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Why do we have a complaints handling procedure?

Argyll and Bute Council & The Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to providing high-quality customer service. 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 leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the Council/Partnership's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf. For example:

- x failure or refusal to provide a service
- x inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- x dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- x failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- x failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- x conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (**except** where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- x disagreement with a decision, (**except** where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

Your complaint may involve more than one Council/Partnership 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:

- x a routine first-time request for a service
- x a first-time report of a fault (for example, potholes or street lighting)
- x a request for compensation only
- x issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process)
- x disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector – such as council tax, planning, or a parking ticket appeal
- x disagreement with decisions or conditions that are based upon social work recommendations, but determined by a court or other statutory body, for example decisions made by a children's panel, parole board or mental health tribunal
- x a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- x a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- x a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- x a concern about a child or an adult's safety

- x an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- x abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Actions Policy
- x 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).
- x a complaint about the conduct of a councillor these are dealt with by the Ethical Commissioner for Scotland (Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HE at www.ethicalstandards.org.uk or by telephone: 0300 011 0550)

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 who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

If you are a young person (under 18) making a complaint, an adult making a complaint on behalf of a young person or an adult making a complaint about an issue that affects a young person then we will follow an additional process to ensure that the views of the young person are captured and considered throughout in line with the UNCRC [Child Friendly Complaints-handling Principles \(spsso.org.uk\)](http://spsso.org.uk).

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, by email or via the Council/Partnership's website. It is easier for us to address 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 the issue. When complaining, please tell us:

- x your full name and contact details
- x as much as you can about the complaint
- x what has gone wrong; and
- x what outcome you are seeking.

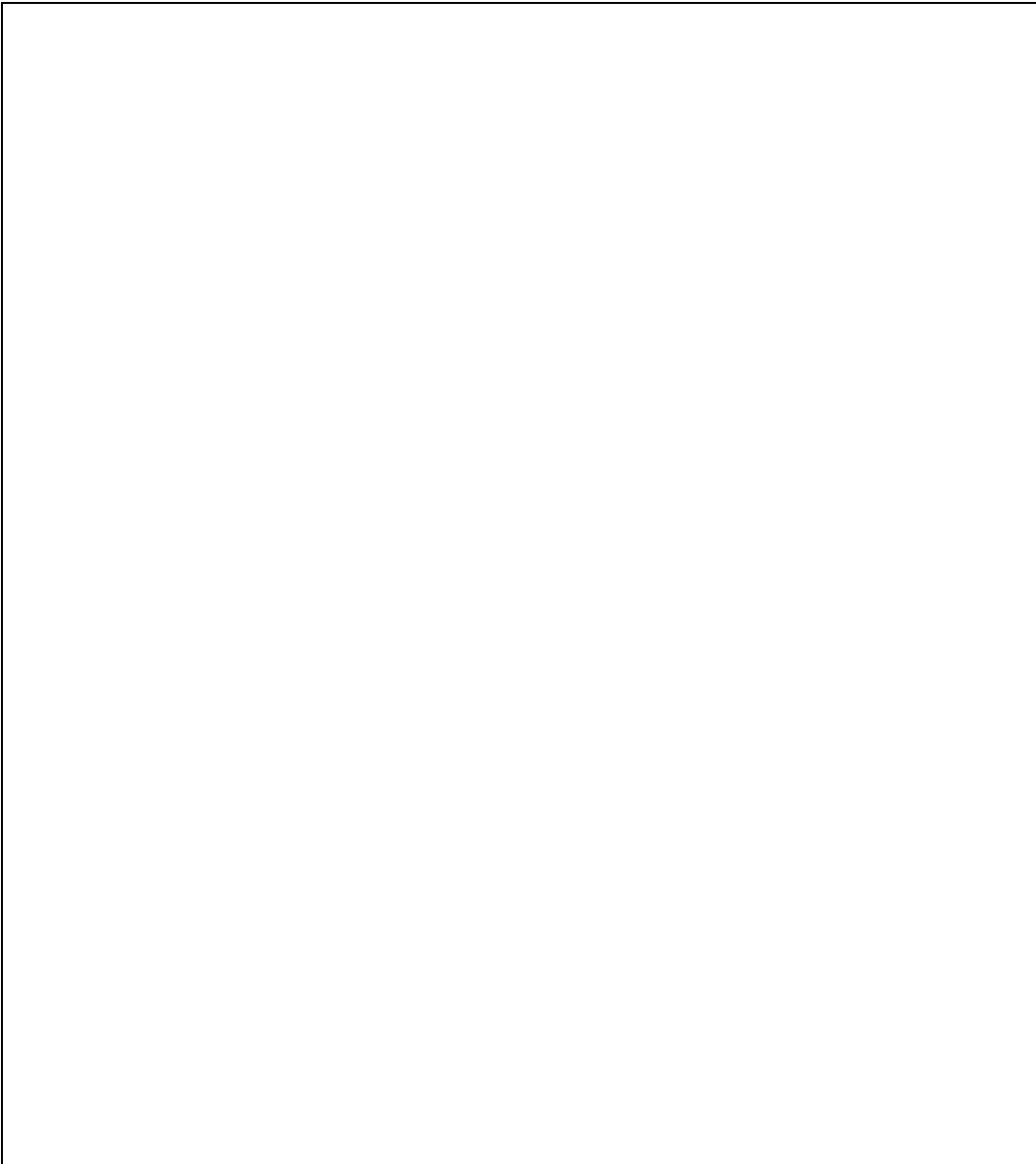
Our contact details

Telephone: 01546 605516

Email: complaints@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Social Work Complaints Email: argyllandbutehscp.feedback@nhs.scot or SWComplaints@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Website: [Complaints | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://Complaints | Argyll and Bute Council (argyll-bute.gov.uk))



There are some complaints that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Care complaints

If your complaint relates to a care service we provide, you can choose whether to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting them.

The Care Inspectorate has several offices around Scotland. Please refer to: <http://www.scswis.com/>

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 510 9410 Website: <http://www.siaa.org.uk>

You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland:

Citizens Advice Scotland
Website: <http://www.cas.org.uk> or check your phone book for your local citizens advice bureau.

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 you 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, please tell us in person, contact us on 01546 605516, email us at complaints@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Our contact details

Please contact us by the following means:

Argyll and Bute Council

Telephone: 01546 605516

Email: complaints@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Social Work Complaints Email: argyllandbutehscp.feedback@nhs.scot or
SWComplaints@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Website: https://argyllandbute.custhelp.com/app/LAP_Forms/LAP_Complaints

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats

BrowseAloud technology on our website reads out text and resizes text for the visually impaired and has a built in translation service for those who require a different language.

