

Making a complaint

About Audit Scotland, Accounts Commission or
Auditor General for Scotland



We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve the way we carry out our work

Audit Scotland helps the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General to make sure organisations that spend public money in Scotland use it properly, efficiently and effectively.

We do this by auditing various aspects of how public bodies work. You can find further information on our website about [the Auditor General](#), [Accounts Commission](#) and [Audit Scotland](#).

Complaints process

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our work, please tell us. We have one complaints procedure covering the Accounts Commission, the Auditor General and Audit Scotland.

Audit Scotland will deal with complaints on behalf of the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and what you can expect from us.

If you make a complaint via our [complaints form](#) we will ensure the complaints is dealt with by the appropriate person.

Concerns about the organisations we audit

If a complaint to Audit Scotland is a concern about a public body, then provided the issues raised fall within our remit, it will be referred to the Correspondence Team for action under our correspondence process.

These concerns will not be considered as part of the Accounts Commission, Auditor General and Audit Scotland complaints process.

Concerns about the quality of audit

If a complaint to Audit Scotland is about the quality of audit, then provided the issues raised fall within our remit, it will be referred to the Audit Quality and Appointments Team for action under our quality complaints process.

Complaints about the standards of the Accounts Commission members

If you wish to make a complaint about the standards of a member of the Accounts Commission, or just want to know more about the kinds of issues that can be considered, please visit our [web page](#) for further information.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- failure or refusal to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- conduct, treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff, or others working on our behalf, eg a contractor, agency, consultant.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints process. These include:

- A routine first-time request for a service.
- A request for compensation only.
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process).
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector.
- A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts.
- A grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment.
- Whistle-blowing it will be acted on under our Whistleblowing Policy.
- A concern about a child or an adult's safety.
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision.
- Abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Actions Policy.

- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf). This will be acted on under our correspondence procedures.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you with your concerns, we will tell you about these.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section overleaf on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

It is usually easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly. You can complain by phone, in writing, email, via our [complaints form](#) or in person at any of our main offices. If you are not sure who to complain to, then contact us and we will direct your complaint to the appropriate person and department. Our contact details are on page 6 of this leaflet.

When contacting us, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- what outcome you are seeking.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

It is better if you make your complaint as soon as possible, and normally be within six months of:

- the event that you want to complain about
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

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

Stage 1 Initial contact response

We aim to resolve complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). 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 five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we cannot resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next.

If you choose to, you can take your complaint to Stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain
- within two months of receiving your Stage 1 response (if this is later).

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect to hear from us. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 2 Investigation

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

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- confirm our understanding of the complaint to be investigated and what outcome you are looking for
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I am still dissatisfied?

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 are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through the Audit Scotland's complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330.

You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint. See the section on Getting help to make your complaint.

SPSO

Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

FREEPOST SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from a person you have chosen to complain for you if you have given them your consent, for example a friend, relative, or an advocate.

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

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

T: 0131 510 9410

www.siaa.org.uk

You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland: www.cas.org.uk or check your phone book for your local citizens advice bureau.

We are committed to making our services easy to use for everyone. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help access to our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us by using the contact details on page 6.

Our contact details

Audit Scotland
Corporate Governance manager
4th floor,
102 West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

Telephone: 0131 625 1500
Online: complaints@audit-scotland.gov.uk
Website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

Or in person at one of our main offices:

4th floor,
102 West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

The Athenaeum Building
4th Floor, South Suite,
8 Nelson Mandela Place
Glasgow
G2 1BT

1st Floor Room 03
Beech Wood Business Park
The Green House
Inverness
IV2 3 BL

Summary of our complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, 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 that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: Initial contact response

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five 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 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 three working days. We will confirm the points of the complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve. We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we 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.

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If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us to discuss your needs: 0131 625 1500 or info@audit-scotland.gov.uk

For the latest news, reports and updates, follow us on:



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T: 0131 625 1500 E: info@audit-scotland.gov.uk
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk