

VisitScotland Complaints Handling Procedure

Why do we have a complaints handling procedure?

VisitScotland is committed to providing high quality services but occasionally things can go wrong. When this happens it is important that we act quickly to resolve the situation. Complaints show us where we are not achieving what people expect of us, and where we are failing to meet our own standards. In other words, they give us a chance to improve our service. Listening to our customers helps us to:

- Put things right for the customer
- Learn from our mistakes
- Improve our services.

*This process refers only to complaints made **about VisitScotland**. There is a separate procedure for how we handle complaints we receive from Consumers about another business, tourism product or service out with VisitScotland's ownership. However, our processes for dealing with such complaints follow the same principles of best practice.*

VisitScotland's Complaints Handling Procedure is fully compliant with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Act 2002.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf. A complaint may involve more than one department and may relate to things like:

- delay in responding to an enquiry or request
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- our policy

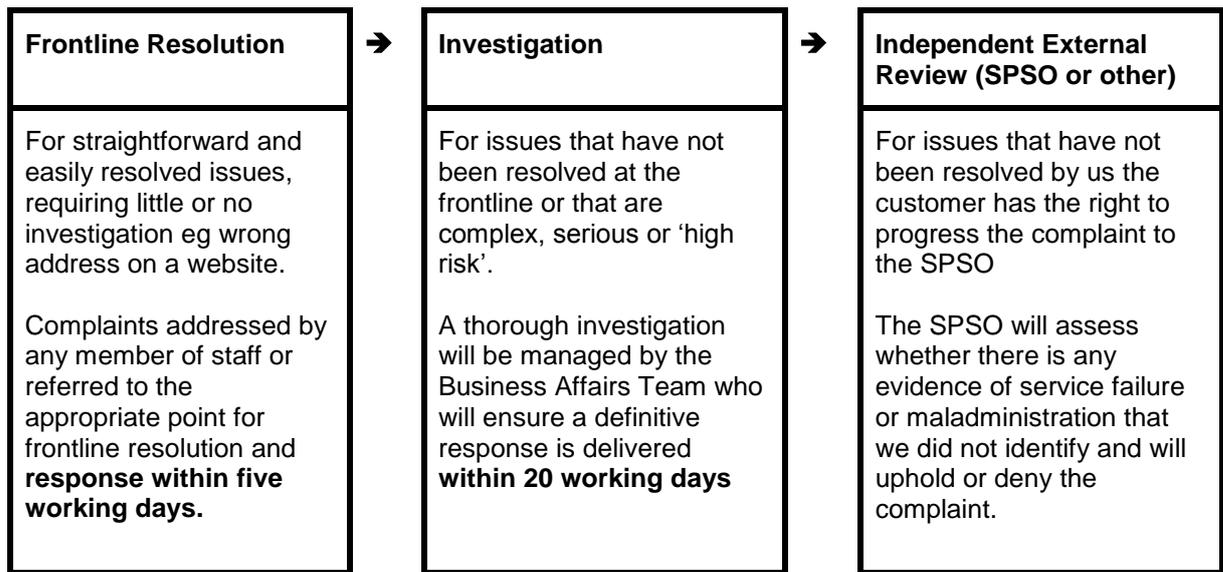
A complaint is not:

- a routine first-time request for a service; e.g. to take advantage of a VisitScotland marketing opportunity or a free web listing
- requests for compensation
- issues covered by an existing right of appeal; e.g. EU tender submission which was unsuccessful

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint in person at any of our Visitor Information Centres, our offices, by telephone, by e-mail, filling out an online form or in writing. *ALL VisitScotland websites provide information on our policy and will link to our Customer Feedback web form. This form will feed automatically into the Complaints Management System (CMS).*

The Model Complaints Handling Procedure



How we manage a complaint

Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution: We will try to resolve complaints on the spot and to the customer's satisfaction. If we need to look further into the issue, we will log the complaint on the Complaints Management System (CMS) and will get back to the customer within five working days. We will normally respond using the channel by which the complaint was received.

We will escalate a complaint to the investigation stage if frontline resolution has not satisfied the customer or the customer refuses to take part in frontline resolution you identify this as

Stage 2 - Investigation: VisitScotland will take particular care to identify complaints that might be considered serious, high-risk or high-profile, as these may require particular action or raise critical issues that need senior management's direct input. The SPSO defines potential high-risk or high-profile complaints as those that may:

- involve serious service failure, for example major delays in providing, or repeated failures to provide, a service
- generate significant and ongoing press interest
- pose a serious risk to an organisation's operations

Investigation stage complaints will be investigated by the appropriate department(s) and we will respond within the 20 day deadline.

Our response to the complaint will address all areas that we are responsible for and explain the reasons for our decision. To help us improve our service standards we will record the decision, and details of how it was communicated to the customer, on the CMS. We will also make the following clear to the customer:

- their right to ask Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to consider the complaint
- the time limit for doing so, and
- how to contact the SPSO

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

If you are still not satisfied with our handling of your complaint, you have a right to apply to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) for a decision on whether we have dealt with your request appropriately.

The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland and may be able independently to take up a complaint on your behalf. The Ombudsman will normally only be able to act if you have followed the steps above.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman may be contacted at:

In person

4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Tel: 0800 377 7330

Website: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

By post

SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

Customers can complain in person, by phone, by e-mail, completing our online form or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with customer complaints at source, but if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will inform the customer and keep them updated on progress.

Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve a complaint within **five working days**.

If a customer is dissatisfied with our response, we will escalate it to Stage 2.

Stage 2: investigation

We will look at a complaint at this stage if a stakeholder is dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1.

Complaints that are complex or high risk will go immediately to this stage.

We will acknowledge the complaint within **three working days**. We will give our decision as soon as possible and after no more than **20 working days**.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on a complaint, the Stakeholder remains dissatisfied with our decision or with the way we have handled the complaint, they can ask the SPSO to consider their issue.

We will tell the customer how to do this when we send them our final decision.