



# Bringing a complaint to the SPSO

For further information and/or a complaint form please contact us:

**SPSO, 4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh EH3 7NS**

Tel **0800 377 7330**  
Fax **0800 377 7331**  
Text **0790 049 4372**  
Email **ask@spsso.org.uk**  
Web **www.spsso.org.uk**

**SPSO**  
**Freepost EH641**  
**Edinburgh EH3 0BR**

This leaflet is available in other languages and formats.

Gàidhlig 中文 (繁體字) اردو বাংলা العربية Polski

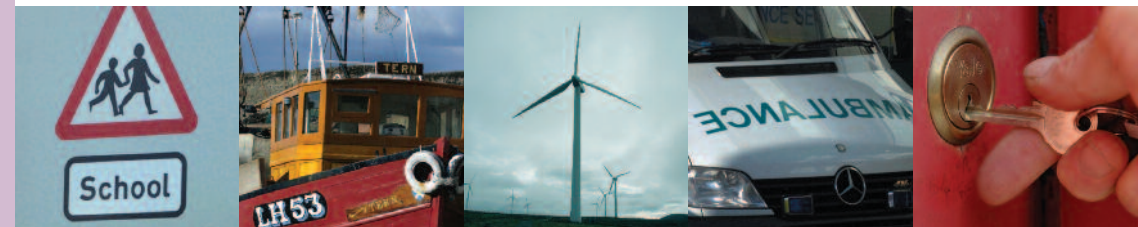
**SPSO** Scottish  
Public  
Services  
Ombudsman

The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about organisations providing public services in Scotland, including:

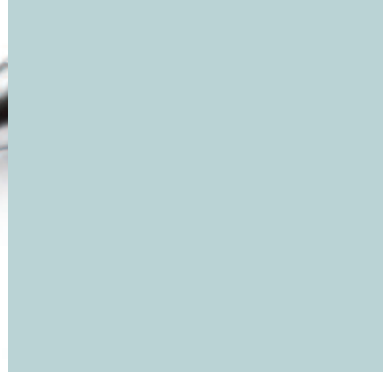
**Councils • the National Health Service**  
**Housing Associations • the Scottish Government**  
**Colleges & Universities • most Scottish public bodies**

If you feel that an organisation has provided a poor service, delivered a service badly or failed to provide a service, causing hardship or injustice, we'll look into your complaint. We can usually only consider a complaint after you have completed the complaints procedure of the organisation concerned.

**Our service is independent, impartial and free.**



**SPSO** information leaflet 1



## Can I bring my complaint to the SPSO?

We can only look into complaints once they have been through the full formal complaints procedure of the organisation concerned. This gives them a chance to respond and try to put things right.

## How to complete the organisation's complaints procedure

- 1 Contact the organisation that you want to complain about and ask them for details of their 'formal complaints procedure'. Some formal complaints procedures have more than one stage, so that complaints that are not sorted out at the first stage can be looked at by someone more senior in the organisation.
- 2 Put your complaint in writing. Head your letter 'Formal Complaint' and keep copies of your letters and responses.
- 3 Make sure you write to the correct member of staff at the right address. If you are unclear who to write to, write to the Chief Executive at the Head Office who will pass your letter on to the right person.
- 4 If the organisation responds to you by telephone, ask them to confirm their response in writing.
- 5 If you are unhappy with the response you receive, write to the person at the next stage of the complaints procedure, clearly stating that the letter is a formal complaint. Write in the letter what your complaint is about, why you are unhappy with the response received and what you would like them to consider.

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can help you make your complaint.

If, once you have been through the full formal complaints procedure and received a final reply, you are still unhappy, your complaint is ready for the SPSO.

## Complaining to the SPSO

Once we have checked that you have been through the organisation's full complaints procedure, our next step is to look at whether we can handle your complaint. We can only consider matters where we have the legal power to do so.

You will need to:

- make a complaint to us in writing; it is best to use an SPSO complaint form if possible
- copies of relevant paperwork, in particular the final response you received from the organisation.

It is also helpful if you can tell us what went wrong, and what you would like to happen to get things put right.

Once we have checked your paperwork, we will find out more about what went wrong. We may ask you and the organisation for more information. All complaints are different and the process of gathering the facts can vary and can sometimes take a long time. We are committed to dealing with complaints as quickly as possible and to keeping you informed and will be in touch regularly to update you.

## Contacting Us

You can get in touch with us at any time for advice or to find out more about our service. Please contact our office for an SPSO complaint form, or visit our website to submit your complaint online. For further information, call **Freephone 0800 377 7330**. We would be happy to discuss your situation with you.