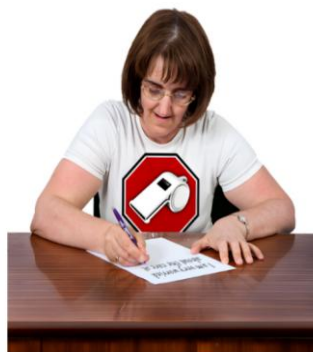


Raising a concern guidance for members of the public



Easy read booklet

1. Who we are



We are the **Scottish Social Services Council**.

We make sure **social service workers** in Scotland give people good care.



We can **investigate** when someone tells us they are not happy about the care they are receiving (a **concern**).

Investigate means we will try to find out what happened. We will speak to people and look at documents to find out the facts.



Social service workers have an **employer**. An employer is the person or company that gave them their job.

2. What this booklet is about



You can tell us if you are not happy about how a social service worker is caring for you or someone you know. We will treat this as a **concern** and we will decide whether we will investigate the concern further.



This booklet tells you when you can tell us about a concern and how you can tell us.



This booklet also tells you about what we can investigate and what we may not be able to investigate, and why this might be.

This booklet tells you about what happens if we do decide to investigate the concern.

3. Before we can investigate



We can only investigate concerns about people who are social service workers.

We need you to tell us the name of the person you have the concern about.



Our process is called **fitness to practise**.



As part of fitness to practise, we need to investigate if a social service worker is able to give good care.

If we do not think they are able to give good care, we may decide that their fitness to practise is **impaired**.



If someone is not fit to practise this may mean they need more training or are not allowed to give care.



The person you have the concern about needs to be **registered** with us or **applying to register** with us.

This means they need to have already been allowed to work with people who need care or support or are applying to be allowed to do this.



Before we investigate, we might ask you to speak to the employer of the social service worker about the concern you have.

If the concern involves something an employer has done, we may ask you to speak to the **Care Inspectorate** about this.



The Care Inspectorate check all care services in Scotland to make sure they give good care.

4. Concerns we can investigate

We can investigate concerns about how a social service worker has behaved. This is sometimes called their **conduct**. Bad conduct is called **misconduct**.



Misconduct by a social service worker can be things like:

- hitting someone
- using bad words
- saying things that are not true
- not caring for someone properly.



We can also investigate concerns about a social service worker not doing their job properly. This is called their **professional practice**.



We can investigate concerns about a social service worker's **health**, where this affects how they do their job.

5. Concerns we can't investigate

We are not able to:

- change any decisions that have been made about care, reports that have been written or change the person who gives care
- change the law
- help you claim compensation (money) for something that has happened
- change information other people might have about you.



We will also not investigate conduct that is less serious. This might include things like a social service worker:

- being late for work a lot
- smoking
- saying things online, unless they were saying really bad things about certain groups of people.



6. How to tell us about a concern



The best way to tell us about a concern you have is to use the form on our website. You can do this if you click [on this blue link](#).



If you are not able to use the online form, you can contact us:

- by phone: 0345 60 30 891
- by email: ftp@sssc.uk.com
- by post: Scottish Social Services Council, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY.



You can tell us about a concern without telling us your name. This is called an **anonymous** concern.

You can tell us about a concern anonymously in two ways.



- Tell us your details anonymously. This means we can still speak to you for more information.
- Do not tell us your details. This means we might not be able to investigate if we are missing important information and are not able to contact you.



If you feel able to provide us with your details, this helps us, as we can speak to you if we need more information.



If you are telling us about a concern that someone else has, it helps if you give us their details.



When telling us about a concern, it helps us if you give us the following information:

- who the social service worker is
- what the concern is, with as much detail as possible
- if you have told the social service worker's employer about the concern, what they have done about it
- any documents (paperwork) you have about the concern.



If your concern is about something a social service worker said or did, it helps to tell us exactly what they said or did. Also, instead of just saying something was bad, explain what they did that was wrong and why you were not happy.

7. What happens next



We will read all the information you have given us about your concern. We will decide whether to investigate the concern further.



We might ask you for more information about your concern.



We might also ask for information from other people, such as the police, if we think we need to.



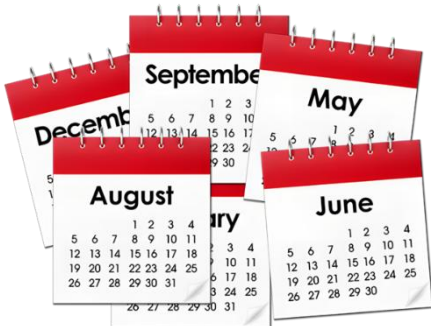
If we decide to investigate further, you will be contacted by an **Investigator** or a **Solicitor** who will explain what will happen next. Investigators and Solicitors are employed by the SSSC to investigate fitness to practise concerns.



They will also speak to other people for information, such as the social service worker's employer.



Every investigation is different and we cannot tell you exactly how long an investigation will take.



On average, investigations take around six months if we decide to take **no further action** (see 12 below). If we decide to take action, the investigation will take longer.



If we decide not to investigate further, we will let you know. We will tell you why this is. We may also tell you who else you might be able to speak to about your concern.

8. What we do with the information you give us



If we decide to investigate the concern, we will tell the social service worker about the concern. We will ask them what they think about the concern.



If there is anything you don't want us to tell the social service worker about, please let us know. We will talk to you about this.



We may use information you have given us about the concern when we make a decision.



Information may also be put on our website when a decision is made or shared with other people if we decide we need to do this. If you are worried about this, speak to us.

9. Information will we give you



If we decide to investigate your concern, you can speak to us at any time if you want to know what is happening.



Our investigation is about the social service worker and the concern you have told us about. We might not be able to share all information with you.



We know this might be difficult. Our job is to decide what to do about the social service worker's registration with us.

10. Temporary Orders



We may decide that a **Temporary Order** is needed at any time.



A Temporary Order is something we can do which may:

- stop a social service worker from working
- put things in place to make sure it is safe for them to work

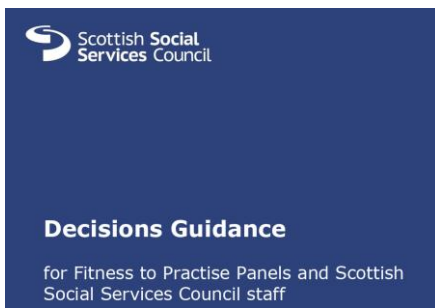
while we investigate the concern.

11. Outcomes



Once we have investigated the concern, we will decide if the social service worker's fitness to practise is impaired. If it is, we need to decide what action to take.

We use a document called our **Decisions Guidance** to help us. You can read this if you click on [this blue link](#).



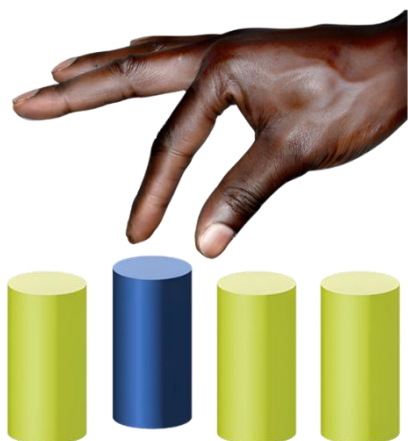
Using this document helps to make sure our decisions are fair.



Once a final decision has been made about your concern, we will tell you the decision.

The possible outcomes are:

- no further action (see 12 below)
- taking action, this could be:
 - a warning
 - conditions (things they need to do to keep working, like training)
 - a warning and conditions
 - suspension (stopping them from working for a while)
 - removal from the SSSC Register or not allowing them to be registered.



If we decide to take action, it will normally be up to the social service worker to decide whether to accept this.



The social service worker can ask for a **hearing** to take place if they do not agree with the decision made by the SSSC.



A hearing involves a number of different people listening to information about the concern and making a decision.



If we hold a hearing, we may ask you to come to the hearing as a **witness**.



A witness is someone who speaks about what they have seen or heard.



If a hearing is taking place, the SSSC Investigator or Solicitor will speak to you about this. It would be your decision about whether you wanted to be a witness at the hearing.

12. No further action



If we take no further action, it does not mean we do not believe you or think nothing happened.



We might decide there is not enough evidence. We call this **insufficient evidence**. This means the evidence does not meet the legal test.



We may also decide that the social service worker's fitness to practise is not impaired. This might be because:

- they have been working safely
- they have said sorry and/or
- they have carried out further training.



We will keep a record of our investigation and may look at it again in the future if things change.

13. More information



This is the end of this booklet.



To find out more, you can visit the fitness to practise section of our website if you click [on this blue link](#).



On our website you can find more information about:

- investigations
- hearings
- being a witness
- investigation outcomes.



If you are not happy about anything, you can make a complaint about us. You can see our complaints policy if you click [on this blue link](#).



Our policy says that we can look into complaints about the way we have done our work. We are not able to look into complaints that are only about a decision we have made about a fitness to practise concern.



In this Easy Read document, we used pictures from Photosymbols.