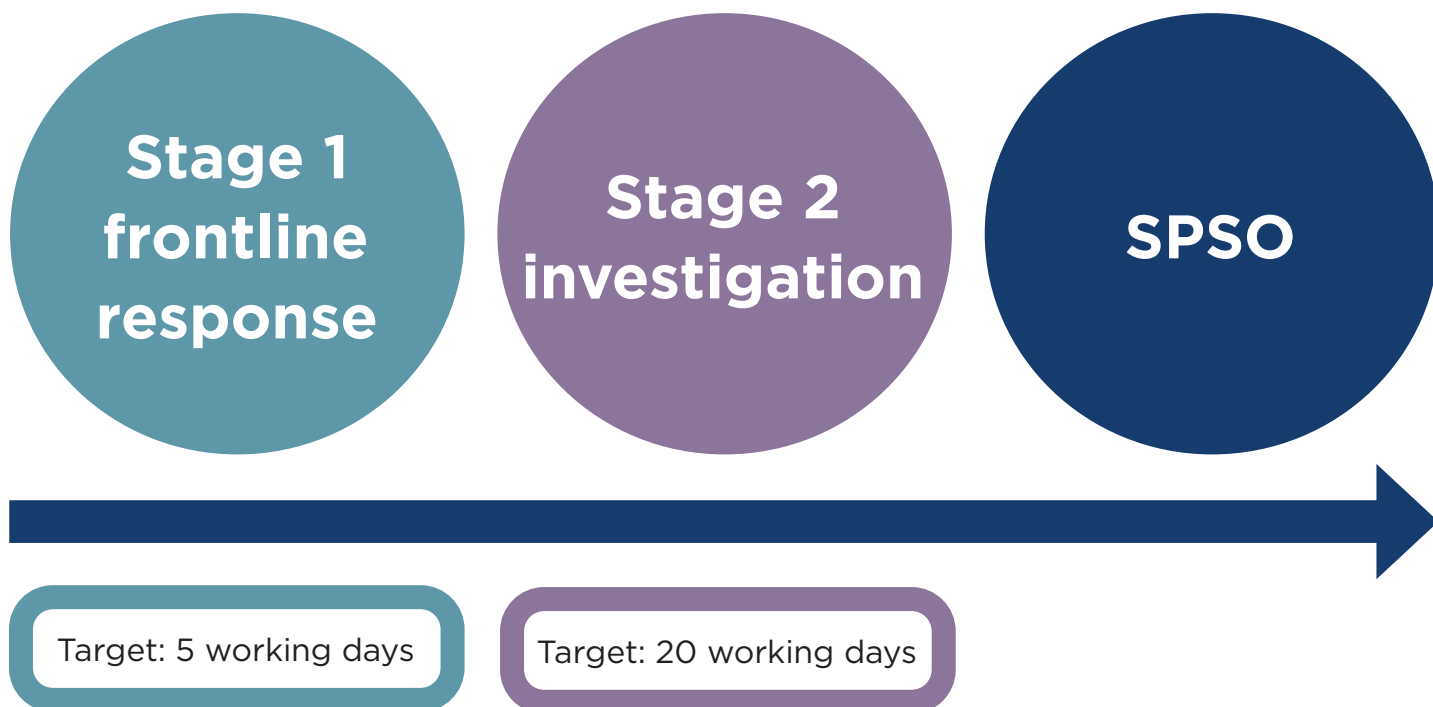
1. **Check the status.** Check that they are dealing with your issue as a complaint, rather than an enquiry, claim or a request for service
2. **Ask for an update.** Ask about the progress of your complaint, the reason for any delay, and when you can expect a response
3. **Escalate.** If you have received a stage 1 response and you are still unhappy, escalate your complaint to stage 2

If you are not sure what stage your complaint is at, you can ask:



What happens after I complain?

The organisation will have a two-stage complaints procedure. This is outlined in the picture below.



Delays

Organisations can sometimes take longer to handle complaints than the timescales set out in the complaints procedure, especially if the matter is complex. If they need more time, they should let you know why and when you can expect a response.

If you are experiencing ongoing delays, contact the organisation's complaints team. Explain that you are concerned about the delay and ask them when you can expect a reply.

Council complaints

If you are waiting for a response from the council and it's taking longer than expected, you can approach your local Councillor. They are elected to represent your community in council matters. You can contact the council to get the contact details for your local Councillor.

NHS complaints

GP, dentist, pharmacist and optician complaints

If you're waiting for a response to your complaint and it's taking longer than expected, contact the practice, pharmacy, or optician. Ask to speak with the practice manager or pharmacy/optician manager, as they handle complaints and should be able to update you on when you can expect a response.

NHS Board complaints

We recognise that due to the complex nature of health complaints, they can take much longer than 20 working days to investigate. If the complaints team cannot give you a clear date for their response, ask them for a commitment to update you every month.

Getting help

The SPSO is an independent service at the end of the complaints process. This means that we cannot help you to make a complaint to a public service organisation.

If you need help with your complaint, you can ask someone you trust. This could be a friend, family member, councillor, or MSP. They can support you or speak on your behalf.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

Tel: **0131 510 9410** Email: **enquiry@siaa.org.uk** Website: **www.siaa.org.uk**

Find your nearest advocate: **www.siaa.org.uk/find-an-advocate**

Citizens Advice Scotland

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can also help you make your complaint.

Website: **www.cas.org.uk**

Find your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau: **www.cas.org.uk/bureaux**

For complaints about the NHS: Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS)

PASS can provide you with information, advice and support if you want to raise concerns or complaints about NHS services. They can help you by writing letters, making phone calls and support you with the complaint.

Tel: **0800 917 2127** Website: **www.cas.org.uk/pass**

How to contact the SPSO



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



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**



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

You can fill in our complaints form online at **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.