



advice and support for older age

**Independent  
Age**

# Guide

## Guide 54

# Complaints about social care and NHS services in Scotland

Making a complaint can feel daunting but help is available. This guide provides you with information on how to make a complaint about care and health services in Scotland.

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Our free advice service offers expert independent advice on social care, welfare benefits, and befriending schemes. Call **0800 319 6789** to arrange an appointment to speak to one of our advisers or email [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org) All our free guides and factsheets can be ordered by phone or email (as above) or downloaded from [www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)



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## **Introduction**

When things start to go wrong with your care or health services, it's important to let someone know this is happening. Don't wait until things get worse. Ask if you need help to make a complaint. You should be able to talk to someone involved in providing the service who can look into the issue for you, or may even be able to change the situation immediately. However, if you decide you need to go further to make a complaint then this guide can give you more information about the steps to take, the response you should receive and let you know about the help and support available to you to make a complaint.

## **1 What are care and health services?**

If you receive care and health services, you may be dealing with many different groups of people. For example, you may be getting visits at home from a health visitor, community nurse or you may have regular carers who help you with personal tasks, such as getting dressed or having a shower. If you are unhappy with these services in any way, you need to first work out who is responsible for providing the service to be able to make a complaint.

Care and treatment provided through the NHS, for example, by a health visitor, GP practice, community nurse or services from a health care agency, is described in this guide as 'health care'.

Care arranged by the council (which may be provided by a private or voluntary care organisation), is described in this guide as 'social care'. Social care services can also be arranged privately, for example if you do not want to involve the council, or have been told that you do not qualify for council support.

Once you know who is responsible for your care service, whether it's the NHS, the council or a private or voluntary organisation, you can take the following steps outlined in this guide to start your complaint.

### **Good to know**

There is new legislation in Scotland which means that health boards and councils must work more closely together and have joint health and social care services.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is talking to joint health and social care bodies about how complaints should work in the future. It is likely that the NHS will no longer have a separate complaints procedure to councils, and that complaints about NHS services will go through the same process as complaints about social care services. We will update this guide when any changes are made.

## **2 Why you might want to make a complaint**

You may be unhappy or upset about an ongoing situation, or be concerned about a particular incident. Sometimes it's enough to raise the issue and have an informal chat either with the individual concerned, a member of staff or the manager in charge of the service to make them aware and to make sure that it doesn't happen again. However, if the problem continues or is more serious, you may want to go further and make an official (formal) complaint.

### **Reasons why you might want to complain about your social care service**

The complaint could be about the process for getting support, such as:

- a new decision about your care, which could mean receiving fewer hours of care
- the way your care needs have been assessed
- delays in being given a decision or being provided with services
- being refused a service without a good reason
- the way your money has been assessed to pay for care
- the amount that you are being charged for your care service, for example, if you feel you have been overcharged or are being charged for a service that should not be charged for
- a lack of information, for example, if you have not been given your written assessment or you have been provided with incorrect or misleading information.

Or your complaint could be about the service itself, such as:

- the quality or amount of care you are being given, if you feel the care is not very good, or the carers are not staying as long as they should
- poor communication from the care provider, for example, if you have not been informed about a change to your care services
- behaviour and attitude of staff, for example, if they have been neglectful, unhelpful or rude.

### **3 How to make a complaint**

You should make your complaint directly to the organisation which is providing your care or health treatment. You can make your complaint either over the phone, in person, or by writing a letter or sending an email to a named person.

You must make your complaint as soon as you can, ideally within six months of an incident happening or since you first became aware of a problem, although you can complain up until 12 months after. You might still be able to complain after the 12-month period if you have a good reason, for example, if you have been unwell.

#### **What your complaint should include**

- your full name and address
- an explanation of why you are making the complaint (make it clear that you are making a formal complaint)
- a description of what has gone wrong – make sure you include all the relevant facts (such as dates, times and names), but keep the account as brief as you can
- any relevant letters or documents you have (if you are writing a letter or email)
- an explanation of how you want the organisation to resolve the matter. For example, whether you would like to receive an apology, better service, an explanation or simply an acknowledgement that the problem will not happen again.

#### **Good to know**

The organisation you are complaining about must keep a written record of your complaint and provide you with a copy.

## 4 Support to make your complaint

Complaints can be made either by you a friend or a relative, if you give your permission. You can also ask for support or advice from:

- an independent advocate (see below)
- an organisation like the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). They may be able to provide face-to-face advice – their details will be in your local phone directory or you can search on the Citizens Advice Scotland website at [cas.org.uk](http://cas.org.uk).
- Independent Age (0800 319 6789, [independentage.org](http://independentage.org))
- the Silverline Scotland Helpline (0800 4 708090, [ageuk.org.uk/Scotland](http://ageuk.org.uk/Scotland) – a partnership between The Silver Line and Age Scotland)
- Care Information Scotland (0845 6001 001, [careinfoscotland.co.uk](http://careinfoscotland.co.uk)).

### Independent advocates

An independent advocate is someone who can speak on your behalf to represent your views and rights, or support you to speak for yourself. They can discuss your situation privately with you and, with your permission, can attend meetings with you or on your behalf. The advocate may be able to help you resolve problems and make communication easier between you and the professionals involved.

This service should be free of charge and the advocate should be independent of health and social care services.

### To do...

You may be able to find a local independent advocacy organisation by contacting the Scottish Independent

Advocacy Alliance (0131 556 6443, [siaa.org.uk](http://siaa.org.uk)). For more information about independent advocacy, see our guide Independent Advocacy (Guide 25).

## **5 Once you have made your complaint**

- keep copies of all the letters and documents that you have sent, and any responses you get.
- Whenever you are in touch with someone about your complaint, make a note of their name, the date, and what was said.
- If a decision is made or anything is agreed over the phone or in person, make sure to ask that the decision is confirmed to you in writing.

## **6 Getting a response to your complaint**

### **When should you expect a response?**

When you will get a response will depend on the type of complaint you have made. If your complaint can be dealt with by a simple explanation, or apology, then this should take place within five working days. If, however, your complaint has not been resolved up to this point, or is more complex and requires further investigation, it should be acknowledged within three working days, and the organisation involved should offer to discuss with you what outcome you would like to see. You should then receive a more thorough response within 20 working days.

The NHS and councils have different complaints procedures, so these timescales may vary slightly. Please contact us (0800 319 6789, [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)) for details of council or NHS complaints processes if you need more information.

### **What response should you expect?**

You should be:

- given a written acknowledgement of your complaint
- given the name of the person who will investigate your complaint
- asked what outcome you would like. For example, you may want an explanation, an apology or refund of costs. But if your complaint cannot be resolved in any of these ways, you may be asked to provide more information, like supporting letters or documents, so that your concerns can be further investigated
- told how quickly your complaint will be dealt with and when you are likely to be able to expect a response

- asked how you wish to be notified of a decision, either by phone, letter or email or through a relative, friend or an independent advocate (see chapter 4) if you prefer.

Once the investigation is finished, you should be told of the result and what action will be taken next. This should be explained to you in writing. You should also be told that you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) if you are still dissatisfied (see chapter 13).

## **7 Complaining about care in your own home**

You may not be happy with the care you receive in your own home if, for example, you are being charged more than you feel you can afford or you have received a bill for more than you were told you should have to pay.

Alternatively, you may have found that your carers have not turned up when you were told to expect them, may not have helped you with the personal tasks that you normally receive help with or may be staying at your home for less time than usual.

### **Should I complain?**

You might feel unsure about making a complaint, but raising the issue with the organisation arranging your care as soon as possible could prevent the situation from happening again, or could stop things from getting any worse. If you do feel unsure about making a complaint, you may want to discuss your concerns with an independent advocate, or you can call our advice service (0800 319 6789, [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)).

### **The steps to take**

**1.** If you are unhappy with the standard of care you are receiving in your own home from the NHS, social services or from a home care agency, you should first speak to someone in charge of the service. This may be the manager or supervisor of the home care agency, the manager of the community nurses, or the social worker involved in organising your care.

**2.** If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you can make a complaint using the organisation's complaints procedure. If the service you receive is provided by the NHS, you will need to use the NHS complaints procedure (see chapter 10). If the service is provided or arranged by your local council, you need to use the local council's social services complaints procedure (see chapter 9). If you arranged the service yourself, the organisation you are using should have their own internal complaints procedure.

**3.** If you are complaining about home care provided by the social work department or a private agency, as well as making a complaint to the care agency and the council, you can also contact the Care Inspectorate (0845 600 9527, [careinspectorate.com](http://careinspectorate.com)). The Care Inspectorate registers and regulates home care providers (and other services, including care homes) in Scotland. It can investigate complaints where the service you have been provided does not meet the National Care Standards. You can view the current National Care Standards ([nationalcarestandards.org/](http://nationalcarestandards.org/)), although please note these are being reviewed and consulted on at this time and may be subject to change.

## **8 Complaining about care in a care home**

The National Care Standards say that all care homes should have their own complaints procedures, which you can ask for information about.

### **Steps to take**

- If you live in a care home, or you are a relative or friend of a resident in care home, you can first approach the care home manager or matron with your complaint, if you feel comfortable doing this.
- You can also report your concerns about care homes to the Care Inspectorate (0845 600 9527, [careinspectorate.com](http://careinspectorate.com)), which registers and regulates all care homes and some other care services in Scotland. The Care Inspectorate can investigate your complaint as long as it relates to the 'National Care Standards'. You can view the current National Care Standards ([nationalcarestandards.org](http://nationalcarestandards.org)), although please note that these are to be reviewed by the Scottish Government. You can write or speak to the inspectors in confidence, although you may have to reveal more information if you want them to investigate in detail.

### **If you are supported by the council**

If the council pays towards your care home fees or arranged your care and you are unhappy with how your complaint was handled by the care home, you can also complain to the council so they can investigate your complaint. If this does not resolve the situation, you can then make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (0800 377 7330, [spsso.org.uk](http://spsso.org.uk)).

## **If you are not supported by the council**

If you pay your own care home fees and don't receive any free Personal and Nursing Care payments from the council, and you feel that the care home's complaints procedure has not resolved your concerns, you may be able to go straight to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) (0800 377 7330, [spsos.org.uk](https://www.spsos.org.uk)), but this is not absolutely clear and you may want to discuss it with the SPSO. Otherwise, if your complaint is about the care standards, you can complain to the Care Inspectorate, as mentioned earlier. You may also want to consider getting legal advice – the Legal Services Agency (0800 316 8450, [lsa.org.uk](https://www.lsa.org.uk)) can give you some free initial advice, or you can get advice about your contract with the care home from the Citizens Advice consumer service (03454 04 05 06, [adviceguide.org.uk](https://www.adviceguide.org.uk)).

## **What if I am still not happy?**

If you have gone all the way through the complaints process without being able to find a solution, and you and the manager of the care home can't agree on a way to resolve the complaint (despite any involvement from the council and the Ombudsman), you may prefer to consider a move to another care home.

## **To do...**

Before you make a decision about moving to another care home, you should think about the impact that this might have on you – for example, is there another suitable home in the area that can meet your needs? Will it be unsettling to move? You should contact your council for an assessment of your needs, so that you can be sure that any

new care home will be able to provide you with all the support you need. This is especially important if the council pays for or arranges any of your support.

If a move to a different care home is the best option, you can find details of local care homes from:

- the Elderly Accommodation Counsel (0800 377 7070, [housingcare.org](http://housingcare.org))
- the Care Inspectorate (0845 600 9527, [careinspectorate.com](http://careinspectorate.com)).

You may also want to read our guide Care Homes: what to look for (Guide 19).

## **9 Complaints about the council's social work service**

You must usually make a complaint within six months of the incident or situation which you are complaining about (or within 12 months at the latest). The time limit may not apply if your council's social services department is satisfied that you have good reasons for your complaint being made later, and if they think that it is still possible to investigate your complaint effectively and fairly.

There are three stages in the complaints procedures that councils in Scotland have to follow. This is set out for council's in the 'Model Complaints Handling Procedure' [1]

### **1. Frontline resolution (making an informal complaint)**

If possible, the council will try to deal with your complaint and resolve it with you informally. Your complaint should be dealt with within five working days (or ten days if there are exceptional circumstances). This could lead to an apology, or an explanation of what happened. The council must also log the complaint, how they have dealt with it, and what they have learnt from it.

If you are unhappy with the response that you get, or if your complaint is not straightforward, it might be necessary to make a formal complaint (step two).

### **2. Formal investigation of the complaint by a senior officer / specialist staff**

Your complaint should be acknowledged within three working days and you should get a response within 20

days, unless you agree to extra time. A report should be produced by the council explaining what they found during the investigation into your complaint, what action they will take and how they will improve services in the future, or learn from the complaint.

### **3. Independent external review**

If you are still not happy, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (see chapter 13). They can look into how the council handled your complaint, whether there was a service failure, or whether there was an administrative fault, for example. You must generally contact the Ombudsman within 12 months of when the issue first arose, but after you have been through the first two steps in the complaints process.

[1]

[valuingcomplaints.org.uk/wp-content/media/The-Local-Authority-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure2.pdf](https://valuingcomplaints.org.uk/wp-content/media/The-Local-Authority-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure2.pdf)

## **10 Complaints about a health service**

Complaints to the NHS could include care you have received in:

- a hospital
- a doctors surgery
- a dentist practice
- your own home (from a district nurse, for example).

If something is wrong with your care, you should raise this at the time by mentioning it to the relevant NHS staff, or to the manager of that service. This may give them a chance to put the matter right immediately, if this is possible, and to make a note of it to make sure the problem doesn't arise again. This may be enough for you to feel much better about the situation.

### **Avoiding problems later**

If you have been given information about your health treatment, but you don't understand what you've been told, don't hesitate to ask for an explanation straight away which could put your mind at rest, rather than worrying about it later.

### **Making a formal complaint**

If the problem cannot be resolved in this way, you can make a complaint using the NHS complaints procedure, which is available from your local NHS organisation such as the GP surgery, dentist practice, hospital or NHS Board. Before complaining, it's important to make sure that it's definitely the NHS who is responsible for the service. You

usually need to have made your complaint within six months of the incident (or 12 months at the most).

If you have a complaint about your GP, you should first contact your GP surgery as all GP practices must have a complaints procedure. You can also write to the Feedback and Complaints Manager at your local NHS Board. Contact details for GP surgeries and NHS Boards are available from NHS 24 (call 111, [nhs24.com](https://www.nhs.uk)) or NHS Inform (0800 224488, [nhsinform.co.uk](https://www.nhsinform.co.uk)).

### **Support to make a complaint about health services**

You should also be advised of your right to support with making a complaint through the Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS). PASS provides independent, free and confidential information, advice and support to help you to understand your rights as a patient, and can provide advice and support to people who wish to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make a complaint about treatment and care provided by the NHS in Scotland. PASS will ensure that are listened to, supported and respected when raising concerns about your experiences.

PASS is run by your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). To get details of your local Citizens Advice Bureau, you can contact Citizens Advice Direct (0808 800 9060, [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)).

### **Your right to complain**

You can find more information on your health rights and on providing feedback or making NHS complaints through:

- the Health Rights Information Scotland website ([hris.org.uk/patient-information/information-about-health-rights/charter/the-charter/feedback-and-complaints](http://hris.org.uk/patient-information/information-about-health-rights/charter/the-charter/feedback-and-complaints))
- the NHS Scotland 'Your Health Your Rights' leaflet, available from NHS Inform ([nhsinform.co.uk](http://nhsinform.co.uk), 0800 224488).

The main guidance about making a complaint about NHS care in Scotland is contained in 'Can I Help You?', available from [scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/6414](http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/6414). If you need further help in understanding the complaints process, please contact Independent Age (0800 319 6789, [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)) or the PASS service at your local CAB.

### **What happens next?**

Your complaint should be acknowledged within three working days. The acknowledgement letter you get should include:

- contact details of the feedback and complaints officer
- details of the advice and support available to you, including the PASS (Patient Advice and Support Service)
- information on the role and contact details for the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
- a statement confirming that the complaint will normally be investigated within 20 working days or as soon as reasonably possible (and where it is not possible to send a report within 20 working days, that you will be provided with an explanation as to why there is a delay and, where possible, provided with a revised timetable).

Your complaint will be investigated by a Feedback and Complaints Manager or Officer. They will produce a report

following their investigation, which may contain an apology if the NHS was found to be at fault.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you can take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) (see chapter 13). Details of how to contact the Ombudsman should be included in the response letter you get.

### **NHS Continuing Healthcare funding**

NHS Continuing Healthcare is care which is fully-funded by the NHS, for people who have complex ongoing health needs and need constant health care support.

If you have applied for, and been refused, NHS Continuing Healthcare funding, you can ask for a review of (appeal) the NHS Board's decision within 14 days. The review process is separate to the NHS complaints procedure described above. The NHS Board should appoint two competent professionals to separately review the decision, and then review the paperwork to make sure the correct procedures were followed. Once they have given their decision, it's still possible to continue on to the NHS complaints procedure as mentioned earlier, if you are not happy with the outcome of the appeal. For more information, see the Care Info Scotland website at [careinfoscotland.co.uk/how-do-i-pay-for-care/nhs-continuing-health-care.aspx](http://careinfoscotland.co.uk/how-do-i-pay-for-care/nhs-continuing-health-care.aspx) .

## **11 Complaints about an individual care or health professional**

If the complaint involves a serious matter involving an individual worker, you may wish to complain about their behaviour as a trained and regulated professional. Here are some examples of bodies who can investigate specific professions.

### **Complaints about the conduct of a social worker**

For a serious complaint about a social worker, you can contact the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) (0845 60 30 891, [sssc.uk.com](https://www.sssc.uk.com)). You can refer to the Code of Practice for social service workers (available on the SSSC website) as part of their registration with the SSSC.

### **Complaints about a doctor, dentist, nurse or health professional**

For a serious complaint about a doctor, you can complain to their professional organisation, the General Medical Council (GMC) (0845 357 0022, [gmc-uk.org](https://www.gmc-uk.org)). The GMC complaints department has the legal power to investigate doctors working in the UK.

For a serious complaint about a dentist, you can complain to the General Dental Council (GDC) (0845 222 4141, [gdc-uk.org](https://www.gdc-uk.org)). The GDC can investigate all concerns from dental patients, whether they are NHS or private patients.

For a serious complaint about a nurse, you can complain to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (020 7333 9333, [nmc-uk.org](https://www.nmc-uk.org)). It has the power to investigate concerns about nurses working in the UK.

If you have a serious complaint about another health professional, such as an occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, or a physiotherapist, you should contact the Health Professionals Council (0800 328 4218, [hpc-uk.org](http://hpc-uk.org)). They maintain a register of certain health professionals and can investigate complaints if it's about a profession they regulate.

## **12 If the complaint is about abuse**

Abuse can occur in any setting - in a care home, at home, in hospital, at a day centre... Whatever form the abuse might take, whether it's financial, physical, sexual, psychological abuse or neglect, you can report your concerns to the Adult Protection or Safeguarding Team based in the council social work department, or to the police.

Adult Protection Committees are responsible for ensuring that the local council, police, NHS and other key agencies such as the Care Inspectorate, work together in an effective and co-ordinated way to protect vulnerable people from harm. The Act Against Harm website ( [actagainstharm.org](http://actagainstharm.org)) has more information and provides contact details for each adult protection unit in Scotland.

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with vulnerable people through paid and unpaid work don't have a known history of harmful behaviour. Disclosure Scotland (0870 609 6006, [disclosurescotland.co.uk](http://disclosurescotland.co.uk)) administers the PVG scheme so that employers can check individual's records before offering employment to people who will be working with vulnerable adults.

### **To do...**

If you wish to speak to someone who is independent about your concerns, you can contact Action on Elder Abuse (0808 808 8141, [elderabuse.org.uk](http://elderabuse.org.uk)) or the Independent Age advice service (0800 319 6789, [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)).

## **13 Taking your complaint further**

If you have made your complaint to the council, the NHS or a care provider, but you are unhappy with the response that you get to your complaint, there are further steps you can take.

### **Contacting the Ombudsman**

You can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) (0800 377 7330, [spsso.org.uk](https://www.spsso.org.uk)). The Ombudsman can investigate complaints

about failures in the administration and processes of councils, NHS Boards and housing associations in Scotland. A complaint to the Ombudsman must usually be made within 12 months of the problem originally arising, unless there are special reasons. The Ombudsman will make recommendations on how the complaint should be resolved.

The Ombudsman will not generally investigate your complaint unless you have been through the council or Health Board complaints procedure first, although there may be exceptions. Also, they may not investigate your complaint if you are privately funding your care, although, again, there may sometimes be exceptions, (for example, if you receive free personal and nursing care from the council). The Ombudsman's role in investigating complaints from 'self-funders' is unclear in Scotland, so contact the Ombudsman directly if you are a self-funder to see if they can investigate.

## **Getting others interested**

You could consider getting support from a voluntary organisation, pressure group or from a political representative to help fight your case. People you may want to contact include:

- a local voluntary organisation, your local councillor or your MP. You can find the contact details for your local MP at [theyworkforyou.com](https://theyworkforyou.com) and they can usually be contacted by letter or email
- the Scottish Government minister responsible for the public service you are concerned about. The Scottish Government website ( [scottish.parliament.uk/msps](https://scottish.parliament.uk/msps)) provides details of each minister, including those who are responsible for public health or social care
- local newspapers, magazines or radio stations. You should be aware, though, that by involving the media you may lose some of your privacy and personal control over the situation.

## **Judicial review**

You can challenge some decisions made by a council or the NHS using a Judicial Review in the Court of Session. The Judicial Review considers the way a public authority, such as a council or the NHS, has made its decision to see if it has followed the law correctly, although it cannot change the law itself (see [scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/legal/Civil/JudicialReview](https://scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/legal/Civil/JudicialReview)).

### **To do...**

You will need to get specialist legal advice from a solicitor to see if you might be able to get help to cover the legal costs, through Legal Aid ( [slab.org.uk/public](https://slab.org.uk/public)). Whether you

can get this type of support will depend on your financial situation. If you aren't eligible for legal aid, a Judicial Review may be a very expensive option.

If you are considering applying for a Judicial Review, you will need legal advice to see if you have sufficient grounds for a case. You may want to contact the Legal Services Agency (0141 353 3354, [lsa.org.uk](http://lsa.org.uk)). You may also need to contact the Scottish Legal Aid Board ([slab.org.uk/public](http://slab.org.uk/public)).

### **Good to know**

There may be a time limit on how long you have to decide to go for a Judicial Review after the original decision by the council or NHS.

### **Private legal action**

It's also possible to take a public authority to court, although the process is slow and can be very expensive.

To find a solicitor, contact one of the following organisations:

- Solicitors for the Elderly (0844 567 6173, [solicitorsfortheelderly.com](http://solicitorsfortheelderly.com)) has a list of solicitors who have experience and/or specialise in legal issues affecting older people.
- The Law Society of Scotland (0131 226 7411, [lawscot.org.uk](http://lawscot.org.uk)) regulates and represents solicitors in Scotland. They have a searchable online database and helpline to help you find a solicitor in your local area. They can provide advice on what to expect, guides to common legal problems and what to do if things go wrong.

## **14 Summary: things to remember when making a complaint**

- Don't wait if things are going wrong with your care or health services – tell someone as soon as you can.
- Do ask for explanations if you don't understand what you're being told – small problems can become bigger when there's a misunderstanding or breakdown in communication.
- Don't feel that you're being a nuisance – organisations need to know if there's a problem and usually prefer to be told so they have a chance to put things right.
- Do ask for help – if you feel you need to make a complaint but can't do it by yourself there is help available, including independent advocacy organisations and advice services, like our team at Independent Age (0800 319 6789, [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)).

## **15 Useful Contacts**

Here are a few of the key organisations mentioned in this guide to support you with following your complaint through:

### **If you are concerned about abuse**

- Action on Elder Abuse (080 8808 8141, [elderabuse.org.uk](http://elderabuse.org.uk)).

### **Getting support to make your complaint**

- Citizens Advice Bureau (0808 800 9060, [cas.org.uk](http://cas.org.uk)) - can give advice about making a complaint (and run the Patient Advice and Support Services for complaints about the NHS).
- Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (0131 556 6443, [siaa.org.uk](http://siaa.org.uk)) – to find a local advocate who could attend meetings with you and represent your views.

### **If you don't get the result you want**

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) (0800 377 7330, [spsso.org.uk](http://spsso.org.uk)).

Remember that you can also speak to one of our independent advisers for advice about making a complaint by calling us on 0800 319 6789.

This guide is not a full explanation of the law and is aimed at people aged over 60.

If you need any of this information in another format (such as large-print or Braille), please contact our Information Manager on 020 7605 4294 or email [comms@independentage.org](mailto:comms@independentage.org)

If you have found our advice useful, please consider supporting us by raising money, volunteering or making a donation. We receive no state funding and rely on support from individuals, trusts and other sources to continue providing our services to hundreds of thousands of people in need.

For further information on how to support us, please see our website [independentage.org](http://independentage.org) or call 020 7605 4288.

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