



Opening Hours

Monday to Friday

9.00am - 8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday

10.00am - 3.00pm

Making a Complaint

If the prisoner has a request or complaint

They should first try to resolve the situation by talking to a member of staff on their wing, ideally their personal officer if they have one. If their request or complaint cannot be dealt with in this way then they should make an application on a request/complaint form or 'app'. 'Apps' should be readily available on each wing.

What if this does not resolve the problem?

If the problem cannot be resolved in this way then a more senior member of staff can look at the prisoner's application. Alternatively, the prisoner will be told if they need to speak to somebody else.

Can a prisoner complain directly to the Governor?

The prisoner can make a Governor's application. They should tell the landing officer or wing manager that they want to do this.

What if they want to complain about a member of staff?

If the complaint is of a serious or sensitive nature, or is about a member of prison staff, then the prisoner can submit a complaint using the 'confidential' access procedure. They should ask wing staff for a confidential access form and

envelope. This allows the complaint to only be read by the person to whom it is addressed.

Confidential access is not a short cut for ordinary complaints. Complaints are more likely to be resolved quickly if the normal procedure is followed.

Can anyone else help to solve problems within the prison?

The prisoner can submit an application to see a member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB). The IMB members are independent and unpaid, appointed by Home Office Ministers to monitor day-to-day life in their local prison or removal centre and ensure that proper standards of care and decency are maintained. Members have unrestricted access to their local prison or immigration removal centre at any time and can talk to any prisoner or detainee they wish to, out of sight and hearing of a members of staff if necessary.

If a prisoner or detainee has an issue that he or she has been unable to resolve through the usual internal channels, he or she can put in a confidential request to see a member of the IMB. Problems might include concerns over lost property, visits from family or friends, special religious or cultural requirements, or even serious allegations such as bullying.

Can a complaint be made outside of the prison system?

If the internal complaints procedure has been exhausted then a complaint can be made to the Prison and Probation Service Ombudsman (PPO). Please note that the PPO cannot help the families and friends of prisoners, the complaint must come from the prisoner themselves.

What complaints can be made to the PPO?

Complaints can be made about almost anything to do with the way the Prison Service has treated the prisoner, except for parole decisions and a few other circumstances that rarely apply (the PPO will notify the complainant if they do).

How to submit the complaint

The prisoner can write to the PPO detailing their complaint, or they can complete an application form (not a request/complaints form) which should be made available upon request. The Prisoners' Families Helpline can also provide a copy of the application form upon request. The application form can also be accessed on the PPO website.

www.ppo.gov.uk

What happens next?

When the PPO receives a complaint they will decide whether they are able to investigate it further. If appropriate they will begin an investigation by gathering further information about the complaint from the prisoner, the Prison Service and anyone else they think might be able to help.

How long will it take?

The PPO aim to deal with complaints within 12 weeks of starting any investigation. If they agree with the complaint they will make recommendations to the prison service as to how the problem should be resolved.

Can complaints be made to anyone else?

Prisoners have the right to submit a complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (PCA) through a Member of Parliament (MP) at any stage.

How do you contact an MP?

MPs have public contact details so their constituents can get in touch. In most cases you can write, phone, fax or email. MPs will generally only act on behalf of their constituents, so please check that the MP who represents you/the prisoner's constituency is the one who receives the complaint.

Families

Telephone: Calling with a simple question might get a faster response than writing. You will talk to a relevant office or have to leave a message. Phone the House of Commons switchboard on 020 7219 3000 and ask for your MP by name. If you do not know their name, then phone the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

You may also contact your MP through their local constituency office. Addresses and contact numbers will be listed in local libraries, town halls and MP's personal website or through the House of Commons Information Office.

Email: The majority of MPs now have email addresses. Email addresses can be accessed via the MP directory listed at:-
<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

Prisoner/families

By letter: When writing to any MP the address to use is: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. A letter allows you to explain yourself more clearly and in detail and the MP will have a record of your problem.