



 sport aberdeen
Charity no SC040973

Complaints Handling Procedure Customer Guide

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1 Introduction

Sport Aberdeen is committed to providing inclusive, high-quality services.

We value complaints and use information from them to help us make improvements. As a charitable organisation, we use feedback and complaints to help ensure our resources are used effectively and services continue to meet the needs of our communities.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with one of our venues, programmes or services, this procedure describes how to make a complaint. It also tells you how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

2 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.

General comments, feedback or suggestions about future improvements you would like to see in our venues, services or our terms and conditions will be noted and reviewed separately. These will not normally be treated as a complaint under this procedure unless they relate to something that has gone wrong, a failure in service or dissatisfaction with action we have or have not taken.

3 What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- Failure to provide a service;
- Poor quality of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service;
- Dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact;
- Failure to properly apply procedure, guidance or law when delivering services;
- Failure to follow the appropriate administrative process;
- Conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or one of our contractors;
- Disagreement with a decision (**except** where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, for example, freedom of information).
- Concerns about how we have handled your personal information.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

If your complaint involves more than one organisation, we will explain which parts we can consider and, where appropriate, signpost you to the other organisation for the matters they are responsible for.

4 What can't I complain about?

There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- A routine first-time request for a service;
- A first-time report of a fault;
- A request for compensation only;
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court;
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as freedom of information or subject access requests);
- A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts however concerns about how these are managed may be treated as complaints.
- A grievance relating to employment by us or staff recruitment;
- A concern raised internally by a member of staff which was not about a service they received;
- An attempt to open a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision;
- A concern about a child or adult's safety which would normally be dealt with under our safeguarding procedures;
- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (except where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give you information and advice to help you.

5 Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes a representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service, for example, a relative or friend.

If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf (but not as a parent or guardian), you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

A parent, guardian or carer can make a complaint on behalf of a child or young person where they have been affected by our services. We will consider the child's age and level of understanding when determining whether they are able to exercise their own rights and, where appropriate, may engage directly with them.

When responding to complaints involving a child or young person, we will take account of their views and act in their best interests. When a complaint is made on behalf of a child, we may require confirmation that the individual has parental responsibility or appropriate authority to act on their behalf. In some cases, we may also seek the child's consent, depending on their age and understanding.

6 How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of our venues or head office, by phone, in writing, on our social media channels, by email or via our web form at **sportaberdeen.co.uk/contact-us**.

It is easier for us to address complaints if you make them directly to the venue or service concerned so please talk to a member of staff at the venue or service you are complaining about. They can then assist you with getting the issue resolved quickly.

When making your complaint, please tell us:

- Your full name and contact details;
- As much as you can about the complaint;
- What has gone wrong; and
- What outcome you are seeking.

We will respond to very simple complaints through Sport Aberdeen's social media channels where appropriate, for example when an issue may affect a large number of people. At a minimum, we will acknowledge your complaint as soon as possible and forward it to the relevant manager for action and response.

If you do not wish to give us your personal details but still want an issue to be considered, we will consider anonymous complaints wherever this is appropriate and will record details of the complaint together with any learning and actions taken.

Sport Aberdeen is committed to respectful and constructive engagement. Customers can find further information in our Respectful Engagement Policy available on our website.

Privacy and confidentiality when you make a complaint

When we investigate a complaint, we may need to collect and use personal information relating to you and, where relevant, other individuals involved in the complaint. This information will only be used for the purposes of managing, investigating and responding to your complaint and improving our services. Information may be shared internally with relevant employees and, where necessary, with third parties who are involved in the complaint or have a role in reviewing or responding to it.

Information may also be shared with external bodies where required by law or as part of a statutory review process. Details of how Sport Aberdeen collects, uses, stores and protects personal information are available in our Privacy Notice, which can be found on our website. Where relevant, we may also explain this in our response to your complaint.

7 Customer responsibilities

To help us investigate and resolve complaints effectively, we ask customers to:

- provide accurate and complete information;
- tell us what has gone wrong and what outcome they are seeking;
- provide any relevant evidence or supporting information they wish us to consider;
- respond to reasonable requests for clarification or additional information;
- treat employees involved in handling the complaint with courtesy and respect;
- engage constructively with the complaints process.

We recognise that making a complaint can sometimes be difficult. We will provide reasonable support and adjustments where required to help customers access the process.

8 Our contact details

Complaints can be made via our customer and corporate support team using the following contact details:



Phone

01224 507721



Email

customerfeedback@sportaberdeen.co.uk



Post or in person at HQ

Sport Aberdeen HQ
4th Floor, The Bridge
King's Way
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen
AB23 8BL



Live Chat

www.sportaberdeen.co.uk

If you wish to complain directly to a venue or service, contact details for these can be found on our website. Alternatively, you can use our venue feedback form.



Venue details

sportaberdeen.co.uk/venues



Venue feedback form

sportaberdeen.co.uk/contact-us

9 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 reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

10 What happens when I have complained?

Our complaints handling procedure has two stages.

Stage 1 - frontline response

We aim to respond to all complaints quickly and wherever possible, when you first tell us about an issue. This could mean you receive an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or we take immediate action to resolve the problem.

Where it is not possible to take immediate action to resolve your issue, we will acknowledge your complaint in writing within one working day. Please note for the purposes of this procedure, we define our normal working hours as Monday – Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm.

We will tell you which manager or member of our company leadership team will deal with it and provide you with a response. We will give you our decision at stage 1 as soon as possible and no later than five working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Occasionally, a short extension of time may be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances (such as the availability of a key staff member). We will notify you if this is the case.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at stage 1, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2.

You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- Within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- Within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Stage 2 - investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaints: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage.

We will automatically deal with serious complaints at stage 2. In some cases, allegations that are very serious in nature may also be dealt with concurrently under other applicable policies and procedures, for example, safeguarding or disciplinary issues.

At stage 2:

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within one working day;
- We will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and the outcome you are looking for;
- We will try to resolve your complaint where we can; and

We aim to investigate your complaint and provide a full response within 10 working days. Our response will explain our decision, the reasons for it and any action we will take where appropriate.

If our investigation takes longer than 10 working days, we may extend the response time to 20 working days, or longer where the matter is complex, in line with the SPSO's model complaints handling procedure. We will write to let you know the reason for the extension, the revised timescale and when you can expect our response. Please note, for the purposes of this procedure, we define our normal working hours as Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Where a complaint relates to personal data or involves a child or young person, we will ensure that relevant legal and safeguarding considerations are taken into account alongside this procedure.

When we send our final response at stage 2, we will tell you whether your complaint has been upheld, partly upheld or not upheld. We will explain the reasons for our decision, any action we will take, any learning identified and what you can do next if you remain dissatisfied. Our final response to a complaint will always come from a member of our company leadership team.

11 What if I am still dissatisfied after stage 2?

After we have given you our final decision at stage 2, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have dealt with your complaint you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

We will provide details of how to do this with any stage 2 response.

The SPSO cannot normally look at your complaint unless it has fully completed Sport Aberdeen's complaints process.

If your complaint relates to how we have handled your personal data, you also have the right to raise your concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) after giving us the opportunity to respond.

12 Data protection complaints

If your complaint is about how we have handled your personal information, we will treat this as a data protection complaint in line with data protection legislation. We will recognise and handle data protection complaints even if they are not described as or use the words ‘data protection complaint’.

A data protection complaint is where you feel we have not complied with data protection legislation when handling your personal information (or the personal information of someone you are acting for). A complaint may involve concerns about:

- How we collect, use, store or share your personal data;
- The accuracy or security of your personal information;
- How we have responded to a request to see the information we hold about you
- Any suspected or actual personal data breach affecting you.

You can raise a data protection complaint by contacting us using the details in Section 8: Our contact details. Data protection complaints are managed in line with the stages and timescales outlined in this procedure, where appropriate.

We will investigate your complaint and provide an outcome to the investigation without undue delay. If you remain dissatisfied with our response, you have the right to raise your concerns with the ICO. We will provide details of how to do this with any stage 2 response to a data protection complaint.

13 Getting help to make your complaint

We are committed to making our services inclusive, accessible and easy to use. We recognise that some individuals may require additional support to access the complaints process and will consider reasonable adjustments where required. This may include support for disabled people, adults at risk, children and young people, people with communication needs, or anyone acting on their behalf.

If you need assistance putting your complaint in writing or want this information in another language or format such as large print, please get in touch using the contact details found in Section 8: Our Contact Details.

14 For more information

If you have any queries or need further advice or assistance with making a complaint, please contact our customer and corporate support team using the details found in Section 8: Our contact details.

Customer complaints quick guide

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing.

We have **a two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always deal with your complaint as quickly as possible (stage 1) but if the matter needs investigation or is of a serious nature (stage 2), we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

It is helpful if you tell us what went wrong, how we can put it right and also provide your full name and contact details so we can respond.

It is best to make your complaint directly at the venue or service where the issue occurred.

Alternatively, please contact our corporate support team using details below:

Email: customerfeedback@sportaberdeen.co.uk

Phone: 01224 507721

Post: Sport Aberdeen HQ, The Bridge, King's Way, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB23 8JB

Our Commitment to Our Customers

We will acknowledge your complaint the same day or next working day if received outside our normal working hours.

We will confirm with you the key points of your complaint and what you want the resolution to be.

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

We will respond to all complaints as quickly as possible. Unless there is good reason, this will be no later than **five working days** for stage 1 frontline complaints and no later than **10 working days** for stage 2 investigation complaints.

We will let you know if we need to extend the timescales for response.

When we respond, we will always tell you what you can do next if you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint.

All final responses will come from the appropriate member of our leadership team.

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.