

# ARE YOU HAPPY WITH OUR SERVICE?

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2025



Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



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ARE YOU HAPPY  
WITH OUR SERVICE?

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## CUSTOMER GUIDE

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Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is committed to providing high quality customer services.

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 our service standards and what you can expect from us.

If something goes wrong, or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell 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:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard 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 enquiry or request for a service
- requests for compensation
- things that are covered by a right of appeal, such as Freedom of Information requests

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 any of HIE's offices, by phone, in writing, and by email.

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

## WHEN COMPLAINING, TELL US:

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

## 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, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself

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.

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Business Improvement

Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
An Lòchran  
10 Inverness Campus  
Inverness  
IV2 5NA

**E** [customer.service@hient.co.uk](mailto:customer.service@hient.co.uk)  
**T** +44 (0)1463 245 245

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE COMPLAINED?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

## STAGE ONE – FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

We aim to resolve complaints quickly at the first point of contact where possible. 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 give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or fewer, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to Stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or sometime after you get our initial decision.

## STAGE TWO – INVESTIGATION

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

### WHEN USING STAGE 2 WE WILL:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- where appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days

On rare occasions when our investigation needs to take more than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

## WHAT IF I'M STILL DISSATISFIED?

After we have fully investigated, 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 cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- 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

### You can contact the SPSO:

**In Person:** SPSO  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS

**By Post:** SPSO  
Freepost EH641  
Edinburgh  
EH3 0BR

**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>

## 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

**T** +44 (0)131 260 5380

**F** +44 (0)131 260 5381

**W** [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, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font or braille, tell us in person.

## CONTACT US

**T** +44 (0)1463 245 245

**E** [customer.service@hient.co.uk](mailto:customer.service@hient.co.uk)

We can also provide this leaflet in other languages and formats such as large print, audio and braille.

## 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 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 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 are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three 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 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to consider it.

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