



Visitor Complaints Procedure

The National Galleries of Scotland is committed to providing high-quality services to our visitors, whether in person at our galleries, online or through our outreach programme.

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 document 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. A quick guide to our procedure is included at the end of the document.

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 standard of service
- our policies
- 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, such as an event booking or picture licensing request

- general enquiries, such as our rationale for inclusion of certain works and not others in an exhibition, or the reason why a particular work of art is not currently on show (unless we have publicised that it is)
- requests for compensation
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- things that are covered by a right of appeal (including where a statutory right of appeal exists, for example under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002)

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 gallery buildings, by phone, in writing, by email, via our online feedback form or using one of our paper feedback forms. Contact details are provided below.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

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?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

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.

Contact details

You can submit complaints, and other feedback, in writing to:

Visitor Feedback
Audience Research Coordinator
National Galleries of Scotland
The Studio
75 Belford Road
Edinburgh
EH4 3DR

Alternatively, you can email feedback@nationalgalleries.org, use the feedback form online at <http://www.nationalgalleries.org/aboutus/feedback/> or call us on 0131 624 6200.

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

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 give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, 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 two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

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.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Freepost SPSO

Freephone: **0800 377 7330**

Online contact www.spso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spso.org.uk>

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

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, call 0131 624 6473 or email equalities@nationalgalleries.org

Unacceptable Behaviour

We may refuse to consider complaints if they are accompanied by unacceptable behaviour or where they make unreasonable demands on our resources. The National Galleries of Scotland has a duty of care to its employees and a duty to ensure that the organisation is able to provide services to all who want them. Some examples of unacceptable behaviour are outlined below:

Violence and aggression are not restricted to acts which cause physical harm. They also include behaviour or language – whether oral or written – that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened, harassed or abused. Examples of such behaviour include threats, physical violence, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations. We expect our staff to be treated courteously and with respect. Violence or abuse is unacceptable.

Individuals might make what we consider unreasonable demands on our office through the amount of information they seek, the level and scope of the service they expect or the amount of contact they have with us. What amounts to unreasonable demands will depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the complainer. Examples of such behaviour include demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale, insisting on speaking to a particular member of staff, continual phone calls, letters or emails, repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint or continually raising unrelated concerns. We consider such demands as unacceptable and unreasonable or start to impact substantially on the work of the office, for example by taking up too much staff time to the disadvantage of other individuals or functions

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, 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.