



# The Scottish Surfing Federation

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

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**Purpose:**

This policy advises how a complaint can be made to the SSF and the process by which complaints will be acted upon.

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## 1. Introduction

This policy relates to making a complaint against the Scottish Surfing Federation.

This policy outlines the procedure that shall be followed in the case of a complaint against the Federation as an organisation, its rules, policies, aims, constitution or a complaint against a member or committee members conduct or behaviour.

## 2. What is a complaint

The SSF 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.

Our Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for responding to complaints early by capable, well-trained staff. Where possible, we will try resolve the complaint to the complainer's satisfaction. Where this is not possible, we will give the complainer a clear and reasoned response to their complaint.

## 3. What can someone complain about

- Failure or refusal to provide a service.
- Inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service.
- Dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on an individual.
- Failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services.
- Failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
- 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).

## 4. What can't someone complain about

- A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts, which is not applicable to the SSF.
- A grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- A concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern).
- A concern about a child or an adult's safety (this will be dealt with separately through our safeguarding process).
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision.
- Abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our own policy; or
- 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).
- 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).
- 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.

## 5. Who can complain

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services/activities 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).

## 6. How does someone complain

Complaints can be put in writing to 'Complaints' to the Scottish Surfing Federation, 14 Shore Street, Thurso, Caithness, Scotland, KW14 8BN or by email to [info@thessf.scot](mailto:info@thessf.scot)

Individuals complaining will be expected to tell us:

- Their full name and contact details
- As much as they can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong; and
- What outcome they are seeking.

## 7. Step 1 – Initial Resolution

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or 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 you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

## 8. Step 2 – Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: where the customer remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage.

When using Stage 2:

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days.
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.