

## **Improving Services: Your Right to Complain**

### **How to make Suggestions, Comments or Complaints about Social Work Services**

#### **Improving Services**

One way Social Work Services can improve our services is by listening to our clients. We want to hear your views and experiences, good and bad.

#### **Complaints**

We define a complaint as “any expression of dissatisfaction with the services provided by, or on behalf of, Glasgow City Council Social Work Services”.

#### **Your Rights**

You have a legal right to complain if you are:

- a client of Social Work Services
- complaining on behalf of a client
- entitled to receive a service from us but not getting the service

We must deal with your complaint according to national government guidance.

You have the choice of an informal (verbal) response or a formal (written) response to your complaint.



When requesting a formal response you are entitled to the following:

- an acknowledgement within five days
- a full written response within 28 days (unless you agree to give us more time)
- if you are unhappy with the response, you can request a referral of your complaint to the Complaints Review Sub-Committee of the Council for a full hearing within 56 days of referral

In addition to these rights, we will usually offer to have a more senior officer review your complaint, to see if we can do anything else, before referral to the Complaints Review Sub-Committee.

Sometimes, the guidance allows us to deal with your complaint in a different way. This might be because you do not have a legal right to complain, or it might be that your complaint results in other procedures being followed (for example a child protection investigation). If this happens, we will tell you:

- what the reason for this is
- how your complaint is to be handled
- how you can take the matter further if you are unhappy with these arrangements

## How to complain

You can complain in any of these ways:

1. **Write a letter** to the Senior Complaints Officer, Nye Bevan House, 20 India Street, Glasgow, G2 4PF
2. **Speak to a member of staff** - they will try sort the matter out or help you take the complaint further
3. **Telephone** the complaints section (0141 287 8741)
4. **Fax** the complaints section (0141 287 8232)
5. **E-mail** us at: **social@glasgow.gov.uk** stating that the e-mail is for the attention of the complaints section
6. **Have someone complain on your behalf** in any of the ways listed above  
If someone complains on your behalf, we may ask for a written note from you telling us that they are acting on your behalf.

No matter how you complain, it will be dealt with the same. You do not have to complain in writing to ensure a proper reply, though some clients prefer to make a written complaint so they can keep a copy.

### How we will respond

1. We will ask you to clarify the **focus** of your complaint (the main concerns you want us to look into) and the required **redress** (what you want us to do in response to your complaint)
2. We will usually offer to sort out the complaint **informally** by looking into the matter, responding verbally and giving you whatever redress we can
3. If you prefer (or if we cannot sort out the matter informally) we will resolve the complaint **formally**

Formal responses involve:

- sending you a written acknowledgement of the complaint
- appointing a senior officer to fully investigate the complaint
- sending you a written response to all issues raised
- letting you know how to take matters further if you are unhappy with the formal response

An informal approach can often be a better, quicker, way of getting things sorted out. It does not mean that the complaint is taken less seriously. If this does not get you the result you want, you will be able to re-submit your complaint for a more formal response.

### The Complaints Review Sub-Committee

The Sub-committee consists of three people who are independent of social work. They are not employees or elected members of the Council or married to employees or elected members.

The purpose of the Sub-Committee is to examine the circumstances in which the complaint was submitted, the issues raised and the way it was dealt with.

As well as providing a written statement and any supporting papers, you and the Social Work Services representative are each given a chance to speak.

A friend, relative, advocate, solicitor or other professional advisor can speak for you.

The Sub-Committee produces a written report with recommendations for action to be implemented by the Director of Social Work Services.

You can only ask for a referral to the Sub-Committee once you have received the formal letter of response to your complaint. This must be done in writing within 28 days of the date of the letter. You should write to:

**The Director of Personnel and Administration  
Glasgow City Council  
City Chambers, George Square  
Glasgow G2 1DU.**

## **Our Commitment to You**

### **Confidentiality**

We will respect your confidentiality and your legal rights under the Data Protection Act. The record of your complaint will be kept separately from your personal records.

### **Equality**

We are committed to ensuring that:

- our services are equally open to all
- we will not accept discrimination or harassment on any grounds by either our staff or people using our services
- we gather statistics about our services to ensure standards are being met and to plan for future service provision –you may be asked to provide information to assist us in this
- we publish reports regularly on our performance in meeting these standards

## **Involvement**

We will make sure that we clearly understand your complaint. We will involve you in any formal investigation of your complaint.

We will give you a clear deadline for responding to your complaint and ask your consent for any extension of that deadline.

## **Discrimination**

Making a complaint will not lead to discrimination against you. If you think that staff are acting unfairly towards you because you have complained, or are not dealing properly with your complaint, then you should report this to:

**The Senior Complaints Officer  
Nye Bevan House  
20 India Street  
Glasgow G2 4PF  
Telephone: 0141 287 8714**

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