

How to make a complaint about the police



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Introduction



The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is responsible for how police forces deal with complaints.



Each area of England and Wales has their own police force.

They have their own department to look at complaints, called the Professional Standards Department.



Very serious complaints or serious incidents will be dealt with by the IOPC.



This Easy Read information explains:

- how to make a complaint about the police
- what happens when you make a complaint.

How to make a complaint



If you are unhappy about something that happened to you that involves the police, you can make a complaint.



Police forces need to know when something goes wrong so they can try to make things better.



Complain to the police

The best way to make a complaint is to contact your local police force.



Your local police force website will tell you how to complain.

You can complain:



- using our online form: www.policeconduct.gov.uk/make-complaint
- in writing
- by calling 101
- or visiting any police station.

Visiting a police station



If you are visiting a police station to make a complaint, you can take someone with you for support.

This could be a friend, family member or an **advocate**.



An **advocate** is a person who helps you to speak up, or speaks up for you.

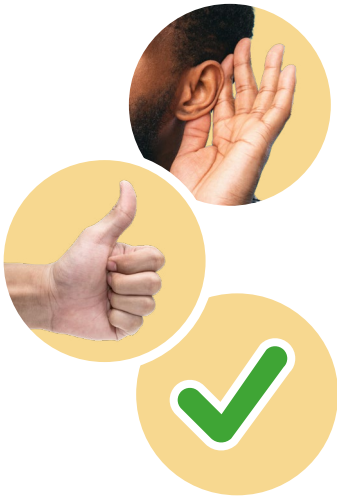


You can ask someone to make the complaint for you, but you must write down that you want them to do this.

What to expect

When you make a complaint, the police force will:

- listen to you
- treat you fairly
- try to put things right.



What happens after you make a complaint?



Contacting you

The person dealing with your complaint should contact you to make sure they have all the information about your complaint.



They should ask you what you want to happen. You might want an apology, or for things to be put right.



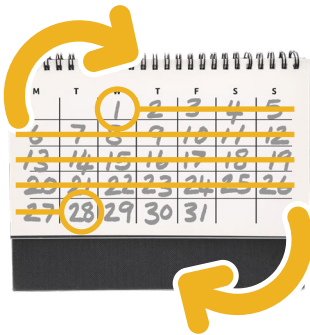
The person dealing with your complaint will be able to tell you what they are doing about it, and what is likely to happen.

Keeping you up to date



The local police force will keep you up to date on what is happening with your complaint.

They should ask you how you would like them to contact you, like by phone, letter, email or face to face.



The police must keep you up to date at least every 28 days.

How will the force handle your complaint?

Handling your complaint without an investigation



Most complaints will be handled without an **investigation**.

An **investigation** is where someone speaks to everyone involved and looks at any proof, like video or sound recordings.



The police force will look at your complaint and think about how to deal with it.

They might:



- give you information, or explain what happened
- say they are sorry for what happened
- change the way they work so it doesn't happen again.



If your complaint is about a certain police officer, they will be dealt with by their manager.



The manager may decide that the police officer has learnt from their mistake, or that they need some more training.



If it is serious then the police officer might be given a different role, or even lose their job.



The person dealing with your complaint will let you know what has happened.



Handling your complaint with an investigation

If the police decide to investigate your complaint, they will tell you what the investigation will look at.



When the investigation is complete, you will be told about what has been found out.

You will also be told what will happen next.



The IOPC will investigate your complaint if it is something very serious (like someone being badly hurt or dying) and the police have had contact with that person either before or during the incident.



All complaints are important

However the police decide to deal with your complaint, it is still important.

Your complaint will help the police to understand:



- whether there are more people complaining about the same thing



- how they can do things differently and better in the future.

What if you are still unhappy?



If you are still unhappy after the police have looked into your complaint, you can ask for a review or appeal.



If you ask for a review or appeal, someone will look at what happened with your complaint.



You have 28 days to decide if you want to do this.



This could be:

- the Police and Crime Commissioner - this is the person who has been chosen to run the local police force



- the police force

IOPC
Independent
Office for
Police Conduct



- the IOPC.

For more information



You can get more information by contacting your local police station, or:



Website:
www.policeconduct.gov.uk



Phone:
030 0020 0096



Email:
enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk



Twitter:
[@policeconduct](https://twitter.com/policeconduct)