

SCOTTISH SPCA COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

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Scottish SPCA Complaints Procedure

At the Scottish SPCA we welcome any feedback you may have about our services as this helps us to develop as a charity, giving us the chance to monitor and improve our services.

We are sorry if you feel that you need to make a complaint, the following information will help you understand our complaints procedure.

How do I make a service complaint?

Complaints can be made in the following ways:

Online:

You can email your complaint to us by using our online form:

<https://www.scottishspca.org/contact-us>

Alternatively, you can email your complaint to Complaints@scottishspca.org

In writing:

You can send a letter to our complaint team at:

Scottish SPCA
Kingseat Road
Halbeath
Dunfermline
KY11 8RY

By Phone:

You can raise your complaint on the phone by speaking to our team on **03000 999 999**.

What information do I need to provide?

To ensure that your complaint can be dealt with quickly and efficiently you should provide as much information as possible such as:

- Full name
- Postal address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Any contact details that are different from the above
- Full details of the complaint including relevant dates
- Any evidence available to support your complaint, e.g. photos, letters, emails, names of witnesses, vets bill, inspectors form or other paperwork
- What outcome you are seeking

How long will it take to respond to my complaint?

We will contact you to acknowledge your complaint via email if you have logged your complaint online within 5 working days. The same timescale of 5 working days applies if the complaint has been made via phone call. If the complaint has been made via post, we will respond to acknowledge this within 7 working days.

Our aim is then to provide a full response within 15 working days.

Although we reply to most complaints within 15 working days, if the matter is complex and requires greater investigation it may take longer. If this is the case, we will contact you again to let you know and advise how much longer it will take and why.

How do I know my complaint will be treated fairly?

We really appreciate honest feedback as it helps us to learn and develop as a charity. We investigate all complaints thoroughly to ensure issues are resolved and learning is taken from them to improve our services and customer experience.

All Complaints received by the Scottish SPCA are handled by our central Complaints Team who will liaise with the relevant Manager of the individual or department to investigate. Any complaints relating to legal matters and action may be responded to by our legal advisors at the discretion of the Scottish SPCA.

Our investigation and response to complaints will be fair and without bias. A full explanation and an apology (when appropriate) will be included in our reply.

We are regulated by **OSCR** the **Scottish Charity Regulator** and will reference regulatory bodies where appropriate. You may also be able to raise concerns with OSCR in certain situations – further information is available online: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/raise-a-concern/>

What are the stages in your complaint procedure?

There are two stages to our complaint's procedure. All complaints will be dealt with in this way.

Stage 1:

New complaints will be formally acknowledged and recorded within 5 working days. They will be handled by our central complaints team with input from the relevant line manager or Chief Inspector, if the complaint relates to an investigation. The complaints team will aim to respond within 15 working days, if the matter is complex, it may take longer to reply in which case we will write back to you to advise of the new timescale.

Stage 2:

If you are still not happy with the outcome after we send you our response, then you have 15 working days from date of our response to appeal.

If you can provide new evidence or additional information that might change the outcome, then we will review it and let you know if there is any change from our original outcome. Appeals will be reviewed at stage 2 by the Animal Helpline Manager and relevant Head of department. Responses at stage 2 will be made within 15 working days from receipt.

To ensure we save our resources for vital work on animal welfare, if there is no new evidence or information to look at then we will be unable to perform a review of your complaint and our original response at stage one stands and will be our full and final response.

At this stage you will have reached the end of our complaint's procedure, and we will be unable to take the matter further.

Are there some complaints we don't respond to?

We will always handle complaints politely and professionally and will do all we can to resolve the issue.

If a complaint is made with abusive language, an aggressive tone or threats are made then we may take the decision to terminate correspondence and close the complaint.

We may also terminate correspondence if despite our best efforts, we are unable to resolve that matter or satisfy you.

The decision to terminate correspondence will be made by the senior complaints manager who will ensure the matter has been investigated thoroughly and that there is no further action to be taken. In this instance, we would write to you to advise of termination and the reason why we are doing this.

Complaints will only be considered if they are received within 3 months of the time you were first aware of the situation. We are unable to handle complaints that date back further than this.

Data protection legislation requires us to only process a complaint if it has come from people who have had direct contact with the Scottish SPCA. It prevents us from corresponding with third parties about complaints and this means that we are unable to help if the complaint has come from a third party such as a family member, friend or someone else, unless they have Power of Attorney.

Complaints made with regards to staff conduct are taken very seriously and will be passed to the staff member's line manager and where appropriate will also be reviewed by our People and Culture team.

Due to data protection and confidentiality, we will be unable to provide an outcome to this type of investigation, but we will still send a reply to confirm when the investigation has been completed.

Our complaints procedure is not set up to handle any animal welfare concerns about particular animals or general animal welfare concerns such as farm animal transport. Concerns of this nature should be reported and discussed with our Animal Helpline Team on **03000 999 999**.

Other instances where we may not respond to a complaint includes:

- If the complaint has been sent as a mass communication to us and other charities or third parties.
- If the complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- If the complaint pursues a matter where we have already provided a full and final response.
- If excessive demands are made to the complaint handler during their investigation such as sending a high volume of emails and/or phone calls.
- If a complaint is made anonymously. We may decide to investigate the complaint but will be unable to respond to the anonymous complainer.
- If any meetings, phone calls or conversations are electronically recorded without prior consent from the other party.

Certain situations are not appropriate to be dealt with under our complaint's procedure. These include:

- Instructions to stop communications.
- Explanations on policy or procedure.
- Requests for information or access to personal data (Data Subject Access Request). Any such requests should be directed to our Data Protection team by emailing data.protection@scottishspca.org

What if my complaint is related to fundraising activities?

Complaints relating to fundraising activities follow a different complaints procedure and you can find details of this at

<https://www.scottishspca.org/fundraising-complaints>