

Complaining to the agency involved

Before you contact us, make your complaint to the agency involved and give them a chance to fix it. In most cases the Ombudsman may decide not to investigate your complaint until you have received a final response from the agency through its complaints management system.

Information about how the agency deals with complaints should be available on its website, or you can phone them and ask for a copy.

The organisation should provide information about:

- where and how to make a complaint
- how your complaint will be managed
- how to request a review or appeal if you are unhappy with the final decision.

How to make a complaint?

If you can, write to the agency rather than making a complaint over the telephone. This means there is a written record of your complaint and the information you provided.

Many agencies have complaint forms on their websites and most have contact details. Alternatively, call the agency and ask for an email or postal address.

You should include:

- what happened?
- when it happened?
- why you think it is unfair or wrong?
- what should the agency do to fix your complaint?
- copies of documents or information you have to support your complaint.

Other things to keep in mind

- Keep a copy of letters you send to the agency. It is also helpful to keep records of all contact with the agency, including conversations, emails, names, dates and times. If you telephone the agency, ask for the name of the

person you speak with and their position. Keep a record of the date and time of your call and details of your conversation.

- If you have made a written complaint and have not heard anything within a month, you should phone the agency or follow up with a letter or email. Ask them to regularly update you about your complaint.
- Once the agency has made a decision about your complaint, you should receive a letter to tell you the outcome. The letter should provide you with information about the decision, reasons for the decision, and advice about how to ask for an internal review if you are unhappy with the decision.

Ask for an internal review

If you are unhappy with the first response to your complaint, ask the agency to do an internal review. An internal review involves a senior officer investigating the process and the facts of the original decision or action, and deciding if it was correct.

Once the agency has finished the internal review, you should receive a letter about the outcome.

Contact us

If you are unhappy with the agency's internal review, you can make an [online complaint](#).

When doing so, please explain why you think the agency's decision is wrong and the outcome you want. Provide copies of

relevant documents, especially the response to your complaint and the internal review decision.

We will assess your complaint to see if we can investigate. [Find out what to expect if you make a complaint to us.](#)

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