

EAST AYRSHIRE

**Health & Social Care**  
Partnership

**East Ayrshire**

**Integration Joint Board**

**Complaints Handling Procedure**



## **East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board Complaints Handling Procedure**

East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board (EA IJB) is committed to providing high-quality services.

### **We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.**

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

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

East Ayrshire Integration joint Board's (EA IJB) ('the IJB') definition of a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about EA IJB's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service EA IJB has provided in fulfilling its responsibilities as set out in the Integration Scheme'.

Issues that are not covered by this definition are likely to be covered by our other CHPs, relating to either our health or social work services.

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

A complaint may relate to dissatisfaction with:

- EA IJB's policies
- EA IJB's decisions
- the administrative or decision-making processes followed by EA IJB in coming to a decision

This list does not cover everything.

### **What can't I complain about?**

A complaint is **not**:

- a first time request made to EA IJB
- a request for compensation only
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision.

We will not treat these issues as complaints, but will instead direct the customer raising them to use the appropriate procedures.

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 who is affected by the decisions made by EA IJB can make a complaint. This is not restricted to people who receive services through EA IJB and their relatives or representatives. Sometimes a customer may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. We will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

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

You can complain in person at any of our public offices, by phone, in writing, by email or online through our website at: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk>

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?**

This complaints handling procedure sets a time limit of six months from when the customer first knew of the problem, within which time they may ask us to consider the complaint, unless there are special circumstances for considering complaints beyond this time.

We will apply this time limit with discretion. In decision making we will take account of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 (Section 10(1)), which sets out the time limit within which a member of the public can normally ask the SPSO to consider complaints. The limit is one year from when the person first knew of the problem they are complaining about, unless there are special circumstances for considering complaints beyond this time.

If it is clear that a decision not to investigate a complaint will lead to a request for external review of the matter, we may decide that this satisfies the special

circumstances criteria. This will enable us to consider the complaint and try to resolve it.

### **What happens when I have complained?**

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

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

#### **Stage one: frontline resolution**

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage; if the member of staff receiving the complaint is not able to provide a response, then it should be referred on to a more appropriate member of staff.

The main principle is to seek early resolution, resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity. This may mean a face-to-face discussion.

Whoever responds to the complaint, it may be settled by providing an on-the-spot apology where appropriate, or explaining why the issue occurred and, where possible, what will be done to stop this happening again. They may also explain that, as an organisation that values complaints, we may use the information given when we review policies and processes in the future.

A customer can make a complaint in writing, in person, by telephone, by email or online, or by having someone complain on their behalf. Frontline resolution will always be considered, regardless of how the complaint has been received.

#### **Stage two: investigation**

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can state our position. These complaints may already have been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the complainant a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position.

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.

If our investigation will take longer 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

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

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>

### **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/>

Or

Telephone 0845 600 9527

Fax 01382 207 289

Online [complaints form](#)

Email [enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

### **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 please, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please contact us. Contact details are provided below.

### **How to contact us**

- by phone: 0845 724 0000
- by fax: 01563 576500
- minicom: 015630576167
- e-mail: [the.council@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:the.council@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- website: [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- at any of our offices
- in writing to: East Ayrshire Council  
Council Headquarters  
London Road  
Kilmarnock  
KA3 7BU

## Quick guide to our complaints procedure

### Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, online by e-mail 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 SPSO to consider it.

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