

Complaints

Date published: 14 December, 2018

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

To see recent changes to this guidance, [check the bottom of this page](#).

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with our standard of service, procedures, or processes that you feel requires a response or explanation from us. You or your representative can complain in person by phone, by email or in writing.

All complaints will be treated seriously by us and you will receive a full response.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

- stage one – frontline resolution
- stage two – investigation

Stage one – frontline resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Under this part of the procedure you should direct your complaint to the officer in charge of the staff you have been dealing with.

This person is likely to be located in your area office or in our office in Edinburgh. They may be able to answer your concerns to your satisfaction. We aim to address your stage one complaint in five working days.

[Contact us](#)

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

Stage two – investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage one. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation before we can resolve the issue.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days. For stage two complaints we will appoint an independent investigating officer who has an in-depth knowledge of the issue you are complaining about and you will receive a report at the end of the investigation.

We aim to issue this report as soon as possible but no later than 20 working days.

You can obtain further information about our complaint handling procedure by visiting the Scottish Government website or by [emailing us](#).

[Scottish Government complaints procedure](#)

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied with the decision reached in the Stage Two report, you or your representative have the right to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to investigate your case.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure
- 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 for example the Scottish Land Court

The SPSO may, however, consider that in certain cases there are 'special circumstances' that mean a complaint is considered even though it has breached the time limit. Further guidance on 'special circumstances' that may be taken into account can be found on the SPSO website.

You can contact the SPSO in the following ways:

- by post – Freepost SPSO (this is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need a stamp)
- by phone – Freephone 0800 377 7330 or 0131 225 5300 (chargeable call)
- by fax –0800 377 7331

[Scottish Public Services Ombudsman website](#)

Scottish Forestry and Scottish Natural Heritage complaints

If your complaint relates to Scottish Forestry or Scottish Natural Heritage, you can contact them directly through their own complaints procedures.

[Scottish Forestry complaints procedure](#)

[Scottish Natural Heritage complaints](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change	New text
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	Addition of text on 'special circumstances' SPSP may consider	The SPSO may, however, consider that in certain cases there are 'special circumstances' that mean a complaint is considered even though it has breached the time limit. Further guidance on 'special circumstances' that may be taken into account can be found on the SPSO website.

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printable version of this guidance you can save or print out.