

**Advisers' training day: the Ombudsman & non-litigation remedies**

**Monday 26th November 2007 10.45 – 4.30pm**

**Cost:** £60 + VAT (£70.50) per delegate

This course is being offered at subsidised rate thanks to funding from the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman.

**Venue:** Shelter Training, Unit 13, London City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 2PU [Nearest tube: Angel/Old Street]

This practical training course aims to give solicitors and advisers the knowledge and tools to make effective use of the non-litigation remedies available within public law.

The focus is on common problems with the Benefit Authorities such as:

- What to do about delays and other failures within the administration of benefits by the DWP, Local Authorities and HM Revenue & Customs.
- What to do if you think there has been an unreasonable decision.
- What to do about problems caused by the application of new policies and procedures.

The event is designed to enable delegates to choose a pair of workshops on the area most relevant to their work. In the first workshop, the focus is on the initial stage of the formal complaints process: the internal complaints service. Here, the complaints officers themselves will offer a comprehensive guide to how these processes are supposed to work, and advice on how to get the most out of them. The second workshop looks at what to do if this doesn't work. Insiders from the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, and the Local Government Ombudsman will give an indispensable practical guide to how to make a powerful complaint to them, and the remedies that they are able to provide for your clients.

The course is accredited for 4.5 CPD points.

## Timetable

10.45 - 11.00	<b>Registration and coffee</b>
11.00 – 11.20	<p><b>Introduction to the day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Session 1 will offer an explanation of how the various internal complaints procedures are supposed to work both in theory and in practice.</li> <li>- Session 2 looks at what to do and who to go to if this doesn't happen.</li> <li>- Choice of focus on Parliamentary &amp; Health Service Ombudsman; and Local Government Ombudsman.</li> </ul>
11.20 – 12.50	<p><b>Workshop I - First tier internal complaints system</b></p> <p>The first stop for your clients is the internal complaints service of the offending organisation. In this session, those in charge of the processes offer a comprehensive guide to how these systems are supposed to work, and advice on how to get the most out of them. The Government sets great store by these processes, so we ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the processes?</li> <li>• Why use them at all?</li> <li>• What are the time limits (on the client and on the public body)?</li> <li>• What should you do if the public body ignores them?</li> <li>• What can you do to help make them work?</li> </ul> <p>Choose from the following focuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) <b>DWP Complaints Procedure</b> Carol Farrell - DWP Corporate Customer Affairs Dept</li> <li>ii) <b>Adjudicator's Office</b> Simon Oakes – Head of Office, Adjudicators Office</li> <li>iii) <b>Local Authority Complaints Procedure</b> TBC</li> </ul>
12.50 – 1.30	<b>Lunch</b>
1.30 – 3.30	<p><b>Workshop II – Second tier Ombudsman complaints system</b></p> <p>Led by a senior member of the Ombudsman's staff, with hands-on experience of complaint investigation.</p> <p>What should you do when the internal complaints procedure doesn't work? This session offers an insider's guide to the Ombudsman Service, and how to use it to get results for your client.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can you make the Ombudsman service work effectively for your client?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you write a good complaints letter? What key information do you need to include to start an investigation?</li> <li>• What happens in an investigation?</li> <li>• How can advisers help?</li> <li>• What remedies can the Ombudsman provide?</li> <li>• How can the Ombudsman take urgent action?</li> </ul> <p>Each workshop will focus on the procedures and complaints areas specific to the different Ombudsman services.</p> <p>Choose from the following focuses:</p> <p><b>i) Parliamentary &amp; Health Service Ombudsman</b> - Complaints against the administrative actions of a wide range of central government departments, the NHS, and other public bodies, or the conduct of organisations acting on their behalf.</p> <p><b>ii) Local Government Ombudsman</b> - Complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, education and social services.</p>
3.30 – 4.00	<p><b>Joint investigations between the Parliamentary &amp; Health Service and Local Government Ombudsman</b></p> <p>On 1 August 2007 the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsmen gained new powers to undertake joint investigations, share information, and issue joint reports on cases that are relevant to more than one of them.</p> <p>Previously, if a case spanned their jurisdictions, the Ombudsmen had to conduct parallel investigations and publish separate reports of their findings. Now a complaint can be made to any one of the individual Ombudsmen who will consider whether a joint investigation might be appropriate. Examples include complaints about the provision of health and social care; the administration of housing and welfare benefits; or planning and environmental issues.</p> <p>This session will offer a comprehensive explanation of the changes and how they may affect the way complaints can be dealt with.</p>
4.00 – 4.20	<b>Q &amp; A</b>
4.20 – 4.30	<b>Closing remarks</b>



## Booking form

I would like to book ..... place(s) on the PLP advisers' training day on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 in London

Workshop preferences (please circle **one** choice from each of the options for Workshop 1 **and** 2):

Workshop 1: *Either* DWP Complaints Procedure; *or*  
Inland Revenue Adjudicators Office; *or*  
Local Authority Complaints Procedure.

Workshop 2: *Either* Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman; *or*  
Local Government Ombudsman

Name:

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Position:

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Organisation:

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Address:

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Postcode:

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Tel:

Fax:

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Email:

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Dietary requirements (if any):

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Do you have any particular access requirements (please specify):

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I enclose a cheque for £ ..... / Please invoice me for £..... (delete where applicable). If paying by purchase order, please raise it with your accounts department before booking. **Your place will only be secure once payment is received.**

Fee: £60 + VAT (£70.50) per delegate

Cancellation fees:

More than 2 weeks before event:

£30 + VAT

Within 2 weeks of event:

100% of full fee

**Please return to:** Pamela Powell, Public Law Project, 150 Caledonian Road, London N1 9RD. Tel: 020 7697 2191. Fax: 020 7837 7048.

Email: [p.powell@publiclawproject.org.uk](mailto:p.powell@publiclawproject.org.uk)