



External Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Zero Waste Scotland aims to provide a high quality service which meets the highest expectations of the public, customers and partners. It welcomes all constructive feedback on experiences of its activities, whether positive or negative, and understands that, from time to time, external people or organisations may be dissatisfied or concerned with the way the Zero Waste Scotland or its staff have acted.

Zero Waste Scotland will respond, where necessary, by improving procedures, correcting mistakes and learning from experience.

Making a complaint will not exclude nor prejudice the outcome for the complainer of any Zero Waste Scotland activity that they may be engaged in now or in the future. There will be no reduction in the quality of service experienced by any complainer.

Procedure

Zero Waste Scotland has developed a procedure to deal with genuine concerns or complaints of impropriety, irregularity, misconduct, poor performance or ineffectiveness against Zero Waste Scotland in a timely and open way.

Who may raise a concern or Complaint?

Anyone who is materially affected by the activities of Zero Waste Scotland including those receiving or seeking a service or who have been subject to a decision of Zero Waste Scotland.

Considerations before raising a Complaint

Consider whether you have exhausted all reasonable steps to seek resolution for the matter you are considering complaining about.

What information should the concern/complaint contain?

The background to the concern/complaint including dates and times of any particular incidents and the names of any people against whom you are complaining or who can provide evidence in support of your concern/complaint.

- Any specific issues which you want to be addressed.
- What outcome(s) you hope to achieve from the concern/complaints process.
- Concerns or complaints should not contain offensive or abusive language, be repeated or persistent complaints which are trivial or untrue, made purposely to abuse this

complaints procedure or those accompanied by abusive or aggressive behaviour will be excluded.

Making a Complaint

We will respond to complaints and suggestions about the services we offer, the actions of our staff, and services that have not been received, and that in the view of the complaint; should have been available.

Examples of causes for complaint

- Have you been refused a service requested from Zero Waste Scotland?
- Do you feel dissatisfied with any service given by Zero Waste Scotland?
- Are you unhappy with the way you have been treated by Zero Waste Scotland staff?
- Do you wish to challenge a decision or statement made, or an action taken by Zero Waste Scotland?
- Have you any suggestions which you would wish to make to help Zero Waste Scotland improve and develop its practice and services?

Solving the problem informally

As a first step it is best to speak to someone in the responsible department who may be able to solve the problem informally with you. You should therefore in the first instance, contact Zero Waste Scotland directly on 01786 433 930 and you will be directed to the relevant department.

If following this; you wish to take the matter further, you can make a formal complaint using the formal complaint procedure as detailed below.

If you need any help, you can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. To find your local bureau please contact 03000 231231 or visit their website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk. We will keep all complaints confidential.

If you make a complaint, we will treat you with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

How to make a formal complaint

In writing to the relevant line manager or a Senior Manager or Chief Executive as appropriate (details of whom are on our website) who will:

- acknowledge receipt within five working days
- investigate your complaint

You must clearly state the following information:

- Personal Details, i.e. address and contact details for correspondence in connection with the complaint
- Outline of complaint, including dates of actions;
- Explain what steps you have taken so far, together with dates, to resolve your complaint informally
- Explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received to date;
- Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:

Our response to your complaint

Once you have made a formal complaint you will receive a written acknowledgement within five working days.

You will receive a full written response to the outcome of your complaint normally within ten working days with a full explanation and details of how we propose to remedy the situation. If a written reply is inappropriate or insufficient you will be offered the opportunity to meet with the relevant line manager, senior manager or Chief Executive as appropriate, to discuss the matter in detail in an attempt to meet a satisfactory outcome.

Should a meeting be required, you will be informed in writing of the outcome of any such meeting, normally within 10 working days of the meeting.

Where it is not possible to meet to the prescribed timescales, if for example the complaint is complex or staff are unavailable we will write to you to explain and let you know when we are able to give you a full response.

Additional Information

Complaints about the Chief Executive should follow the same format as already described and should be addressed to the Chairperson of Zero Waste Scotland, whose details are available on our website.

Making an Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or response to your complaint you may appeal in writing, outlining the reasons for your dissatisfaction to:

- The Senior Manager or Chief Executive (as appropriate), if it has been dealt with by a line manager
- The Chairperson, if it has been dealt with by the Chief Executive

This should be done within a maximum period of ten working days of receiving written notification of the outcome of your complaint.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of this within five working days. You will then be given a full response in writing within twenty working days.

Confidentiality

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission. All investigation records will be stored confidentially.