












Scottish Government Complaints Handling Procedure

Easy Read version

January 2026

Scottish Government Complaints Handling Procedure

	<p>Make a complaint</p> <p>We listen to complaints and use them to make our services better.</p>
	<p>Please tell us if something has gone wrong or if you are unhappy with our service.</p>
	<p>We will work with you to fix it.</p>
	<p>What is a complaint</p> <p>A complaint is when you tell us that you are unhappy with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• our service• what we did• what we did not do.
	<p>What you can complain about</p> <p>You can complain about things like:</p>

	<p>not answering your questions quickly enough</p>
	<p>bad service</p>
	<p>being treated unfairly by staff</p>
	<p>not following processes properly.</p>
	<p>We will explain how to complain about services provided on our behalf if you are unhappy with them.</p>
	<p>What you cannot complain about</p> <p>There are some complaints that we cannot handle</p> <p>These include:</p>



comments on government policy



first-time requests for services



requests for money for loss or damages



things that are covered by appeal procedures or other complaints processes



asking us to look again at complaints we have decided on



decisions that have been made about Freedom of Information or Environmental Information requests



court cases.



We will give you information and advice on other ways to solve your problem if we can.



Who can complain



You







Anyone can make a complaint about our services.



You can ask someone to complain for you.



They must prove you have given consent for them to do this.

  	<p>To complain you can</p> <p>Email sgcomplaints@gov.scot</p> <p>Write to Scottish Government Complaints 1E. 10 St. Andrews House Edinburgh EH1 3DG</p> <p>If you use BSL contact us at Contact Scotland-BSL</p>
	<p>Please tell us if there is a better way for us to talk to you or if you need help making a complaint.</p>
	<p>Get help to make a complaint</p> <p>Anyone can complain but there may be reasons why you do not want to or cannot complain yourself.</p>
	<p>You can ask a friend, family, or a supporter to make your complaint for you.</p>



The [Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance](#) can help you find local support if you need it.

6 months



When to complain

Complaints should be made within six months.



If you find a reason to complain after six months you can still get in touch.



Sometimes we accept late complaints. Please explain why the time-limit should not apply.

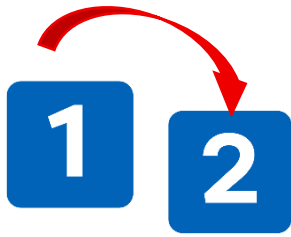


What happens when you complain

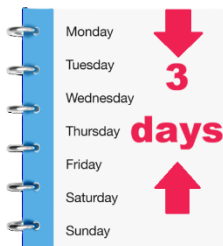
Stage 1

Staff in the service you complained about will reply.

We aim to handle stage 1 complaints in five working days.



You can go to stage 2 if you are not happy with our reply.



Stage 2

Someone new will be asked to look at it. They may suggest changes to make things better.

We will




- tell you that we have got your complaint within 3 working days
- talk about it with you to understand why you are unhappy and what you would like us to do
- write you a full answer within 20 working days.



We will tell you if we think it will take longer to do this.



You can talk to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) if you are still unhappy after stage 2.

	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>The SPSO is the last stop if you have a complaint about the public sector in Scotland.</p> <p>They usually only help if you have already gone through stages 1 and 2.</p> <p>Visit their website Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to learn more.</p> <p>You can also write to their office at Freepost SPSO. No stamp is needed.</p>
	<p>Child friendly complaints</p> <p>The rights of children are written into law in Scotland.</p> <p>This makes sure their needs are met by public services.</p>
	<p>The Scottish Government will handle complaints from children in a child friendly way.</p>



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