

**Glasgow City Council Model
Complaints Handling
Procedure – customer guide
to making a complaint (from
April 1, 2021).**

Contents

What is a complaint?	3
What can I complain about?.....	3
What can't I complain about?.....	4
Who can complain?	5
How do I complain?	5
Our contact details.....	5
How long do I have to make a complaint?	6
Stage 1: Frontline response	6
Stage 2: Investigation	6
What if I'm still dissatisfied?	7
Care complaints	8
Getting help to make your complaint.....	8
Quick guide to our complaints procedure	9

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Glasgow City Council is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

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

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This information describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard 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.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- failure or refusal to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (**except** where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- disagreement with a decision, (**except** where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).
- complaints about councillors (these should be addressed to the Standards Commission for Scotland – www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk)
- complaints about senior officers (these will be investigated by a member of the management team, independent of the situation)

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

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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
- a first-time report of a fault (for example a missed or late scheduled service such as a domestic bin collection, street lighting defect or telling us about a pothole)
- a request for compensation only
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process)
- disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector
- a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- a concern about a child or an adult's safety
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision. Where we have given our final decision, you will be advised to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman should you remain dissatisfied (see below, for how to do this)
- abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff
- elected members enquiries (elected members may bring a complaint on your behalf to our attention provided it is **clearly marked as a complaint**. In these circumstances, and provided you have consented to your personal data being shared by the elected member with the council, we will respond to you directly as part of the complaints process. It is important to note that this is not the same as the council responding to an elected member inquiry, which is covered by a different process and timescales.
- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

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

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

How do I complain?

The quickest way to send us your complaint is by using the form on the council's website at www.glasgow.gov.uk/complaints. We recognise, however, that not everyone will want or be able to use the form so you can also complain in person at any of our offices (subject to Covid-19 restrictions), by phone, in writing by postal letter or by email.

It is easier for us to address complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve the issue with you.

Complaints raised on social media outlets, like Facebook and Twitter, are not treated as formal complaints. If you use our official social media channels to complain, we will advise you of the methods available to make a formal complaint. We are not able to respond to complaints about council services made on Facebook, Twitter pages etc which are not operated by Glasgow City Council and accept no liability for this.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details (if you require a response)
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong; and
- what outcome you are seeking.

Our contact details

- by writing to the Customer Care Team, Glasgow City Council, George Square, Glasgow G2 1DU;
- by telephoning Glasgow City Council on 0141 287 2000; and by using the online form at www.glasgow.gov.uk/complaints

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How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, 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.

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.

If you have made a complaint, and received a response at Stage 1 of the process, you have up to six months to ask for your complaint to be investigated at Stage 2, if you were unhappy with the Stage 1 response.

What happens when I have complained?

The appropriate manager/appropriate staff member will deal with your complaint. Managers will always identify themselves on formal correspondence. Our complaints procedure has two distinct stages.

Stage 1: Frontline response

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- within six months of receiving a Stage 1 response if you were unhappy with that response

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at

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this stage. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead, although we retain discretion on whether this is appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the complaint. Generally, more complex matters are suitable for immediate escalation to Stage 2. If we decide that your complaint is more appropriate for a Stage 1 response we will make that clear to you. We can also choose to escalate the complaint to stage 2 where we consider it is more suited to investigation at Stage 2.

When using Stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for. We may need to contact you at this stage in the process to discuss your complaint and we will use our best endeavours to do so
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have given you our final decision, 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 are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through our complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330.

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See the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS
(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is:

FREEPOST SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

There are some complaints that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Care complaints

If your complaint relates to a care service Glasgow City Council provide, you can choose whether to complain to Glasgow City Council or the Care Inspectorate, whose details are below:

The Care Inspectorate has several offices around Scotland. Please refer to: <http://www.scswis.com/>

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. A mandate is required to confirm personal consent, under data protection legislation.

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Where necessary, staff can assist you by writing the complaint for you and read it back to ensure that an accurate record of the complaint has been taken. Where possible, customers should endorse the letter to show that it has been agreed.

In certain circumstances, a person may raise a complaint involving another person's personal data, without receiving consent. The complaint should still be investigated where possible, but the investigation and response may be limited by considerations of confidentiality. The person who submitted the complaint should be made aware of these limitations and the effect this will have on the scope of the response.

We are committed to making our service 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 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 please contact us.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting:

**Scottish Independent Advocacy
Alliance**

Tel: **0131 510 9410**

Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland:

Website: www.cas.org.uk

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Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint 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 investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress..

Stage 1: Frontline response

We will always try to respond to your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.

Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they need investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**.

We will confirm the points of complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

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

There are some complaints that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

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

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