

Improvement Service

Complaints Handling Procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint by email or in writing.

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

Stage 1: Frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within ten working days if we can. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in ten working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest you take your complaint to Stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

We may ask you for additional information during stage 1, to help us resolve your complaint as quickly and effectively as possible.

Stage 2: Investigation

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

When using Stage 2 we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- Where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- Give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days

We will let you know if our investigation will take longer than 20 working days. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What is a complaint?

An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the Improvement Service.

A complaint may relate to:

- The quality and standard of service
- Failure to provide a service
- Dissatisfaction with an Improvement Service policy
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- The failure of the Improvement Service to follow an appropriate administrative process

Your complaint may involve more than one service or be about someone working on our behalf.

What's not covered under our complaints handling procedure?

There are some things we are unable to deal with through our complaints handling procedure, including:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- A request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act
- A request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- A response to an invitation to provide feedback through a formal mechanism such as a questionnaire will generally not be treated as a complaint
- A grievance by a member of staff which is eligible for handling through the grievance procedure
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- Disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision

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

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service.

Is there a time limit to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- The event you want to complain about, or
- Finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

How to lodge a complaint

You can complain in writing or by email.

When complaining, tell us:

- Your full name and address
- As much as you can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong
- How you want us to resolve the matter

Write to us at the following address:

Improvement Service

WLC Civic Centre,

Howden South Road,

Livingston,

EH54 6FF

Email us at

business.support@improvementservice.org.uk

What if you are still not satisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (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

Getting help

We understand you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equality duties, we'll always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services.

Please get in touch if you have trouble putting your complaint in writing or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille.

Personal information

The Improvement Service seeks to resolve directly all complaints about how it handles personal information.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Write to the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Call 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745