Fife’s Health and Social Care Partnership is between NHS Fife and Fife Council, as well as partners in the third and independent sector. This guide has been created to help you understand the policy and procedures in place and to help you if you want to complain or make a comment or compliment about the Partnership’s Social Work Services.

We aim to provide the best possible service to people who use Health & Social Care Social Work Services. Occasionally though people may want to complain about the support they receive. We are committed to providing users of services and those acting on their behalf with a transparent, accessible and effective process for dealing with complaints.

Health & Social Care (Social Work) has a legal duty to provide an accessible and responsive complaints procedure.

If you’re not happy with the care or service you’ve received or you’ve been refused support, you have the right to complain, have your complaint investigated, and be given a full and prompt reply.

What is a complaint?

Our definition of a complaint is:

‘An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about Health & Social Care’s Social Work Services action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Social Work service.’
A complaint may relate to the following, but is not restricted to this list:

- failure or refusal to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- failure of administrative processes
- delays in service provision
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- disagreement with a decision made in relation to social work services.

**Complaints involving more than one public body or organisation**

If a complaint involves more than one agency / service, the agencies / service will work together and agreement will be reached regarding which agency / service will take the lead. Complainants will be informed.

**Who can complain?**

You or someone acting on your behalf can complain if you:

- Receive Health & Social Care Social Work Services support
- Have been refused access to Social Work support or a service provided on behalf of Social Work
- Have a need or possible need for a service and have been refused an assessment or advice.

Complaints can also be made by someone who is acting on an individual’s behalf and who has legal authority to do so, or has their consent. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else then we must receive written confirmation of this.
How to complain

You can complain in any of the following ways:

• go online at www.fifedirect.org.uk/commentsandcomplaints
• phone our Health & Social Care Contact Centre line: 03451 551503 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)
• BT Text Direct for the Deaf: 18001 03451 551503
• fill in our comments, compliments and complaints form at the end of this leaflet and post it to us; you don’t need a stamp
• write to us, using the envelope at the back of this guide, at: Freepost RTLZ-UBSL-GLKK, Director of Health & Social Care, Fife Council, Fife House, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT
• if you are deaf or hard of hearing and have registered for the Council’s SMS text service, please send your complaint to the number given when you registered.

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 a 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.
Comments, Compliments & Complaints

What happens next?

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
- 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 is going to 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 not happy?

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. There is no further level of appeal within the Health & Social Care Social Work Service.

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, and / or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman:

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)**
4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS

By Post:  **Freepost SPSO**
Tel:  **0800 377 7330**
Web:  **www.spso.org.uk/contact-us**
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.

Tel: 0345 600 9527  
Fax: 01382 207 289  
Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com  
web: www.scswis.com

Making a comment or compliment

As well as complaints, we are always interested in your comments and compliments regarding Social Work services, policies and procedures.

Your comments can help us to:

• improve the quality of services we provide, and
• plan and improve services which better meet your needs.

We also like to know when things have gone well and you have received good customer service, we can then pass this on to the staff involved.
Quick guide to our complaints procedure

You can make your complaint through the web or email, by phone or in writing / completing our comments, compliments and complaints leaflet. 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 as soon as possible, 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.
**Health & Social Care Social Work Services Comments, Compliments & Complaints Form**

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME & ADDRESS IN BLOCK CAPITALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Dr</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forename:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Tel:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Your □ Comment □ Compliment □ Complaint**

Please give as many details as possible and note what action you would like us to take. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**□ I would like a response**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Date Protection Act 1998 – The information you have supplied will be maintained in accordance with the Act. It will not be passed to any other person outside Fife Council, without your prior consent, unless this is a legal requirement.
To return your comments, compliments and complaints form, post it to us following the instructions below:

1. Separate the form from this leaflet (see illustration).
2. Fold along dotted line (see illustration).
3. Tape edges closed (see illustration).

**Quick guide to our complaints procedure**

- **Stage 1: Frontline resolution**
  - We aim to resolve your complaint quickly. However, if it’s clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will let you know and keep you updated.
  - 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.
  - Our response at Stage 1 will be after no more than 20 working days unless there is a good reason for needing more time.

- **Stage 2: Independent review**
  - If your complaint is complex and needs a detailed investigation, we will refer it to an independent reviewer for consideration.
  - The independent reviewer will consider whether there was a failure of service and, if so, what you should be compensated for.
  - The review will be carried out within five working days if we can.

- **Stage 3: Appeal**
  - If you are still not satisfied, you have the right to make an appeal to the SPSO. Their advice will be final and binding.
  - The Chief Executive will carry out an appeal investigation. The outcome will be confirmed in writing to you, within 28 working days of receiving the response to your original complaint.

- **Contact us**
  - If you are telling us about something that has gone wrong, or if you have a complaint, comment or compliment, please write to us:
  - Freepost RTLZ-UBSL-GLKK
  - Director of Health & Social Care
  - Fife Council
  - Fife House
  - Glenrothes
  - KY7 5LT

- **How to contact us**
  - You can make your complaint through the web or email, by phone or post.

- **Email**
  - visitusatwww.fifedirect.org.uk/commentsandcomplaints

- **Phone**
  - BT: 01592 55 11 91
  - BT Text Direct for the Deaf: 18001 01592 55 11 91

- **Post**
  - Fill in this form and hand it in or post it to us, no stamp required.

- **Date Protection Act 1998**
  - The information you have supplied will be maintained in accordance with the Act. It will not be passed to any other person outside Fife Council, without your prior consent, unless this is a legal requirement.

- **Comment**
  - Please give as many details as possible and note what action you would like us to take. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.
Need assistance?

Please let us know if you need help. We will try to overcome any barriers you may have. You can have someone speak on your behalf, or if you have language or communication difficulties we will arrange assistance for you.

If you think that you need independent help to make your complaint, an independent advocacy service may be able to help. You can find out more about advocacy services in your area by contacting:

**Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**  
London House, 20-22 East London Street, Edinburgh EH7 4BQ

Tel: 0131 55 66 443  
Email: enquiry@siaa.org.uk  
Web: 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 please contact us on 03451 55 55 00.
Contacting Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

Online
www.fifedirect.org.uk/socialcare

Phone
03451 551503 (9am to 5pm)

BT Text Direct
18001 03451 551503 (9am to 5pm)

In person
To make an appointment call
03451 551503 (9am to 5pm)

In an emergency
If you have an emergency between 5pm and 9am Monday to Friday or at the weekend, call 03451 550099

Alternative Formats
To request information in large print, braille, audio CD/tape and BSL interpretation call 03451 555500

Language lines

03451 55 55 77

03451 55 55 99

03451 55 55 88

03451 55 55 44

Please send any comments, compliments or complaints to:

Freepost RTLZ-UBSL-GLKK
Director of Health & Social Care
Fife Council
Fife House
Glenrothes
KY7 5LT