



Complaint procedures for particular Public Bodies

1. Introduction

If you think a public body has made a mistake, or you are unhappy with the service you have received because of something they have - or have not - done, you can make a formal complaint through the public body's internal complaints procedure. (See the PLP leaflet no. 6 in this series for general details of complaints procedures.) This leaflet will summarize the internal complaints procedures operated by:

- the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- the Home Office
- Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)
- Local authorities (local councils)

You should start by asking the public body for a copy of their relevant complaints procedure. This may be available on their website, or you can ring them and ask them to send you a copy. You should also check whether you might, in a case of maladministration, be entitled to a discretionary payment under a special payments or compensation scheme. A number of organisations listed below, including Jobcentre Plus, the Pension Service, CSA, Disability and Carers Service and HMRC operate these schemes, which are explained in their complaints procedure leaflets.

2. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

The DWP is an umbrella organisation for the agencies listed below, each of which has their own website and complaints procedure. However, you should start with the following DWP website, which summarises the complaints procedures for all its departments at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/contact/complaintsappeals.asp>

- **Jobcentre Plus:** www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
helps people of working age to find work and get any benefits they are entitled to, and offers a dedicated service to employers to fill their vacancies quickly and effectively.
- **The Pension Service:** www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk
provides services and support for pensioners and people looking into pensions and retirement.
- **Child Support Agency:** www.csa.gov.uk

administers the Child Support scheme.

- **Disability and Carers Service:** www.dwp.gov.uk/dcs
delivers a range of benefits to disabled people and carers.
- **The Health and Safety Commission and Health and Safety Executive:** www.hse.gov.uk
protects people's health and safety by ensuring risks at work are properly controlled.
- **The Rent Service:** www.therentservice.gov.uk
provides a rental valuation service for housing benefit purposes, fair rent valuation for landlords and tenants, and advice to customers within the public and private sectors on these issues.
- **Debt Management:** www.dwp.gov.uk/debtmanagement
delivers debt management and recovery systems.

3. Jobcentre Plus

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the following PDF leaflet: "*Tell us what you think*" available at:

http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_011217.pdf

Jobcentre Plus operates a 3-stage internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - contact the person you have been dealing with, or their manager, with your complaint. The local office or contact centre will send a full reply within seven working days of receiving your complaint.

Stage 2 - if your complaint is not settled at stage 1, contact the district manager or centre group manager responsible for the local office or contact centre you have been dealing with. The district manager or centre group manager will arrange for your complaint to be reviewed and let you know the outcome.

Stage 3 - if you are not happy with the response at the end of stage 2, you can write to the Chief Executive who cannot personally answer all complaints but will make sure that your complaint is considered again fully and fairly. They will appoint the most appropriate person to investigate on their behalf (eg the regional field director, district manager or contact centre group manager with responsibility for the local office or contact centre that deals with you).

Final Stage: Investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman - the Parliamentary Ombudsman investigates complaints from members of the public where they have suffered injustice because of maladministration by Government departments or certain other public bodies. You can find out more about the Parliamentary Ombudsman by visiting their website at www.ombudsman.org.uk or by reading the PLP leaflet no 8: *How to make a complaint to the Ombudsman*.

4. The Pension Service

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the following PDF leaflet: *"The Pension Service: tell us how to improve our service"* available at:

<http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/pdf/g122/g122apr06.pdf>

The Pension Service also operates a 3-stage internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - report your complaint by phone (0845 60 60 265) from 8am to 8pm (Monday to Friday), or in writing - by letter or fax - to the address on letters sent to you. The Pension Service aims to reply within seven working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 2 - if your complaint is not settled at stage 1, you can contact the Pension Centre Manager whose address is on letters sent to you, or is available by calling 0845 60 60 265.

Stage 3 - if you are not happy with the response at the end of stage 2, you can write to the Chief Executive, Alexis Cleveland, at: The Pension Service, PO Box 50101, London SW1P 2WU.

Final Stage: Investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3 above).

5. Child Support Agency (CSA)

Their complaints procedure is set out on the following website:

<http://www.csa.gov.uk/new/contact/helpline.asp#S4>, and is summarised in the leaflet: *"Child Support Agency – How do you complain?"* available at:

<http://www.csa.gov.uk/pdf/english/leaflets/new/CSL119.pdf>

The CSA operates the following internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - contact the person you have been dealing with, or their manager, with your complaint. You can e-mail your complaint from the CSA website at www.csa.gov.uk, or you can write or phone. Your complaint will be acknowledged, and if it is likely to take longer than 15 working days to provide a full reply, the CSA will let you know.

Stage 2 - if the person you have already been dealing with cannot settle your complaint, you can contact the Complaint Resolution Team, either by visiting the CSA website (as above), or by contacting the office you have been dealing with, or by calling the national helpline on 08457 133 133.

Stage 3 - if you are not happy with the reply from the Complaint Resolution Team, you should contact the Area Director at the office you have been dealing with. You can do so either by visiting the CSA website (as above) or by writing. The reply to your letter at Stage 2 will tell you who to contact.

Stage 4 - if the Area Director does not settle your complaint, you can write to the Chief Executive of the CSA by visiting the CSA website (as above) or by writing to: The Office of the Chief Executive, Quay House, The Waterfront, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 1XZ. The Chief

Executive, or someone on his behalf, will look into complaints not resolved by the Complaint Resolution Team or the Area Director.

Stage 5 - if, after receiving a response from the Chief Executive (or someone acting for him), you still feel that the CSA has not dealt with your complaint properly, you can write to the Independent Case Examiner, an independent organisation that offers a free and impartial service. You must contact them within six months of receiving a final reply about your complaint from the Chief Executive of the CSA. You can find out more about the Independent Case Examiner by visiting their website at: www.ind-case-exam.org.uk, or by calling on 0845 606 0777.

Final Stage: Investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3. above).

6. Disability and Carers Service

Their complaints procedure is set out on the following website:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/dcs/#complaints> and is summarised in the leaflet: "Disability and Carers Service – Customer Information" available at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2005/dcs/charter.pdf>

The DCS operates the following internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - contact the office dealing with your claim, either by phone or in writing, to make a complaint. The DCS aims to reply within seven working days of receiving the complaint, but will inform you if it is likely to take longer. The reply will tell you what you should do if you are still not happy.

Final Stage: Investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3. above).

7. The Health and Safety Commission and Health and Safety Executive

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the leaflet: "What to expect when a health and safety inspector calls" at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc14.htm>

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) operates the following internal complaints procedure, depending on where the inspector has come from.

If the inspector is from the **Health and Safety Executive**, you can:

Stage 1 - speak or write to the inspector's manager who will investigate your complaint and tell you what is going to be done about it.

Stage 2 - if you are not satisfied, write to the Chief Executive of HSE, Geoffrey Podger, who will make sure that your complaint is followed up promptly and fairly. He can be contacted by writing to the Health and Safety Executive, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS.

Stage 3 - you can also ask your MP to take up your case with HSE, with Ministers, or the Ombudsman (see 3. above).

If the inspector is from a **local authority**, you can:

Stage 1 - contact the inspector's manager and ask for your complaint to be investigated.

Stage 2 - if you are not satisfied, you can use the local authority's formal complaints procedure.

Stage 3 - in cases of maladministration, you can also make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman in England, Scotland or Wales.

If the inspector is from **another enforcing authority**, you can:

Stage 1 - speak or write to the inspector's manager who will investigate your complaint and tell you what is going to be done about it.

Stage 2 - if you are not satisfied, write to the Chief Executive of HSE, Geoffrey Podger, who will make sure that your complaint is followed up promptly and fairly. He can be contacted by writing to the Health and Safety Executive, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS.

Stage 3 - in cases of maladministration, you can also make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman in England, Scotland or Wales.

8. The Rent Service

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the leaflet: "*If things go wrong*" available at: <http://www.therentservice.gov.uk/documents/general/how-to-complain-02-05.pdf>

The Rent Service operates the following internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - you can complain to **any** member of staff (in person, by phone or fax, in writing, or by e-mail) and your complaint will be directed to a member of staff who will be able to deal with it properly (usually this will be a member of staff based locally). The Rent Service aims to reply within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, but will inform you if it is likely to take longer. They aim to give a full response within a further 10 working days, but if a complaint is particularly complicated, involving extensive investigation, this may take longer and they will keep you informed of progress at all times.

Stage 2 - if you are not happy with the response to your complaint at the end of Stage 1, or the way it has been dealt with, you can ask for the matter to be referred to the Chief Executive Officer, or write, fax or e-mail to: Customer Services Manager, The Rent Service, 4th Floor, 5 Welbeck Street, London W1G 9YQ. Tel: 020 7023 607. Fax: 020 7023 6222. E-mail: customer.services@therentservice.gov.uk. The Customer Services Manager will refer your complaint to the Chief Executive on your behalf. Your complaint will be re-examined and looked into, as to how it was dealt with. You should expect to receive an acknowledgment within 5 working days of the Customer Services Manager receiving your complaint, and a full response

from the Chief Executive within a further 10 working days, but if a complaint is particularly complicated, involving extensive investigation, this may take longer and they will keep you informed of progress at all times.

Stage 3/Final Stage - if you are still not satisfied, you may ask your MP to refer the complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3. above).

9. Debt Management

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the leaflet: "*DWP Services and Benefits – advice and information*" available at:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/debtmanagement/chart_advice.asp

The Debt Management department operates the following internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - informal complaint: if you wish to make a complaint about the service during a telephone call with a member of staff, and it cannot be resolved during the conversation, you will be given the opportunity to discuss your concerns with the section Team Leader in order to resolve the problem.

Stage 2 - formal complaint: if the complaint is not resolved after discussion with the Team Leader, you will be invited to put your complaint in writing within 14 days. If you are unable to put the complaint in writing, the Team Leader will write to you and ask you to confirm by telephone, within two weeks of the date of his/her letter, that you wish to take the complaint forward. The matter will become a formal complaint when a written complaint or telephone confirmation is received. The Debt Management department aims to reply within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, but will inform you if it is likely to take longer. If you are not satisfied by the response, it will contain details of what to do next.

Stage 3 - if you are not happy with the response at the end of Stage 2, you can contact the Debt Centre Manager of the Debt Centre.

Stage 4 - if you do not consider that the response you receive from the Debt Centre Manager is satisfactory, you will be given details of how to submit your complaint to the Head of Debt Management.

Stage 5 - if you do not consider that the response you receive from the Head of Debt Management is satisfactory, you will be given details of how to take your complaint further to the Independent Case Examiner. You must contact the Independent Case Examiner within six months of receiving a response from the Head of Debt Management. The Independent Case Examiner will take a fresh look at the facts of the case in order to determine a satisfactory outcome, but does not consider matters of law or government policy.

Final Stage: investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3. above).

10. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

HMRC was formed on 18th April 2005, following the merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise Departments. HMRC is responsible for collecting the bulk of tax revenue, as well as paying Tax Credits and Child Benefits and strengthening the UK's frontiers.

Their complaints procedure is summarised in the leaflet: "*COP1 Putting things right – how to complain*", available at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop1.htm>, and in the following **Interim Arrangements**, pending a review of their complaints procedures, set out at:

http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageContactUs_Complaints#P22_1869

HMRC operates the following internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - speak to someone in the office you normally deal with. For complaints about matters such as taxes, Tax Credits, National Insurance Contributions and Child Benefit, telephone or write to the number or address on the latest communication from that department (this may be a letter, Self Assessment Statement, Tax Credit Award etc). If you don't have a telephone number available, use the contact details set out on Page 2 of the Interim Arrangements (Tax Credits: 0845 300 3900 from 8am to 8pm daily; Child Benefit: 0845 302 1444 from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday).

Stage 2 - if you are unhappy with the outcome of Stage 1, ask to be put in touch with the person who will be able to look into your concerns, usually the Customer Relations or Complaints Manager. You can complain by letter, phone, fax, or in person by visiting HMRC offices. You must speak, or write, to the Customer Relations or Complaints Manager for the office you have been dealing with. If you are writing, it helps to write "Complaint" at the top of your letter.

Stage 3 - if you are unhappy with the outcome of Stage 2, ask the Director with overall responsibility for the office concerned to review your complaint. You can do this in writing, by fax or phone. HMRC Directors are listed at the end of COP1. The Director of the Tax Credit Office can be contacted at: Tax Credit Office, Preston, PR1 0SB. Tel: 01772 235551. Fax: 01772 239067.

Stage 4 - if you are unhappy with the Director's response, you can ask the Adjudicator to look into your complaint. The Adjudicator is a fair and unbiased referee whose recommendations are independent. You can contact the Adjudicator at: The Adjudicator's Office, Haymarket House, 28 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4SP. Tel: 020 7930 2292. Fax: 020 7930 2298. The Adjudicator's Office leaflet AO1 (available from the Adjudicator's Office and HMRC office) tells you how to make a complaint and gives information on what the Adjudicator can look into. The Adjudicator's Office may be accessed by e-mail at adjudicators@gtnet.gov.uk, or at their website: www.adjudicatorsoffice.gov.uk

Final Stage: Investigation by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (see 3. above).

Payments for worry and distress

If HMRC have made mistakes or caused you a great deal of worry and distress, you should let them know. HMRC may be able to make a payment (usually ranging from £25 to £500) to acknowledge and apologise for the way you have been treated.

11. Home Office

The Home Office Complaints Procedure is summarised at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/complaints/>

Complaints are divided between:

General complaints – write to Home Office, Direct Communications Unit (CCS), 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF. Tel: 020 7035 4848. Fax: 020 7035 4745. E-mail: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Immigration and Nationality Complaints – write to: Immigration and Nationality Directorate Complaints, PO Box 1384, Croydon, Surrey, CR9 3YJ. Tel: 0870 241 6523. Fax: 020 8760 4310. E-mail: ind.cu@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Police Complaints (see section 12. below – IPCC).

12. Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

The IPCC is completely independent of the police and was established under the Police Reform Act 2002 to ensure that the police complaints and misconduct system in England and Wales works effectively and fairly. The IPCC may be contacted at: 90 High Holborn, London WC1V 6BH. Tel: 08453 002 002. E-mail: enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk

The IPCC can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of police officers and staff. If your complaint is about the overall policies of a police service, you can contact your police authority. The IPCC's job is to make sure that complaints against the police are dealt with effectively. The IPCC sets standards for the way that the police handle complaints.

Their complaints procedure is set out in a number of IPCC leaflets available at: http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/complainants/info_leaflets.htm. These leaflets can also be obtained from any police station, or by contacting the IPCC who will send them in the post. They include:

- *“An Introduction to the IPCC”*
- *“How to make a Complaint Against the Police”*
- *“Dealing with your complaint locally”*
- *“Appealing to the IPCC”*
- *“You and the Police Complaints System”*
- *“Complaints against HMRC”*
- *“Complaints against members of SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency)”*

The IPCC complaints procedure is also set out on the IPCC website at:

<http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/complainants/>.

If you have any questions about making a complaint, or decide to make a complaint by telephone, you can ring the IPCC on 08453 002 002 and choose 1 at the prompt, to speak to a member of the Complaints Team.

13. National Health Service

Their complaints procedure is summarised at:

<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=1084>

The NHS operates the following complaints procedure:

Stage 1 - if you want to complain about an NHS service you have received, for example from a hospital, GP or optician, you should contact them directly and speak to a member of staff. They may be able to resolve your concerns without the need to make a more formal complaint. This first stage of the NHS complaints procedure is called 'local resolution' and aims to resolve complaints quickly and appropriately.

Stage 2 - if, after speaking to the people involved, you decide that you want to continue with your complaint, you can contact the primary care trust, hospital trust or other NHS organisation concerned. They should have a complaints procedure in place. You can complain verbally or in writing and the complaints manager should make a written record of your complaint. Organisations should respond within 10 days and chief executives should respond within 20 days. You should normally complain within 6 months of the event concerned. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, the hospital or practice must agree that you are a suitable representative.

NHS Foundation Trusts will have their own systems for the internal handling of complaints; you should contact them directly for advice on how to make your complaint.

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been dealt with, an independent organisation is available to provide advice and support: ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service).

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) is available to help you with making a complaint and explaining the procedures involved.

Healthcare Commission (see 14 below)

If you feel your complaint has still not been resolved you can contact the Healthcare Commission for an independent review of your complaint. Contact them by phone on 0845 601 3012 or e-mail: complaints@healthcarecommission.org.uk.

The Health Service Ombudsman

If you are still unhappy after local resolution and independent review then you can complain to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the NHS and government. Contact them by phone on 0845 015 4033 or e-mail: OHSC.Enquiries@ombudsman.gsi.gov.uk. See the PLP leaflet no.8 in this series on complaining to the Ombudsman.

14. The Healthcare Commission

The Healthcare Commission was set up in April 2004 to improve healthcare by inspecting services and providing information to the public and healthcare professionals on their findings. They have a statutory duty to assess the performance of healthcare organisations, award annual performance

ratings for the NHS and coordinate reviews of healthcare by others. The Healthcare Commission is responsible for reviewing complaints about the NHS or independent healthcare services in England that have not been resolved locally. The Healthcare Commission also has responsibility for reviewing complaints about the independent sector where they are providing an NHS funded service. Any complaint about services or treatment funded by the NHS can be reviewed by the Healthcare Commission.

Anyone can contact the Healthcare Commission whether they are a patient, or someone acting on behalf of someone else (provided they have their permission), visitor or family member.

The Healthcare Commission's complaints procedure is summarised in the leaflet: "*Unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled by the NHS: Contact the Healthcare Commission*", available at: http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/_db/_documents/Unhappy_complaint_NHS.pdf

Their complaints procedure is also set out on the Healthcare Commission website at: <http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/contactus/complaints.cfm>

For advice on making a complaint about healthcare services, contact the Complaints Helpline on 0845 601 3012 or email: complaints@healthcarecommission.org.uk. You can also make a complaint in writing by sending it to: Healthcare Commission, FREEPOST NAT 18958, Complaints Investigation Team, Manchester, M1 9XZ.

The Healthcare Commission operates the following complaints process:

Stage 1 - make a complaint to the organisation or practitioner concerned; see above.

Stage 2 – initial review: the Healthcare Commission is responsible for **the second stage** of the NHS complaints procedure. If you are not satisfied with the formal written response provided at Stage 1, or if the complaint has been with the healthcare provider for six months and has not been resolved, you can ask the Healthcare Commission to review your complaint in writing, by filling in the form and the standard consent form at the back of the leaflet referred to above. The Commission will acknowledge your request within two working days. If the Healthcare Commission is able to review your complaint, it will be allocated to a case manager who will work with you (and the organisation or individual you are complaining about) to resolve your complaint. Initial enquiries will be carried out and, if necessary, clinical advice obtained. In most cases, it should take no longer than six months for cases to be reviewed and recommendations to be made. A letter outlining their decision will be sent to you and to the relevant NHS organisation. At the initial review stage, the Healthcare Commission can decide to:

- take no further action
- refer the complaint back to the NHS organisation, in order for them to try to resolve the issues
- carry out a full investigation (see Stage 3 below)
- refer your case to an independent panel (see Stage 3 below)
- refer your case to mediation or conciliation

Stage 3 - full investigation: if the Healthcare Commission carries out a full investigation, the terms of reference will be agreed with you and the organisation/practitioner you are complaining about. Following the investigation, the Healthcare Commission will send you and the

organisation/practitioner their investigation report, which may also include recommendations for improving services. Alternatively, if your complaint is referred to an **independent panel**, three members of the public, who are trained to examine complaints objectively, will consider your complaint and the response of the healthcare provider. Following consideration by a panel, a report of the proceedings will be sent to all parties concerned.

Stage 4 - if you are not satisfied with the decision of the Healthcare Commission following the initial review, or following an investigation by the Commission's complaints staff, or following consideration of your complaint by a panel, you can ask the Health Service Ombudsman to consider your complaint. Write to: Office of the Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP. See also PLP's leaflet no.8 in this series on complaining to the Ombudsman.

15. Local Authorities

How to complain about local social services

Local social services are the responsibility of individual councils. Councils are required by law to have a social services complaints procedure. This will be divided between services for adults and services for children, young people and families. If you are unhappy with the service you have received, you should contact your local council and identify the specific complaints procedure relating to the service you wish to complain about. If your complaint is not resolved by the local complaints procedure, you can then complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman system has been set up by the Government to monitor the actions of local government.

How to complain about matters other than social services

Each local council operates its own complaints procedure and this may be accessed through that local council's complaints page. The DirectGov website provides both a step-by-step guide to making a complaint against your local council and direct access to the complaints procedures operated by the local council you wish to complain about. This information may be accessed at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Di011/DoItOnline/DG_4018266.

These are the types of complaints you can make.

- Complain about a councillor by contacting the Standards Board for England (see useful contacts below)
- Complain about a school – the local authority should have a leaflet to explain the process
- Children and young people can complain too
- Complain about a landlord, either if your landlord is the local council or is a housing association service (all social landlords except for local councils are members of the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme – see useful contacts below)

Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints about councils and certain other bodies. They investigate complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, education and social services. It is an independent, impartial and free service. The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the council has done something. But they cannot question

what a council has done simply because someone does not agree with it. There are three Local Government Ombudsmen, one for England, one for Wales and one for Scotland. Their complaints procedure can be accessed at: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/complain.htm>. See also PLP's leaflet no.8 in this series on complaining to the Ombudsman.

16. Who can help you make a complaint?

The following may be able to assist you in making a complaint to a public body:

- Your local councillor
- Your MP can only help you with problems where Parliament or central government has responsibility. Your MP is not there to help you in private disputes with other individuals or with companies who have sold you faulty goods, or, for example, to interfere with decisions made by courts.
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau gives free, confidential and impartial advice on a limitless range of subjects, including debt, benefits, housing, legal matters, employment, immigration and consumer issues. To contact your nearest CAB, drop-in or phone during opening hours or write.
- Your local community law centre
- A specialist advocacy service

17. Useful contacts

CAB

You can also go to your local Citizens Advice Bureau for help to make a complaint. To find your local CAB, look them up in your phone book, ask at your local library or go online to www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Cabinet Office

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/feedback/complaints.asp

Government agencies include the Benefits Agency, Child Support Agency, Employment Service, Highways Agency, Inland Revenue, Student Loans Company and UK Passport Agency. The Cabinet Office website gives advice on how to complain about a wide range of government agencies.

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

www.cre.gov.uk

The CRE offer advice to people who have been subjected to racism, work towards the elimination of racial discrimination, promote the quality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups.

Department of Health

Social Services Complaints Procedure:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/ComplaintsPolicy/SocialServicesComplaintsProcedure/fs/en>

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

www.eoc.org.uk

The EOC works to remove illegal discrimination on grounds of sex, promotes equal opportunities for men and women, and reviews and proposes changes to sex discrimination legislation.

ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service).

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/ComplaintsPolicy/NHSComplaintsProcedure/NHSComplaintsProcedureArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4087428&chk=WoVmTf

The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) supports patients and their carers wishing to pursue a complaint about their NHS treatment or care. This statutory service was launched on 1 September 2003 and provides for the first time a national service delivered to agreed quality standards.

The Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR)

<http://www.icrev.demon.co.uk/>

The Independent Complaints Reviewer investigates complaints about the Land Registry, The National Archives, the Charity Commission and the Housing Corporation.

Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme

www.ihos.org.uk

The Housing Ombudsman Service considers complaints against member organisations, and deals with other housing disputes.

Local Government Ombudsman

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/complain.htm>

The Local Government Ombudsmen investigate complaints about councils and certain other bodies. They investigate complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, education and social services.

NHS Direct

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/

The NHS Direct website can give you up-to-date information about how the NHS complaints system works. The NHS Patient's Charter sets out your rights and the standards of service you should expect from NHS services. For example, you have the right to be registered with a GP and a right to have access to your own health records. You can get a copy of 'the NHS & you' from the NHS Direct website.

Parking and Traffic Appeals Service

www.parkingandtrafficappeals.gov.uk

The Parking Appeals Service gives motorists an opportunity to challenge a decision by a council that they are liable to pay a parking penalty. Last year, they dealt with over 30,000 appeals.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make_a_complaint/health/index.html

The Health Service Ombudsman can carry out independent investigations into complaints about poor treatment or service provided through the NHS in England. Investigators look into complaints against NHS services provided by hospitals, health authorities, trusts, GPs, dentists, pharmacists, opticians and other health care practitioners. They can also investigate complaints against private health providers if the treatment was funded by the NHS.

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PatientAndPublicInvolvement/PatientAdviceAndLiaisonServices/fs/en>

Provides information, advice and support to help patients, families and their carers.

Standards Board for England

www.standardsboard.co.uk

The Standards Board for England was established in March 2001 to look at the ethical behaviour of members who serve on local authorities, parish councils, fire and civil defence authorities and the Greater London Authority. The organisation deals with complaints and breaches of the local Code of Conduct. The Standards Board only deals with councillors, members or co-opted members who serve on a range of authorities, not the staff who work in these authorities.

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The information contained in this leaflet is for information only. You should always seek advice from an appropriate adviser or solicitor in relation to the specific circumstances of your own case.