

How to complain

It's always best to resolve things you're not happy about by discussing problems as they arise, with the person or their manager. If that isn't possible, or doesn't work, then you may need to complain.

Remember, you don't have to do it alone – you can use advocacy if you need to.

What to do

If possible:

Keep any letters, emails or other documents

Write down who did and said what, and when – for example:

'phoned Fred at the council on 10 Feb. He said he would look into it and call me back by 20 Feb'

Check websites or leaflets so that you know what service you were supposed to get, for example:

'we promise to explain all treatment to patients in simple English and support them to make informed choices'

or what any laws say must happen – for example, the self-directed support act says that councils have a

'Duty to have regard to the general principles of collaboration, informed choice and involvement as part of the assessment and the provision of support'

when people access social care services.

Check what your rights are – ask for help to find out if you need to – for example, by getting in touch with Grapevine.

Find out what the complaints procedure is – you may have been given information on this, but it's more likely that you'll need to phone or go on the organisation's website to find out. This will normally tell you exactly what to do and how long it will take them to reply to you.

You may want to think about writing to someone senior (like the Chief Executive, or Chair), or to an elected person (a councillor, MP or MSP) as well as using the complaints procedure – sometimes this will have more effect.

Be clear what you want, and ask for it – for example:

‘I want my case reassessed and my support increased’

Back this up with reasons why you believe you should have that –

‘The assessment didn’t take into account the change in my condition’
or ‘the SDS Act says I should be offered the chance to have a direct payment and I wasn’t told about this.’

Keep copies of anything you send, and any replies you get (see above).

What if I do all that and I’m still not satisfied? For public services (councils or NHS) if you’ve been through the complaints procedure and you still don’t think you’ve got what you should, you can go to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The ombudsman will investigate your complaint and make a decision. He has the power to make councils and NHS make changes. You can only go to the ombudsman if you have completed the complaints process of the council or NHS.

Contact details

City of Edinburgh Council

Social Work Advice and Complaints

Level 1:7

Waverley Court

4 East Market Street

Edinburgh

EH8 8BG

socialwork.complaints@edinburgh.gov.uk

0131 553 8395

East Lothian Council

Customer Feedback team

John Muir House, Brewery Park

Haddington East Lothian

EH41 3HA

feedback@eastlothian.gov.uk

0131 653 5290

Midlothian Council

Midlothian Council Feedback

Freepost SCO5613

Dalkeith Midlothian

EH22 0BR

feedback@midlothian.gov.uk

0131 561 5444

NHS Lothian

NHS Lothian Patient Experience Team

Waverley Gate

2 – 4 Waterloo Place

Edinburgh

EH1 3EG

feedback@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

0131 536 3370

Note – GP practices and dentists will all have their own complaints procedures

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

FREEPOST EH641

Edinburgh

EH3 0BR

<http://www.spsso.org.uk/>

0800 377 7330