



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



# How to make a **complaint**

**If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with the Scottish Parliament's staff or services, please tell us. This document describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.**

**We value complaints and use the information from them to improve our service.**

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

## Who can complain?

Any member of the public can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. (See 'Getting help to make your complaint'.)

## What can I complain about?

You can complain about things such as:

- our failure to provide a service
- inadequate standard of service
- the policies of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB)
- treatment by or the attitude of a member of staff
- the SPCB's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.

Your complaint may involve more than one service.

## What is not a complaint?

A complaint is not:

- the first request for a service (for example, a request for portable seating)
- a request for compensation only
- a request for information or an explanation of a policy or practice
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint where we have given our final decision.

## What can't I complain about?

Some things cannot be dealt with through our complaints handling procedure. These include complaints about:

- Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)
- the Scottish Ministers or Scottish Government policy
- other organisations
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists such as the decision on a freedom of information request.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to assist you.

## How do I complain?

You can complain in person, by telephone, by letter, by email or online using our complaints form at [www.scottish.parliament.uk/complaints](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/complaints)

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned, so please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. They can then try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

## Getting help to make your complaint

If you are unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself, we can accept your complaint from a representative such as a friend, a relative or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain on your behalf. Please contact Public Information for a mandate form if you wish to appoint a representative.

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



0131 556 6443



enquiry@siaa.org.uk



www.siaa.org.uk

## How long do I have to make a complaint?

You must make your complaint within six months of the date when you first knew of the problem, unless there are special circumstances for making your complaint beyond this time. If you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

## What happens when I have complained?

Our complaints procedure has **2 internal stages**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. However, if it is clear that the matter will need detailed investigation, we will tell you who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a response.

## Stage 1: Frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology, an explanation and immediate action to resolve the problem. We will give you our decision within **5 working days**, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve the matter at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next such as taking your complaint to stage 2. You may do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

## Stage 2: Investigation

This stage deals with 2 types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

At this stage, we will acknowledge your complaint within **3 working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible and usually within **20 working days**. If there is clearly a good reason for needing more time, we will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

## External review: The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

After we have fully investigated, if you are dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to look at it.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been, or is being, considered in court.

In addition, please note that the SPSO cannot question the merits of a decision taken by the organisation acting properly within its legal powers.

The SPSO's contact details are:



**By post:**  
SPSO  
Freepost EH641  
Edinburgh  
EH3 0BR

**In person:**  
SPSO  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS



0800 377 7330



[www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)

## A quick guide to our complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by telephone, email or letter, or through our online form.

We have a **2-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, but if it is clear the matter will need detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

### Stage 1: Frontline resolution

We will aim to resolve your complaint quickly, within **5 working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.

### Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We will also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **3 working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible and in no more than **20 working days**, unless there is a good reason for needing more time.

### The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

If you remain dissatisfied with our final decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

## Our contact details

You can contact us by the following means:



Public Information (Complaints)  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



0800 092 7500 or 0131 348 5000  
0131 348 5395 (Gàidhlig)

We also welcome calls using the Text Relay service.



Text the Scottish Parliament on  
07786 209888



[sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk)



[www.scottish.parliament.uk/complaints](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/complaints)

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the public and will always make reasonable adjustments to help you access and use our services.

Please contact us if you have trouble putting your complaint in writing or need this information in another format such as large print, Braille or audio, or in Gaelic or another language. Complaints may be made in English, Gaelic or any other language or format.

We will use any personal details you provide only in order to deal with your complaint.