

A useful guide for correspondents

If you have a complaint or an issue of concern about a public body in Scotland, follow this guide. On page 2 we have included some other public sector contacts which you may find useful.

STEP 1

If your complaint or issue of concern is about a public body in Scotland such as an NHS Board or local council, contact the body directly. This might involve asking the public body about why it made certain decisions, for example on a planning application or a proposed school closure. It may also be helpful to request a meeting with the relevant department. Whatever your complaint or issue of concern, public bodies will have procedures to deal with it.



STEP 2

If you are dissatisfied about how a public body has dealt with your complaint or issue of concern, you can complain by following the body's formal complaints procedure. To do this, contact the public body directly and ask for a copy of its procedure.



STEP 3

If you have completed step 2 and are still dissatisfied, you should contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about public bodies in Scotland. It will only consider complaints that have been through the formal complaints procedure of the organisation concerned. The SPSO considers complaints where a member of the public claims to have suffered injustice or hardship as a result of maladministration, for example mismanagement, or because a service has failed. For more information about the SPSO, what they can consider and details of the public bodies within their remit contact www.spsso.org.uk

We use correspondence to help inform our work. In general, our work covers issues of concerns that have wide implications rather than those that affect one person or a small number of individuals, unless the issue involves significant sums of money. For example, we can examine issues of concern that relate to how public bodies use public money and the processes they go through to make decisions.

If you wish to share your issue of concern with us, please copy us into your correspondence with the public body. We will add it to other information we already have, to build a clearer overall picture of the organisations and services we audit. For more information on how we use correspondence please visit our [website](#).

Useful Contact information for other public bodies

We may not be the appropriate people to take up an issue of concern that you wish to raise about a public body. The list below provides information and contact details of public services in Scotland and public bodies and regulators associated with them. When someone approaches us with an issue of concern we often refer them to a body on this list if we feel they are better placed than us to help. You may find it helpful to refer to this list before you contact us to check that we are best placed to deal with your issue of concern.

We annually review and update this list based on our experience of the correspondence we receive and how often we refer correspondents to another public body.

Public service or issue	Organisation	What their remit covers	How to contact them
Care services, such as care homes for adults, nurseries	Care Inspectorate	Regulates and inspects services to make sure they meet the right standards	www.careinspectorate.com
Debt, money advice	Citizens Advice Scotland	Independent and free advice	www.cas.org.uk/bureaux
Conduct of MSPs, councillors and members of public bodies	Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland	Investigates complaints	www.ethicalstandards.org.uk
Discrimination and human rights, including work-based discrimination	Equality Advisory Support Service	National helpline and advice service	www.equalityadvisorysupportservice.com
Fraud within the NHS	NHS – Counter Fraud Services	Provides NHSScotland with a counter fraud service through the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, embezzlement, theft, corruption and other irregularities	www.cfs.scot.nhs.uk
Unresolved complaints about your internet or telephone provider	Ombudsman Services – Communications	Independent free service for consumers, they handle disputes between communication companies that are signed up to their scheme and consumers (domestic customers and small businesses Approved by Ofcom,	www.ombudsman-services.org/
Charities, including community groups, religious charities, schools, universities and major care providers	OSCR (Scottish Charity Regulator)	Regulates and maintains the registrar for over 23,500 Scottish charities	www.oscr.org.uk
Police and policing	Police Investigations and Review Commissioner	Independent scrutiny of how police bodies respond to complaints. Investigates serious incidents involving the police	www.pirc.scotland.gov.uk

[Continue](#)

Public service or issue	Organisation	What their remit covers	How to contact them
Planning: the system in general	Planning Advice Scotland	Advice on how the planning system works generally	www.pas.org.uk/overview
Planning decisions	Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals	Advice on how and when you can appeal planning decisions. Their website details their role and the cases they consider	www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk
Procurement	Single point of enquiry (Scottish Government)	Advice for suppliers who have issues or concerns with a procurement exercise, carried out by Scottish public sector organisations. They provide an independent, impartial and confidential service for suppliers and potential suppliers to the Scottish public sector.	www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement/Selling/supplier-enquiries
Housing, registered social landlords (RSLs), tenants, homeless people	Scottish Housing Regulator	Regulates social landlords (RSLs) and local services to protect the interest of tenants, homeless people and others	www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk
Housing advice registered social landlords (RSLs), tenants, homeless people	Shelter Scotland	Shelter Scotland provide answers and advice for anyone with issues from homelessness to home owner.	www.scotland.shelter.org.uk
Freedom of information	Scottish Information Commissioner	Promotes and enforces people's right to ask for information held by Scottish public authorities	www.itspublicknowledge.info
Complaints about legal practitioners in Scotland	Scottish Legal Complaints Commission	Investigates complaints	www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk
Whistleblowing	Protect	Advice on how best to raise concerns and rights as a whistleblower. Also helps organisations to deal correctly with whistleblowing disclosures	www.protect-advice.org.uk