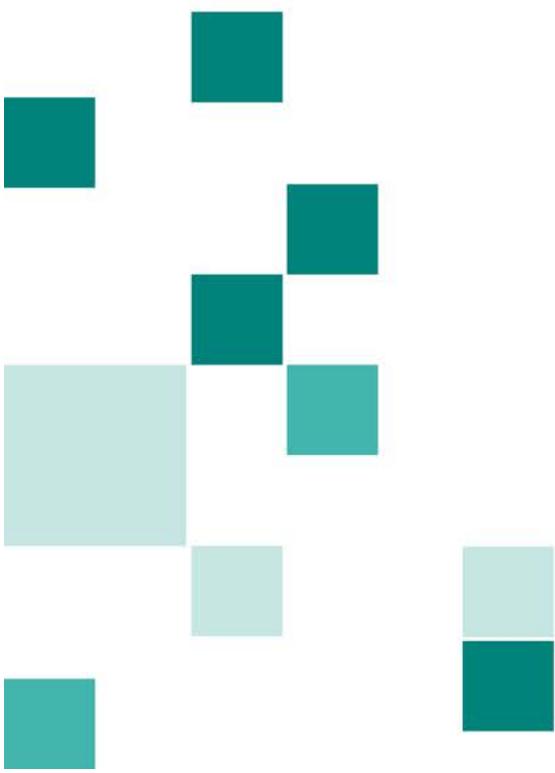


Complaints Handling Procedure Guide for complainants

August 2019



Contents

Complaints about the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).....	2
What do we treat as a complaint?.....	2
Who can complain?.....	3
How to complain.....	3
Unacceptable actions policy	5
Getting help to make your complaint	5
Monitoring complaints	6
Review	6

Complaints about the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

The SSSC was established in October 2001 by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. We are responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training. Our vision is of a trusted, skilled and confident social service workforce. Our aims are to protect those who use services, to raise standards of practice and to strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce.

We want to know what you think about us, our services and the way we deliver them. We always aim to give the best possible service in all areas of our work, but we accept that sometimes things may go wrong. When that happens, we would like to know so we can try to put things right. This document explains what we can deal with under our complaints procedure, how you can complain and how we will deal with your complaint.

If you need help to make your complaint please let us know.

We treat all the information you give us as confidential. We follow data protection laws in handling and managing information about your complaint.

What do we treat as a complaint?

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf. This includes the conduct of our staff.

Here are some examples of the types of things you can complain about.

- Delays in responding to your enquiries and requests.
- Failure to carry out our business properly.
- Our standard of service.
- Our policy.
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff.
- Our failure to follow proper procedure.

Your complaint could involve more than one part of the SSSC or be about someone working on our behalf.

We will not consider the following as a complaint.

- A routine first time request for a service (for example, a request for information in a different format).
- Requests for compensation.
- Any decision under the [Registration Rules](#), [Fitness to Practise Rules](#), [Social Work Training Rules](#), [Specialist Training for Social Service Workers Rules](#) or other SSSC Rules.
- Any decision challengeable in law.
- Any exercise of discretion, except where the decision is unreasonable, unless the complaint is that SSSC procedures were not followed or there has been unreasonable delay.

Other procedures or rights of appeal may help to resolve your concerns. If this is the case we will give information and advice to help you.

If you want to complain about a social service worker, read the [process you should follow](#) on our website.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on [Getting help to make your complaint](#).

Anonymous complaints

You may want to make a complaint without providing your personal details. We take all complaints seriously and this includes those made anonymously.

If possible we will investigate anonymous complaints, however it may be that the anonymous nature of the complaint will prevent a full investigation. We will use outcomes from an anonymous complaint to help us improve how we deliver our services.

When a complaint can be made

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 complain

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, by email or online by using our [complaint form](#).

You can contact us in person or by post at:

Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

By phone: 0345 60 30 891

By email: complaints@sssc.uk.com

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.

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages.

Stage one

Our aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and as simply as possible. If you feel able to do so, please raise your complaint with the member of SSSC staff that you have been dealing with. If you feel you can't complain directly to that person, please refer your complaint to their manager. You can find out who this is by emailing enquiries@sssc.uk.com or by calling 0345 60 30 891.

Let the member of staff or their manager know what the problem is, how it happened, and what you would like us to do to sort it out.

We will give you our decision at stage one in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Often we will be able to respond sooner, for example if an on-the-spot apology and explanation is appropriate, or if we can take immediate action to resolve the problem.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to stage two. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

Stage two

We deal with two types of complaints at stage two - those that have not been resolved at stage one and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

At stage two 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.

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 the progress.

All stage two complaints will be handled by a member of our Executive Management Team (EMT). If appropriate, complaints at this stage can be referred to our Chief Executive. The EMT member will manage the complaint and appoint an investigator if necessary.

If the complaint is about our Chief Executive, two Council Members appointed by the Convener will handle it. The members may choose to include another independent person if it is reasonable to do so.

If the complaint is about a Council Member or panel member the Chief Executive will handle it.

If at the end of stage two you are still dissatisfied you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Procedure for complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

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 is not complete under our complaints procedure (please make sure it is complete before contacting the SPSO)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago; however, the Ombudsman may consider complaints outwith this period if there are special circumstances which make it appropriate to do so, or
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In person: SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh EH7 4NS

Website: www.spsso.org.uk
Post: FREEPOST SPSO
Phone: 0800 377 7330

Unacceptable actions policy

Please be aware that we have an Unacceptable Actions Policy. If someone continues to correspond with us about a complaint that we have fully reviewed in line with the complaints procedure, we may respond in line with [our unacceptable actions policy](#).

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that 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, advocate or elected official (for example your MSP or MP), if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

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

Phone: 0131 260 5380
Website: www.siaa.org.uk

We are committed to making our service easy to use for everyone. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use 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) tell us in person, call us on 0345 60 30 891 or email enquiries@sssc.uk.com

Monitoring complaints

We will keep a record of the number, nature and outcome of complaints and use this information to improve service delivery. We will use the record of complaints to identify trends, which will allow a proactive response to potential areas of complaint, and to identify training requirements.

We publish the results of our complaints handling performance, including actions taken and improvements made where applicable, every quarter on our website. [Read the results of our complaints handling performance.](#)

Review

The complaints handling procedure came into effect on 1 April 2014 and applies to all complaints received from that date. It was revised in May 2018 and May 2019.

You can find the current complaints handling procedure on our website [here](#).



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If you would like this document in another format,
please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

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