



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

**Complaints Handling Procedure
CUSTOMER INFORMATION LEAFLET**

April 2016

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

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 our service standards and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Joint Board's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Joint Board.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- Failure to provide a service
- Failure to achieve standards or quality of service promised by the Joint Board
- Dissatisfaction with Joint Board policies or the way they are being applied or administered
- The Joint Board's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
- Failure, negligence or delays in responding to customers' inquiries or requests
- Inappropriate/unacceptable treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff

This list does not cover everything.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include things that are covered by a right of appeal e.g. if you believe your house is incorrectly banded for council tax you can make a proposal to the Assessor to amend the Band.

A complaint is **not**:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- A request for compensation
- An issue that is in committee, court or a tribunal or has already been heard by a committee, court or a tribunal
- A disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists, for example in relation to council tax or non-domestic rating appeals
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- Formal complaints concerning valuations under the Valuation Acts
- Objections to inclusions in the Electoral Register

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 can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, e-mail or via our complaints form.

It is usually easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to us. So please talk to a member of our staff. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

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 your 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.

You can write to “Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board at:-

9 Wellington Square
Ayr
KA7 1HL

Telephone Number: 01292 612221

E-mail to: assessor@ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk

For more information, visit our website at: www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk

What happens when I have complained?

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 will 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 dissatisfied?

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.

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 or is being considered by a committee, court or tribunal.

You can contact the SPSO:

In person	SPSO 4 Melville Street Edinburgh EH3 7NS
By post	Freepost SPSO
Freephone	0800 377 7330
Online contact	www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website	www.spsso.org.uk
Mobile site	http://m.spsso.org.uk

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 260 5380** Fax: **0131 260 5381**
Website: 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, audio, or Braille, tell us in person, contact us on 01292 612221, e-mail us at assessor@ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

Quick guide to our complaints procedure Complaints Handling Procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing. 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 quickly, 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 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.