



Complaints handling policy

March 2026

1. Foreword

GTC Scotland is committed to providing excellent service to all. We accept, however, that sometimes things go wrong. As a learning organisation, we want to hear from you when you think things have gone wrong so we can learn from what has happened and continue to develop and improve the way in which we work.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This document sets out our Complaints handling policy (CHP) and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

We consider the CHP to be an important element of our work and use information from complaints to help us improve our services.

GTC Scotland will not accept or engage with any complainants who demonstrate behaviour that we consider to be violent, insulting or threatening.

2. What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

3. What can I make a complaint about?

This CHP is designed for service users to raise a complaint about the service that they have received.

You can make a complaint about things like:

- 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 you (although it is recognised that the policy is set at the discretion of GTC Scotland)

- Failure to properly apply the law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- Conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- Disagreeing with a decision (except where there is an alternative procedure for challenging that decision or an established appeals process to be followed)

(This is not an exhaustive list.)

4. What can't I make a complaint about?

There are some things that we don't deal with through our CHP.

These include:

- Concerns about a registered teacher. If you have serious concerns about the conduct of a teacher, you can make a fitness to teach referral. More information about [making a referral](#) can be found on our website.
- Concerns about a GTC Scotland Council or Panel Member. If you have serious concerns about a Council or Panel Member, you should raise these in line with the Code of Conduct and Membership Scheme, through the governance@gtcs.org.uk mailbox. More information about our [Code of Conduct and Membership Scheme](#) can be found on our website.
- A routine first-time request for a service.
- A request for compensation only.
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or practice.
- Issues that are in court, have already been heard by a court or a tribunal or are intended to be litigated (if you decide to take legal action while a complaint remains live, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this procedure).
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (for example freedom of information requests or

through the Judicial Review process) or an established review process within the organisation.

- A request for information under Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) legislation, or the Environmental Information Regulations.
- Concerns about services out with GTC Scotland's statutory responsibilities.
- A concern about a child or adult's safety or wellbeing. These should be reported in line with the relevant school or local authority's child and adult protection arrangements. Concerns about a person's immediate safety should be reported to the police.
- 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.
- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue.

We will not use the CHP for these issues and will instead direct you to the relevant applicable procedure.

5. Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes a representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent.

6. How do I make a complaint?

If we have been unable to resolve your issue informally, you can make a complaint through our online service complaint form.

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 you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, please contact us on 0131 314 6000.

When submitting a complaint, we will ask you to tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint, including the individual or team you were dealing with
- what has gone wrong; and
- what outcome you are seeking.

7. How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within 3 months of:

- The event you want to complain about; or
- Finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit (for example, where you were not able to complain due to serious illness or recent bereavement or where the complaint relates to a serious issue which, by its nature, resulted in your being unable to raise it at the time). If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

8. What happens when I have made a complaint?

We will acknowledge your complaint and tell you who is dealing with it. Our CHP has two stages.

Stage 1: Frontline response

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 always aim to do this within 7 calendar 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 3 months of the event you want to complain about; or
- Within 2 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.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those where the complainant remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation and so are handled directly at this stage. This means that there may be instances where we may identify that your complaint is best handled at stage 2, for example where you have been in correspondence with the organisation about your complaint ahead of formally submitting it as a complaint. We will let you know under which stage your complaint will be handled.

When using stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 calendar days
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint and what outcome you are looking for
- we will investigate and respond to your complaint

Where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a response as soon as possible, normally within one calendar month (with the exclusion of any period where GTC Scotland offices are closed, for example GTC Scotland's December office closure).

Our response will provide details of our investigation, including who was responsible for conducting it, whether your complaint is upheld or not upheld, and details of any additional actions we are taking to resolve the issue.

If our investigation will take longer than one calendar month, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

If you have raised a complaint about a member of staff our relevant internal processes may be engaged. As a result, we may not be in a position to provide details about our investigation, given this information will be personal to the individual employee.

Our response to Stage 2 will be the final response and position of GTC Scotland on your complaint.