



..... step by step

how to make a complaint
against the police



making a complaint against the police

IPCC stands for Independent Police Complaints Commission. We are responsible for the way complaints about the police are handled.

To complain, all you need to do is follow these easy steps:

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what can I complain about?

If you think you have been treated badly by the police, it's **easy** to complain. This might be if someone was rude to you or hurt you.

You can complain about police officers of any rank or other members of police staff.

If a friend or relative has been treated badly by the police, you can complain if you are distressed as a result.

You can also complain if you personally saw someone you didn't know being treated badly by the police.

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 force, you should contact the Chief Constable of the force or the local Police Authority.

Can anyone else complain for me?

Yes, they can. A friend, relative or member of a community group can make a complaint on your behalf as long as you agree in writing that you are happy for them to complain for you.

If you prefer, they could write down your complaint and that you have agreed for them to complain for you, and you could sign to show you have agreed. This can be in a language other than English if you prefer.

For more information, visit the IPCC website (www.ipcc.gov.uk)



how to complain

Who do I complain to? There are many ways to complain, so you can choose the one that suits you best:

You can

- ❖ Go into a police station and explain the problem
- ❖ Contact any police force by phone, email, post or fax

Who else can I complain to?

- ❖ To someone at the IPCC. Write to us at: Independent Police Complaints Commission, 90 High Holborn, London WC1V 6BH.

Or call us on **08453 002 002**
(calls charged at a local rate).

Or email us at **enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk**

Or

- ❖ You can contact your local:
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Youth Offending Team
 - Racial Equality Council
 - Probation Service
 - Neighbourhood Warden

- They will give you information about what to do next.

Or

- ❖ You can ask a solicitor or your MP to make a complaint for you

We will pass your complaint on to the police force for them to record it.

what to say

So that your complaint can be dealt with quickly and efficiently, you must give your name, address and details of how you can be contacted.

You will also need to explain:

- ...❖ What happened
- ...❖ When it happened
- ...❖ Who was involved
- ...❖ What was said or done
- ...❖ Whether anyone else (a witness) saw what happened
- ...❖ How the witness can be contacted (if you know)
- ...❖ If there was any damage or injury
- ...❖ That you agree for your complaint to be passed to the police force you are complaining about to be 'recorded'



what to expect when making your complaint

Even if you give the police all the details on the list on page 7, they may need to ask you some more questions. They may also fill in a form and ask you to make a statement about your complaint.

The police must make an official record of your complaint. If, after making a complaint, you do not hear anything from the police or the IPCC about how your complaint will be dealt with, you should contact the IPCC as you may be able to appeal. (See page 14 : *What to do if you are not happy with how your complaint was handled.*)

When you make your complaint, the police will ask you for information such as your age, whether you are working and your ethnic group. This is to help the police and the IPCC make sure that everybody is being treated fairly.





who will deal with your complaint

Most complaints will be dealt with by your local police, so long as you agree to this. This is called 'Local Resolution'.

It's the simplest and most flexible way of:

- ❖ telling the police what happened
- ❖ finding out why it happened
- ❖ allowing someone to say sorry, if appropriate
- ❖ making sure action is taken to stop the same thing happening to someone else in the future

More serious complaints may involve a more formal investigation locally by the police or may be referred to the IPCC who will decide how they should be handled.

The IPCC may oversee a police investigation or, in the most serious cases, handle your complaint using its own independent investigators. This might be when someone dies or is badly injured while they are in contact with the police.

how you will be kept informed

Whether it's the police or the IPCC who are handling your complaint, you usually have the right to be told about how it will be dealt with, what action may be taken as a result and how the decision will be made.



The police or the IPCC will also agree with you how often and by which method you would like to be kept informed.





what happens once your complaint has been looked into?

When the police or the IPCC have finished looking at your complaint, they will tell you what they have decided to do.

Possible results might be:

- ...❖ the police may decide to improve or change their procedures
- ...❖ the police may take disciplinary action against the officer or person being complained about
- ...❖ in more serious cases, the police or IPCC may take your complaint further by passing it to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS will decide if there is enough information for someone to be taken to a criminal court.
- ...❖ in some cases, there may not be enough information to take any action over your complaint. If this happens to you, it may just mean there is not enough evidence available.

what to do if you are not happy with how your complaint was handled

If you are not satisfied with the result of your complaint, you may be able to appeal to the IPCC if:

...❖ **your complaint was not ‘recorded’.** After you made your complaint, the police or the IPCC should have contacted you to tell you how your complaint will be dealt with. This means your complaint has been ‘recorded’. You can appeal if your complaint was not recorded by the police, if they haven’t decided whether or not to record it or if they haven’t told you whether they will record it or not.

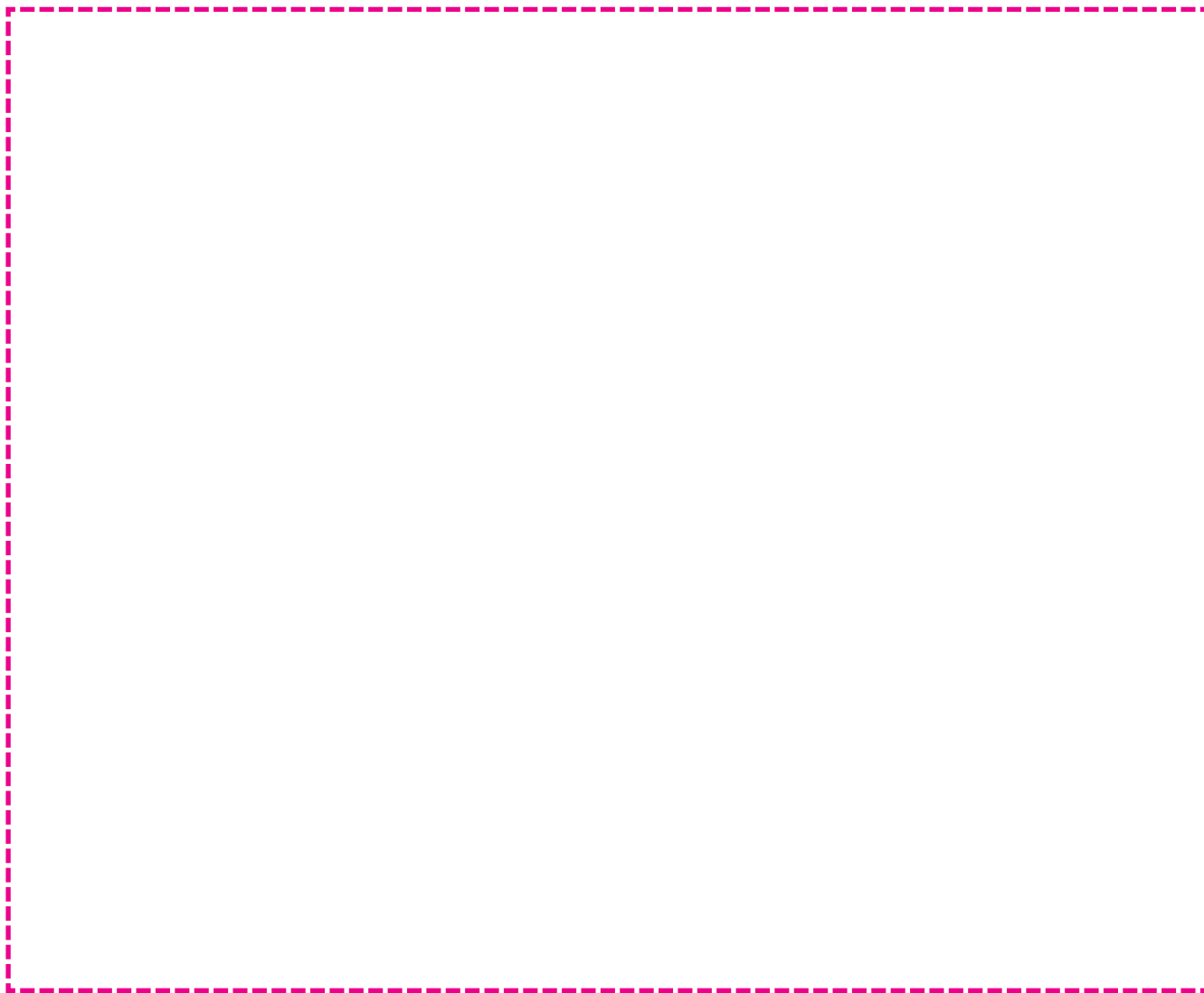
...❖ **during a ‘Local Resolution’, the police didn’t handle your complaint in the way you agreed.** At the start of a ‘Local Resolution’, the police will agree with you how your complaint will be dealt with. You can appeal if you don’t think the police handled your complaint in the way you agreed.

...❖ **you have not been given enough information about what the investigation has found**

...❖ **you are unhappy about any action the police are going to take as a result of an investigation**

For more information about when and how to appeal to the IPCC, call us on **08453 002 002** (local rate) email us at **enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk** or visit our website – **www.ipcc.gov.uk**

See below on how to obtain this information in other languages.
This leaflet is also available in Braille, audio and large print.





**Independent Police
Complaints Commission**

90 High Holborn
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www.ipcc.gov.uk

Tel: 08453 002 002 (local rate)
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