



Independent Complaint Resolution Service

How we deal with complaints
about the service delivered
by the Scottish Public
Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Fair, impartial, effective

www.icrservice.co.uk

What is ICRS?

ICRS is an independent complaint review and settlement service. Our reviewers are highly experienced specialists in complaint handling and dispute resolution.

How we deal with complaints about the service delivered by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

If you have a complaint about the service you have received from the SPSO, the first step is to make a complaint to the SPSO. The SPSO leaflet 'Our Service Standards' describes how the complaint will be investigated. The final step - if you are unhappy with the response from the SPSO - is to ask for an independent review by ICRS.

ICRS can look at complaints about whether SPSO has lived up to its service standards. So, for example, we can look into whether the SPSO has treated you fairly and with respect, whether it has dealt with matters promptly, whether it has explained things clearly and whether it has met your specific needs.

However ICRS cannot consider complaints about decisions made by the SPSO. There is a different process for these complaints. If you need information about this please contact the SPSO.

How to refer your complaint to ICRS

The final response from the SPSO will provide contact details for ICRS, and tell you the date by which you must contact us if you wish us to investigate.

When you contact us please let us have:

1. Your contact details
2. A short outline of your complaint
3. The date you received the final response from SPSO
4. A brief explanation of why you are unhappy with the response
5. An indication of what you would like SPSO to do to put matters right.

There is a complaint referral form on our website that you may wish to use.

What will happen when we receive your complaint referral?

When we receive your referral we will acknowledge it within three days and will offer you the opportunity to discuss your complaint with one of our reviewers.

We will not carry out a review if:

- You contact us more than a month after receiving the final response from SPSO
- Your complaint is about a decision made by SPSO
- We do not think that we can help you to achieve the outcome that you want

If our initial view is that we cannot help we will let you and the SPSO know and give you the opportunity to comment. If we then decide that we will not carry out a review we will write to you to explain the reasons for our decision.

If we decide to carry out a review we will ask the SPSO for information to enable us to do so. We will then prepare a short written summary setting out the background and issues which our review will cover, and will send it to you for agreement, asking you to respond within 5 working days. When the summary has been agreed we will send a copy to the SPSO for comment and will share any comments with you.

We will then consider what additional information we need either from you or from the SPSO. We may ask to have a meeting or video-conference with you or with SPSO representatives.

When we have all the information we need we will reach a decision and produce a draft report which we will send to you and to the SPSO and ask for any comments within 5 working days.

Our report will be based on the agreed complaint summary and the information you and the SPSO have provided, and will explain the reasons for our conclusions.

In reaching a decision we will look at whether the SPSO has followed its own Service Standards. We will also take into account general principles of good administration and customer service.

When we have received comments on the draft report we will make any necessary amendments and send you and the SPSO the final version.

Depending on our conclusions the report may include recommendations to SPSO either for specific redress, for example an apology, or for changes to reduce the risk of similar complaints arising in future. Please note that we are unable to ask SPSO to change any decision it has made.

Our target is to complete reviews within 40 working days of receiving a referral. If for any reason we are unable to meet this target we will let you know, and will tell you when we expect to complete the review.

Equality

ICRS is committed to treating everyone with respect and courtesy and giving equality of access to our service. We monitor our work to ensure that we treat everyone with equal fairness and that no one using our service suffers discrimination as a result of race nationality, colour, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or age.

Please let us know if you have any special needs to be taken into account in the way that we communicate with you.

Confidentiality

We promise to treat the information we receive from you with appropriate care and sensitivity, but it is important to note the following:

- In order to deal with your complaint effectively we may need to share with the SPSO the information that you provide.
- We have access to SPSO files in order to help us investigate your complaint, but we do not have authority to disclose this information to you or anyone else. Any request for disclosure should be made directly to the SPSO.
- Our reports are provided only to you and to the SPSO. However anonymised summaries are published in our annual reports.

Feedback on our service

We welcome feedback on our service - whether complimentary or critical - and use it to improve our service and make it more responsive to customers' needs. If you have a specific complaint about the service you have received from ICRS please let us know immediately and we will respond promptly.

Contact us

Independent Complaint Resolution Service

Email: enquiries@icrev.org.uk

Website: www.icrservice.co.uk