

Complaints Handling Procedure A Guide for Customers

Cairngorms 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?

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 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 any of our offices, by phone, in writing, or online via our complaints form at www.cairngorms.co.uk/complaints.

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

We aim to resolve will give you our decision at Stage 1 as quickly as possible, 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 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 management

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.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

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.
- 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

t: 0131 260 5380

f: 0131 260 5381

Website: 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 on 01479 873535, or email us at enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk .

This guide will be available in Gaelic at www.cairngorms.co.uk/complaints . We can also give you this guide in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

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.

What we will and won't tolerate

There are certain actions by individuals that CNPA will not accept when dealing with customer complaints. These are set out in our Unacceptable Actions Policy.

Contact details

Please contact your nearest office:

Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3HG

Cairngorms National Park Authority
Albert Memorial Hall
Station Square
Ballater
AB35 5QB

T: 01479 873535

F: 01479 873527

E: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

T: 013397 53601

F: 013397 55334

E: enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk

Other ways to contact us:

Online service: www.cairngorms.co.uk/complaints

Helen Jenkins

Governance and Corporate Performance Manager
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square,
Grantown on Spey
PH26 3HG

t: 01479 870552

f: 01479 873527

e: helenjenkins@cairngorms.co.uk

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
Website: www.spsso.org.uk
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

If your complaint is about a CNPA Board Member, you can contact:

Public Standards Commissioner
39 Drumsheugh Gardens
Edinburgh
EH3 7SW

t: 0300 011 0550 f: 0131 220 5419
e: investigations@ethicalstandards.org.uk

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 www.cairngorms.co.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback/feedback/

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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