



Renfrewshire
Health & Social Care
Partnership

Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Complaints Handling Procedure

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Renfrewshire HSCP is committed to providing high quality care and treatment to people in our communities through the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care. We understand, however, that sometimes things go wrong. If you are dissatisfied with something we have done, or have not done, please tell us. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

This leaflet 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. This leaflet is relevant for all complaints about community health care, adult social care, and decisions made by the Integrated Joint Board.

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:

- delays;
- a failure to provide a service;
- an inadequate standard of service;
- a lack of information and clarity about appointments;
- difficulty in making contact with us for appointments or queries;
- treatment by or attitude of a member of our staff;
- scheduled or unscheduled ambulance care;
- transport concerns, either to, from or within the healthcare environment;
- environmental or domestic issues;
- operational and procedural issues;
- our failure to follow the appropriate process; and
- your dissatisfaction with our policy;

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

What can't I complain about?

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

- routine first-time request for a service, for example a request for an appointment or a request for a specific course of treatment;
- a request for a second opinion in respect of care or treatment;
- matters relating to private healthcare or treatment;
- matters relating to services not provided by or funded by the NHS or Local Authority;
- a previously concluded complaint or a request to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision;

- a complaint made by an employee of the service provider or other person in relation to their employment contract;
- a complaint that is being or has been investigated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO);
- a complaint arising from a suggested failure to comply with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act;
- a complaint about which you have commenced legal proceedings, or have clearly stated that you intend to do so, rather than pursue the matter using the complaints procedure; or
- a request for compensation.

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, advocacy worker or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. If they do not have capacity to consent, we will need a copy of your Power of Attorney. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at the place where you have received care, treatment or advice, or where the incident that you want to complain about happened.

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.

When complaining, please include the following information:

- your full name and address
- your date of birth
- your email address
- your phone number
- the full name, address and date of birth of the person affected if you are complaining on behalf of somebody else
- which service you are complaining about
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- when did this happen
- where did this happen
- how you want us to resolve the matter
- please also advise if you have difficulty in corresponding via email and / or if you have any specific communication requirements.
- what outcome you are seeking.

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.

What happens when I have complained?

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

Stage 1: Local/ Frontline resolution

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 in which case we will respond within ten working days.

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 two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

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 are complex and required detailed investigation. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead.

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 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 Renfrewshire HSCP's 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.

You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint. 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

Care complaints

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

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

Getting help to make your complaint

If you are unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself, you can get someone else to help you with your complaint. You will need to provide consent for them to act on your behalf.

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance website: <https://www.siaa.org.uk/> has information about independent advocacy services. They can also help you put your complaint in writing or give you this information in another language or format, such as large font or Braille.

You can also get free, independent and confidential advice from Citizens Advice Scotland. <https://www.cas.org.uk/>

If you wish to make a complaint about an NHS service that we provide you can request assistance from the independent Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS). The Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) is an organisation that provides free and confidential advice and support to patients and other members of the public in relation to NHS Scotland. The service promotes an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients and can advise and support people who wish to make a complaint to the NHS. Further information can be found on the PASS web site: <https://www.cas.org.uk/pass>. PASS can also be contacted via your local Citizens Advice Bureau office or on 0800 917 2127.

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 complaints information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us.

Our contact details

Email: renfrewshireHSCP.Complaints@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Address: Complaints, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership,
3rd Floor, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AL

Phone: 0141 618 7659

Website: <https://www.renfrewshire.hscp.scot/Complaints>

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. *If your complaint relates to a care service you can choose to complain to us or to the Care Inspectorate.*



Stage 1: Local/Frontline resolution

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.

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