

From Sally Loudon, COSLA Chief Executive



24 June 2020

Judith Robertson
Chair
Scottish Human Rights Commission

By email: chloe.trew@scottishhumanrights.com

Dear Judith

Scottish Local Authority Complaints Procedures

Thank you for your letter of 10th June 2020 which conveys your concerns regarding local authority complaints procedures. I understand that a similar letter has been sent by yourselves and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to councils across Scotland. As a result, I have secured information from a number of councils on their current practice regarding the handling of complaints during this challenging time.

Councils have told me that, irrespective of various communications that may have been issued, local authorities continue to process all complaints they receive. I understand that in some cases, due to the impact COVID-19 has had on staffing capacity, some councils have introduced arrangements to prioritise the most urgent complaints they receive.

I do note however, that some councils have advised that there have been instances where communication could have been clearer. For instance, where a council has revised the options through which complaints are raised e.g. suspension of an online portal reverting to more traditional channels such a telephone, letter or email; due to a reduction of staff capacity. For those councils, I believe communication has now been clarified.

All Scottish Councils are acutely aware of the need to guard against the potential for harm that the current pandemic situation can entail; and of the continuing need for systems like complaints procedures to help protect the citizens in our communities. At this time councils are paying particular attention to safeguarding and supporting its communities, with particular focus on those who are most vulnerable and at risk.

I hope the above gives you assurance that local authorities continue to process all complaints that they receive.

Yours sincerely



Sally Loudon
Chief Executive