

# Complaints Handling Procedure

## A Guide for Customers

2014



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**Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority is committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve**

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

### **What is a complaint?**

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority defines a complaint as being:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority.'

### **What can I complain about?**

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our quality of service
- our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

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:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- requests for compensation
- things that are covered by a right of appeal, for example if we refuse consent for a planning application.

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 can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

### **How do I complain?**

You can complain in person at our offices, by phone, in writing, by email, or online via our 'Contact Us Online' form on our website.

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When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

### What happens when I have complained?

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and 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 always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has 2 stages:

#### Stage one – frontline resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation. We aim to do this within 5 working days.

If for any reason we aren't able to resolve your complaint within 5 working days we will contact you to discuss the options. These may include an extension to the original timescale or, should the case be more complicated than we originally thought, undertaking a more detailed (Stage 2) investigation.

#### Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with three types of complaint:

- not been resolved at Stage 1
- complex in nature and are immediately apparent that detailed investigation is required
- involve members of senior staff

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- provide a full response within 20 working days

If the investigation is particularly complex and we need longer than 20 working days to resolve the problem we will agree a revised time limit and keep you updated on progress.

#### Independent external review

If, having gone through our complaints procedure, you are still dissatisfied you can appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure. You must have been informed of the outcome of your complaint, at stage 2, before raising it with the SPSO.

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- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
  - a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

### How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within 6 months of the event you want to complain about.

If you find out that you have a reason to complain after 6 months of the event, you should raise this with us as soon as possible, and within 12 months of the event you want to complain about.

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.

### 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.

#### Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380

Fax: 0131 260 5381

Website: [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)

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 customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing contact us on 01389 722600, or e-mail us at [info@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:info@lochlomond-trossachs.org)

### Mediation

We recognise there are occasions where some outside assistance is required to bring about resolution. For such occasions we may offer to use the [Scottish Mediation Network](#) to help us reach a pragmatic solution.

### Unacceptable behaviours

We recognise that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. We also recognise that the reasons leading to a complaint may contribute to the way in which the issue is presented. However, there are occasions when we deem such actions to be unacceptable.

Our Unacceptable Behaviour by Customers Statement outlines the types of behaviours we deem to be unacceptable and the actions we may take.

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### Contact details

National Park Website: <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org> Making an online complaint:  
<http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/contact-us/menu-id-471.html>

#### Our offices:

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (HQ) Carrochan, Carrochan Road, Balloch Dunbartonshire G83 8EG Tel: 01389 722600 Fax: 01389 722633 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@lochlomond-trossachs.org">info@lochlomond-trossachs.org</a>	National Park Visitor Centre Balmaha (Seasonal opening hours apply) Balmaha G63 OJQ Tel: 01389 722100
National Park Area Office Callander, 52-54 Main St, Callander FK17 8BD Tel: 01389 722126	Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, Pier Road, Balloch, Alexandria G83 8QX Tel: 01389 722030

### You can contact the SPSO:

#### In Person

SPSO  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS

Freephone: 0800 377 7330  
Online contact: [www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)  
Website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)  
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

#### By Post

SPSO  
Freepost EH641  
Edinburgh  
EH3 0BR

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### If your complaint is about an LLTNPA Board Member, you can contact:

**Public Standards Commissioner**  
39 Drumsheugh Gardens  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7SW

Tel: 0300 011 0550 Fax: 0131 220 5419  
E-mail: [investigations@ethicalstandards.org.uk](mailto:investigations@ethicalstandards.org.uk)

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### Quick guide to our complaints procedure

#### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail, in writing or use our online form at <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/complaints/menu-id-385.html>

We have a **2-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 1: FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

We will always try to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

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 are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **3 working days**. We will 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.



#### THE 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.

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