

## **Making a Complaint to SOLAS**

### **What is the complaints process?**

The SOLAS Complaints Process provides a way for you to make a complaint to us regarding our services or how we conduct our business.

We will deal with all complaints fairly. We will protect the equality and human rights of those involved in the complaint. We will treat the person making the complaint and those against whom the complaint is being made with dignity and respect.

### **Before you make a complaint**

Before you make a complaint you should check if your complaint is about SOLAS services. In some cases it may be about a service provided by an Education and Training Board (ETB) or other education provider.

If we receive a complaint about ETB services we will give you the contact details to contact them directly or forward it to the ETB for you if you prefer.

If you are not sure if your complaint is about SOLAS or an ETB you can email or phone the SOLAS Complaints Liaison Officer to get advice. (Contact details below.)

Contact details for each ETB can be found here: [Directory of ETBs](#).

### **Can I make a complaint on behalf of someone else?**

Yes, but you may be asked to provide written permission in a letter or email from them to allow us to communicate with you on their behalf.

## **How do I make a complaint to SOLAS?**

If you wish to make a complaint about our services you should contact our Complaints Liaison Officer by post, email or phone.

### **By post:**

Complaints Liaison Officer,  
SOLAS,  
Block 1, Castleforbes House,  
Castleforbes Road,  
Dublin 1,  
D01 A8N0.

**By email:** [complaints@solas.ie](mailto:complaints@solas.ie)

**By phone:** Call us on **01 533 2500** and ask to speak to the Complaints Liaison Officer.

When we receive your complaint, the Complaints Liaison Officer will bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate person in SOLAS.

## **What information do I need to provide?**

It is important that you provide as much information as you can to help us find the right person to deal with your complaint and solve it quickly, such as:

- Name
- Daytime phone number or mobile number
- Email address
- Home address
- Student number or Apprentice registration number if you have one
- If you are doing a course or apprenticeship please give details of your college/course/year/apprenticeship phase
- Include as much detail as you can, such as locations, dates and times
- Names of those involved, including SOLAS staff
- Copies of any relevant documentation

## **If you are making a complaint relating to the Disability Act**

People with disabilities can complain to SOLAS under the Disability Act of 2005 if one of our services or the information we provide is not accessible to you.

You should mention in your complaint if it relates to your rights as a disabled person under the Disability Act.

Our Complaints Liaison Officer also acts as our Inquiry Officer for complaints related to the Disability Act.

SOLAS also has an Access Officer – you can contact them if you need help making your complaint by emailing [accessofficer@solas.ie](mailto:accessofficer@solas.ie) or phoning our office on **01 533 2500** and asking to speak to them.

More information about the Disability Act can be found here:

<https://www.ahead.ie/disabilityact>

## **What happens after I make a complaint?**

When we receive your complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 working days.
- Bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate person in SOLAS.
- Investigate your complaint and make a decision.
- Inform you of the decision in writing within 20 working days from the date of our acknowledgment.
- We will also inform those against whom the complaint was made of the decision.
- If a case is very complex, we will let you know within 20 working days from the date of our acknowledgment that extra time is required to make a decision.

*A working day does not include weekends, public holidays and days at Easter and Christmas when our office is closed.*

### **Is the process confidential?**

We will ensure confidentiality throughout the process. All information will be kept in strictest confidence within SOLAS unless there is a reason we must disclose it. An example of this would be where there is a child protection concern or if a crime has been committed.

### **Complaints that we will not investigate**

We will not investigate complaints that are frivolous, vexatious or malicious.

Examples of these are complaints that are only meant to cause inconvenience or trouble, or made to harm someone on purpose, or where someone makes the same complaint over and over again when it has already been investigated.

We will not reopen a complaint that has been closed unless new information has become available.

### **What if I am unhappy with the decision?**

If you are unhappy with our response to your complaint you should let us know in writing within 20 working days of the date of the initial decision. To do this, you should contact the Complaints Liaison Officer by **post** or **email** at the same details as above.

SOLAS will review the decision. Reviews will be carried out by a more senior staff member than the person who first investigated the complaint.

We will let you know the outcome of the review within 20 working days of receipt of the request for review.

### **What if I am still unhappy with the decision?**

We hope that if you make a complaint to SOLAS that we will be able to resolve it. However, if you remain unhappy with our decision then you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.

## **The Office of the Ombudsman**

Services provided by the Office of the Ombudsman are impartial and free to use. They examine complaints from members of the public who feel they have been unfairly treated by certain public bodies, including SOLAS. Complaints must have already been dealt with through our internal complaints procedure in the first place.

The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your complaint and to provide a copy of our final response to your complaint.

The best way to refer a complaint to the Ombudsman is by clicking on 'Make A Complaint' at their website [www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie).

You can also write to them:

Office of the Ombudsman  
6 Earlsfort Terrace,  
Dublin 2,  
D02 W773

You can also call the Ombudsman's Office on **01 639 5600**.

## **Still unsure about how to make a complaint?**

If you have any other questions about

- how to make a complaint to SOLAS
- the complaints process
- help to put your complaint in writing

you should contact the Complaints Liaison Officer by email or phone.

**By email:** [complaints@solas.ie](mailto:complaints@solas.ie)

**By phone:** Call **01 533 2500** and ask to speak to the Complaints Liaison Officer.