

COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Who can complain?

Everyone has the right to expect a good service from public bodies, and to have things put right if they go wrong. Good complaint handling matters because it is an important way of ensuring that people receive the service they are entitled to expect.

From 1 January 2011 the two roles of Commissioner for Public Appointments and First Civil Service Commissioner have been held by a single dual post-holder. Since January 2011, the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Civil Service Commission have been supported by a joint secretariat. The secretariat provides a full range of support services to the dual post-holder, and to the Commission.

Anyone may complain about a decision of the Commissioner for Public Appointments or the supporting secretariat, or about the way that they have been treated in their dealings with the Commissioner or the secretariat.

How will my complaint be dealt with?

In considering complaints about our own service, we apply the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Principles of Good Complaint Handling, which are:

- Getting it right
- Being customer focused
- Being open and accountable
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Putting things right
- Seeking continuous improvement.

What can I complain about?

The Commissioner will not normally consider complaints about our decisions if you just say you disagree with us.

We would usually expect you to tell us why you believe we have made an incorrect decision, or what information we have not properly considered, or what we have done wrong in our dealings with you, or if you feel that you have been treated in an unacceptable way by the Commissioner or the staff of the secretariat.

It is also helpful if you are able to tell us what you would like us to do as a result of your complaint.

If you wish to bring a complaint about a public appointments process under the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, please see the guidance on the Commissioner's website at <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/what-we-do/complaintsand-investigations/> .

Who do I complain to?

There are a variety of ways in which you can complain. You will have to put your complaint in writing. You can:

- Contact the member of staff with whom you have already had contact
- Contact the Civil Service Commission's Chief Executive, who heads up the joint secretariat:

Clare Salters
Chief Executive
Civil Service Commission/Commissioner for Public Appointments
Room G08
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ
Clare.Salters@csc.gov.uk

- Write to the Commissioner for Public Appointments at the address above.
- Send an e-mail to our enquiry e-mail address publicappointments@csc.gsi.gov.uk

Is there a time limit for complaining?

We will do all we can to look into your complaint. We ask you to complain within six months of the decision or treatment that you wish to complain about.

Under our records management policy, we may destroy certain papers after a given period of time. For this reason, if your complaint to us is delayed we may be unable to investigate your complaint because of the lack of documentary evidence.

What happens to my complaint?

Once you have made a complaint, we aim to send you an acknowledgement within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will explain that the Commissioner or one of the senior staff of the secretariat will respond to your complaint.

We will give serious consideration to the issues you raise. Where we identify mistakes in our earlier decision making or failings in our service we will acknowledge those mistakes or failings and offer appropriate remedy if it is available.

We expect to respond to the majority of complaints within 16 weeks of the complaint arriving with us. The time taken to respond will vary depending on the urgency and complexity of the complaint. We will assess your complaint about us when it arrives and identify whether, exceptionally, it merits priority.

If we are unable to respond within 16 weeks because, for example, the matters you raise require more detailed work, we will let you know and will give an indication of when we believe we will be able to conclude our consideration of your complaint.

What if I still disagree?

Once the Commissioner, or his senior staff, has considered your complaint and sent you a response, the decision is final.

We will acknowledge any further correspondence from you but, unless it raises new issues that we consider significant, we will not send further replies.

Can I appeal against the Commissioner's decisions?

The Commissioner's decisions can be the subject of judicial review proceedings and you may wish to seek legal advice on that matter. Applications for judicial review have to be made promptly (usually within three months of the decision).

If you remain dissatisfied with our decision on a Freedom of Information or Data Protection response, you can complain to the Information Commissioner. Further information can be found on our website or on the Information Commissioner's website at www.ico.gov.uk.

To whom do I send comments, compliments and suggestions?

If you would like to send us a compliment, make a comment or suggest an idea about improving our service we would be very pleased to receive it.

Please contact the person with whom you have had dealings in the Secretariat, or the Chief Executive, or send an e-mail to our enquiry e-mail address publicappointments@csc.gsi.gov.uk