

# BUSINESS GATEWAY CLIENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## 1. Introduction

Business Gateway is a publicly funded service providing access to free business support and impartial advice to start up and existing businesses in Scotland.

Scottish Local Authorities are responsible for the delivery of Business Gateway services in their respective geographic areas across Scotland. Scottish Local Authorities are supported in the delivery of the service by the Business Gateway National Unit (which is based in COSLA), and the Business Gateway Enquiry Service (delivered by Scottish Enterprise).

Scottish Local Authorities who deliver the Business Gateway service, the Business Gateway National Unit, and the Business Gateway Enquiry Service are committed to providing high quality services. We value complaints and use the 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 standards and what you can expect from us.

## 2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the Business Gateway service.

## 3. 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
- Treatment or attitude of a member of staff
- Our failure to follow proper procedure

Your complaint may involve more than one service or organisation involved in delivering the Business Gateway service, or be about someone working on our behalf.

## 4. What can't I complain about?

There are some things that we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- A routine, first time request for a service, for example a first time request for a meeting with a business adviser
- Requests for compensation
- Lack of available funding in the form of grants or loans, or the process or decision in relation to funding that is not directly managed by Business Gateway National Unit
- Things that are covered by right of appeal, or other such matters out with the jurisdiction of Business Gateway – e.g. planning appeals lodged with your local Council
- Requests for information and publicly available information
- Requests under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act
- Complaints that are currently in the process of being investigated / resolved, or attempts to re-open a complaint where a final decision has already been made.

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

## 5. 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'.

## 6. How do I complain?

- You can complain in person at any Business Gateway office, and speak directly to a member of staff by phone, in writing or email, or via social media. You can find the contact details for your local Business Gateway office at <http://www.bgateway.com/local-offices>
- You can also complain directly to your local Council through their online complaints form. You can find details of your local Council at <https://www.mygov.scot/organisations/#scottish-local-authority>
- If you wish to complain by phone and are not able to reach your local office you can also contact us on 0300 013 4753
- You can also contact us using LiveChat on [www.bgateway.com](http://www.bgateway.com)
- or by emailing us at [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com)

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the local office where the service is concerned. So please talk to a member of staff at the office/ service you are complaining about. They can then try to resolve problems on the spot.

When complaining, please tell us:

- Your full name
- As much as you can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong
- How you want us to resolve the matter

## 7. 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
- 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.

## 8. What happens after I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

### **Stage 1 – 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 an explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.
- We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in no more than five working days, 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 2 – 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
  - 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 days, we will tell you why. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

## 9. What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the local council or the way we have 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 considered or is being considered in court

You can contact the SPSO:

- In person: SPSO, 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS
- By post: FREEPOST SPSO
- Freephone: 0800 377 7330
- Online contact: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us>
- Website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)
- Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

## 10. 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 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:

- Telephone: 0131 260 5380
- Website: [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)