

Perth & Kinross Council Complaints Procedure



our duty to listen

Perth & Kinross Council is committed to providing high-quality services.

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with the service you receive, please tell us. If this happens, please contact the person who deals with the service you want to complain about. They'll do their best to sort out the problem for you. If you are unsure who to contact, our Customer Service Centre can advise you on 01738 475000.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the local authority's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the local authority.'

There are six categories of complaints:

- Communication
- Policy & Procedure
- Employees
- Service Provision
- Equalities
- Other

Your complaint may involve more than one Council Service or be about someone working on our behalf.

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 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- *delays in responding to your enquiries and requests;*
- *failure to provide a service;*
- *quality of service provided;*
- *incorrect application or failure of a Council policy;*
- *treatment by or attitude of a member of staff;*
- *failure to follow proper procedure.*

From 1 April 2017, you can also complain about Social Work services through this complaints handling procedure.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- *a routine first-time request for a service, for example a first-time request for a housing repair or action on anti-social behaviour;*
- *requests for compensation from the Council;*
- *complaints concerning Councillors. Councillors must comply with a Code of Conduct approved by the Scottish Parliament. The Standards Commission for Scotland is responsible for promoting and enforcing the Code. Complaints regarding the conduct of a Councillor should be referred to:*

*Commission for Ethical Standards in
Public Life in Scotland
Public Standards Commissioner
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
EDINBURGH
EH12 5HE*

Tel 0300 011 0550

Email info@ethicalstandards.org.uk

- *complaints to do with Planning Applications that are still being considered, unless related to an aspect of service delivery;*
- *areas that are covered by a right of appeal. Here are some examples:*
 - *If you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you have the right to appeal against the decision.*
 - *If your planning application is refused, you have a right of appeal to Scottish Ministers within three months of the decision or a review by Perth & Kinross Council's Local Review Body. There is, however, no right of appeal for a third party, for example someone who has objected to the application.*
 - *If you believe your house is incorrectly valued for Council Tax, you can appeal to the Assessor.*
 - *Complaints that constitute a disagreement with or refusal to accept legal matters which the Council is obliged to apply.*
 - *A complaint where you or the Council has started legal proceedings or has taken court action.*
 - *A complaint that has already been heard by a court or tribunal.*
 - *Insurance claims.*
 - *A request for information in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.*
 - *A request for an explanation on the application of the law.*
 - *Most commercial or contractual issues.*

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

How do I complain?

It is usually easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the Service responsible. Please talk to a member of our staff at the Service you are complaining about. They can then try to resolve any problems on the spot.

Alternatively, you can:

- *complete a form online at www.pkc.gov.uk*
- *telephone the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000*
- *email us on customercomplaints@pkc.gov.uk*
- *write to the Customer Service Centre, Perth & Kinross Council, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, PERTH, PH1 5GD*
- *visit any Council office*

When you contact us, tell us:

- *your full name and address;*
- *as much as you can about your concern;*
- *what has gone wrong;*
- *how you want us to resolve the matter.*

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- *the issue you want to complain about; or*
- *finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the issue 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.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two steps:

Stage One: Frontline Resolution (FLR)

We aim to resolve complaints quickly, and as close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

*We will give you our decision at Stage One in **five working days** or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.*

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: Investigation

Stage Two deals with those complaints that have not have been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

At Stage Two we will:

- *acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **three working days**;*
- *discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for;*
- *respond to the complaint as soon as possible and within **20 working days**. If our investigation is going to take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.*

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

If you are still dissatisfied with our decision or with 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 has not completed our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO);*
- *issues that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago;*
- *a matter that has been or is being considered in Court.*

The contact details for the SPSO are:

in person: SPSO
4 Melville Street
EDINBURGH
EH3 7NS

by post: SPSO
Freepost EH641
EDINBURGH
EH3 0BR

freephone: 0800 377 7330

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

website: www.spsso.org.uk

mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Care complaints

If your complaint relates to a care service we provide through our Social Work services, you can choose whether to complain to us or to the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting them direct.

The Care Inspectorate has several offices around Scotland. Please refer to:

www.scswis.com/
(online complaints form)

or

Tel 0345 600 9527

Fax 01382 207 289

Email enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Education complaints

Due to the size of the pupil population, schools have ongoing, sometimes daily, contact with parents and carers when issues can be raised. Additional guidance for Headteachers regarding complaints has therefore been developed to ensure a proportionate approach to complaints handling in schools. Complaints to schools will be treated as a Stage 1 (FLR) when it requires a response or action at Headteacher or school Senior Management Team level.

Additional Support for Learning - Resolving Disagreements

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) introduced ways of resolving disagreements where a child or young person has additional support needs. These include discussions with the school/nursery, independent mediation, applying for dispute resolution or making a referral to the Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland.

Further information is available in our [Information Sheet on Resolving Disagreements](#).

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, or an advocate, 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. Their contact details are:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel 0131 260 5380

Fax 0131 260 5381

www.siaa.org.uk

We are committed to making our services easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers 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 - see our contact details overleaf.

Our contact details

Please contact us by the following means:

- Telephone the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000
- Email customercomplaints@pkc.gov.uk
- Write to the: Customer Service Centre
Perth & Kinross Council
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
PERTH
PH1 5GD

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can raise your concern in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We have a two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage One: Frontline Resolution (FLR)

We will always try to resolve your concern within **five working days if we can**.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this point, we will explain why and suggest how we might resolve it. It maybe that your complaint requires to be investigated at Stage Two.



Stage Two: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage One. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear to us that they are complex and require detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible and wherever possible within **20 working days** **unless** there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

إن احتجت أنت أو أي شخص تعرفه نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو تصميم آخر فيمكن الحصول عليها (أو على نسخة معدلة لمملخص هذه الوثيقة مترجمة بلغة أخرى) بالاتصال ب: الاسم: Customer Service Centre رقم هاتف للاتصال المباشر: 01738 475000

اگر آپ کو یا آپ کے کسی جاننے والے کو اس دستاویز کی نقل دوسری زبان یا فارمیٹ (بعض دفعہ اس دستاویز کے خلاصہ کا ترجمہ فراہم کیا جائے گا) میں درکار ہے تو اس کا بندوبست سروس ڈیولپمنٹ Customer Service Centre سے فون نمبر 01738 475000 پر رابطہ کر کے کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

如果你或你的朋友希望得到這文件的其他語言版本或形式 (某些時候，這些文件只會是概要式的翻譯)，請聯絡 Customer Service Centre 01738 475000 來替你安排。

Jeżeli chciałbyś lub ktoś chciałby uzyskać kopię owego dokumentu w innym języku niż język angielski lub w innym formacie (istnieje możliwość uzyskania streszczenia owego dokumentu w innym języku niż język angielski), Proszę kontaktować się z Customer Service Centre 01738 475000

P ejete-li si Vy, anebo n kdo, koho znáte, kopii této listiny v jiném jazyce anebo jiném formátu (v n kterých p ípadech bude p eložen pouze stru ný obsah listiny) Kontaktujte prosím Customer Service Centre 01738 475000 na vy ízení této požadavky.

Если вам или кому либо кого вы знаете необходима копия этого документа на другом языке или в другом формате, вы можете запросить сокращенную копию документа обратившись Customer Service Centre 01738 475000

Ma tha thu fhèin neo duine a dh'aithnicheas tu ag iarraidh leth-bhreachden phàipear seo ann an cànan eile neo ann an cruth eile, (aig amannan cha bhith ach gearr-chunntas a-mhàin ri fhaighinn air eadar-theangachadh) faodar seo fhaighinn le bhith a' cur fios gu: Customer Service Centre 01738 475000

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

www.pkc.gov.uk

(PKC Design Team - 2016893)

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