

An Easy Read guide about how to make a complaint against the police

There is a form inside this leaflet that you can fill out if you have a complaint about the police

Who we are and what we do

We are the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**. We are an **independent** group. Being **independent** means we work for ourselves and we decide things for ourselves. We are not part of the police or the government.



We are here to sort out any **complaints** you have against the police.

A **complaint** is something you make when someone has said or done something you are not happy about.

We can only look into complaints from people who live in England and Wales.

We can look into your complaint

- if you have already made a complaint to the police and you were not happy with what they did
- if the complaint is very serious. If this happens then the police have to tell us about it. We might work with the police to sort it out or we might do things on our own



The police have to listen to what we say

This means that



- if you make a complaint to us then we will follow the rules about how to look into a complaint



- if something serious has happened we will ask someone independent to sort out your complaint. This is someone who does not work for the police



- we will learn a lot from what we find out and share it with the police and other groups. This will help everyone learn how to do things better in the future.

Complaints about other groups



We can help to sort any complaints you have with other groups too.

You can read more about this in the leaflet – **An Easy Read guide to the work of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**

What you can make a complaint about

You can make a complaint if someone who works for the police



- says or does something to you that was not right – this might mean not treating you in a good and fair way
- says or does something to someone else that is not right and you see or hear it happening

You can also make a complaint if you see something or something happens to you and you still feel bad about it for a long time after it happened.

You can make the complaint yourself or you can ask someone else to do it. This might be a friend or someone in your family. You will have to write something down to say that you are OK for them to do this.



Things you can make a complaint about

You can make a complaint about the police for lots of different things.



Anyone who works for the police should behave in a good and safe way. The police have rules that they have to follow to make sure this happens.

Everyone who works for the police needs to

- be honest and treat people in a good and fair way
- respect the public – this means following the law and treating everyone in a good and fair way
- respect the people they work with – this means treating other people who work with them in the police in a good and fair way
- behave in a good way at work so that people like you know the police are doing a good job



If you think the police are not doing some of these things then you can make a complaint about it.

You can only make a complaint to the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)** if it is about the way someone in the police has treated you.



If you have a complaint about anything else then you need to go to the police where you live and talk to them about it.

How to make a complaint

If you want to make a complaint you can



- get in contact with the **police force** where it happened. The **police force** are the people who work for the police. They make sure that everyone stays safe and does not break the law. You can find out where they are in the telephone book or you can go into the police station where they work



- go on the internet to our website and fill out a form. You need to go to **www.ipcc.gov.uk/complaints**. You can fill out the form online and send it back using the internet



- telephone us at **08453 002 002** - we can talk to you between 9am and 5pm



- fill out the form in this leaflet and post it back to the police force you want to complain about or to us



- get in touch with another group who can give you advice like the **Citizen's Advice Bureau**. They can give you advice on lots of things. You can find them in the telephone book or on the internet



- talk to a lawyer or **your local MP** to see if they can make a complaint for you. **Your local MP** is someone who works for the government

What happens when you make a complaint

Keeping a record of your complaint



Keeping a record means the complaint is written down or put on computer and kept in a safe place.

The law says that the police have to **record** every complaint.



If you make a complaint to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) about someone in the police then we will send the complaint to where they work.



You need to say that you are OK for us to do this for you.

We cannot pass on the complaint unless you say we can.



Things will get sorted out more quickly if you send your complaint to the police force you are complaining about.

What happens after your complaint has been recorded



Once your complaint is recorded then the police force will decide what to do next.

Most complaints can be sorted quickly with the police force where things happened.

If you make a complaint and it is **not recorded** then you can make an **appeal** to us at the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).



An **appeal** is something you make when you are not happy about the way your complaint has been sorted out.

Sorting things out with the police where you live

Most complaints can be sorted out with your local police force. You will have to say you are OK for them to do this.



If they are not able to do this then the police will carry out a **local investigation**. A **local investigation** is something that happens where you live. They can only do this if you say it is OK.

The police will tell you how the investigation is going and what will happen at the end of the investigation.

The investigation might only take a few hours but if it is serious then it might go on for a few months.

Investigations the IPCC will do

The police are not allowed to look into every complaint. If the complaint is serious then they have to tell us about it.

Serious complaints are things like

- when someone dies or is hurt very badly because of someone who works for the police
- when someone is attacked by someone who works for the police
- when someone is **sexually assaulted** by someone who works for the police. **Sexually assaulted** means someone touches or hurts your body in a bad way. They might force you to have sex with them or make you touch them in a way you do not want to.
- anything that is against the law – for example saying or doing bad things to other people

If we find out that these things have happened then we will carry out an **investigation** to find out more. We will write down what we find out in a report.

We will carry out some of the investigations working with the police force. Some of them we will do on our own.



How we tell you what is happening

We will always tell you about what is happening. We will do this if we are or the police are looking into your complaint.

We will tell you what is decided and what will happen at the end of the investigation.

We will talk to you to find out how you want to be told what is going on and how often.



What happens after the investigation is finished

We will get in touch with you after we have found out everything we need to know.

If something has gone wrong for you then we want to put it right. This helps the police to do their job better in the future.



What the police might do after an investigation

The police might



- change what they do and how they sort things out in the future
- talk to the person you made the complaint about so they can learn from what has happened
- **discipline** the person you made the complaint about. If someone is **disciplined** it means the police force where they work will tell them not to do the thing again and may give them a punishment
- if the complaint is serious they might have to take the person to court so the law can decide what to do with them.



Court



Sometimes the police might not find out enough about what happened to do anything.



Sometimes the police might agree with you that something went wrong but there is no need to do anything else about it.

What to do if you are not happy with the way your complaint is sorted out



If you are not happy with the way your complaint is sorted out then you can come to us at the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**.

We will decide what to do next. We might be able to ask the police to change what they have decided to do about your complaint.

You can come to us for help if



- the local police where you live have not recorded your complaint – this means they have not written down what you said happened
- things could not be sorted out with the local police force where you live
- there was an **investigation** where you live but your complaint could not be sorted out – this means someone else was asked to sort your complaint out for you



If the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) have already done an investigation for you **can not** make an appeal.

To find out more about making an appeal to us you need to go to



www.ipcc.gov.uk



Or telephone us on **08453 002 002**

Using the complaints form



You need to fill out a form to make your complaint.

There is a form inside this leaflet that you can fill out if you have a complaint.

We need to know that you are OK for us to send your complaint to the police force that you are complaining about.



You will need to sign or make a mark at the end of the form to say that you are OK for us to do this.

Filling out the form



If you need help to fill out the form or you need to get the form in another way then let us know. We can send you the form in a different language. Or we can send the form in another way like Braille, large print or on a CD.

Contact us



Telephone: **08453 002 002**

Fax: **020 7404 0430**

Minicom: **020 7404 0431**



Email: **enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk**



Website: **www.ipcc.gov.uk**



You can fill out this form on the internet. You need to go to

www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/complaints/forms.htm



When you are filling out the paper form we would like you to write all the words in BLOCK CAPITALS.



You can ask someone else to fill out the form for you. This might be a friend or someone in your family. If you want to do this then you will need to tell us who they are and send this in with the form.



The police complaints form

About you

Mr, Mrs	
First name	
Last name	
Date of birth	
Address	
Post code	
Work telephone	
Home telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Things about the police force

Who do you want to make a complaint about?



Please tell us as much as you can about the person or people that you are making the complaint about. If you do not know all the answers then try and tell us much as you can so we know who you are talking about.

Write their name, job, police number or anything else you know that will help us find out who they are here

Write the name of the police station where they work here



.Where did it happen?

Try and tell us as much as you can. For example, is there anything about the place where it happened – was it in the street or somewhere else?

When did it happen?

Did it happen once or more than once? Try and tell us as much as you can about it.



The date it happened



The time it happened

Something might have happened to you over a longer time than just a day. Write down when it started and when it finished here



The day it started

The day it finished



What happened to you?

We need to know what happened to you. Try and tell us as much as you can. You can tell us things like

Who did it

What they said and did

If anyone else saw what happened – write down who these people are if you can

If anyone was hurt or anything got broken



Anything else you think is important you can write down on extra paper and send it in with this form.

Saying you are OK for us to send the form out

We need to know that you are OK for us to send this form on to other people who need to sort out your complaint. This might be to the police station near where you live.

Sign here to say you are OK with this



Signature

Date

Where you are from

We need to know **your race, culture or background** – **your race, culture or background** means who you are and where you are from.



What you say about who you are and where you are from will not make any difference to the way we look at your complaint. We need to know this so we can treat everyone in a good and fair way.

Tick next to your **race, culture or background**

White British	
White Irish	
Any other White background	
White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Any other mixed background	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Any other Asian background	
Caribbean	
African	
Any other Black background	
Chinese	
Any other ethnic groups	
Do not want to say	

Send this sheet in with your form.

Sending the form back to us



Send the form and the where you are from sheet to the police force that you are complaining about.



You can do this on the internet by going to

www.ipcc.gov.uk/professional_standards_contact_details.htm



Or you can send your form back to us at the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**.



Post

**IPCC
90 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6BH**

Fax

020 7404 0430

Email

enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk





Other useful information

There are lots of questions that people ask about making a complaint. Here are some of the questions that we are asked the most and our answers.



Can I go and see the Independent Police Complaints Commission to talk to them about my complaint?

You cannot come and see us in person. You need to fill out this form and send it back to us before we can help you.

You can post it to us or send it to us by using the internet.



I have a disability. How can you help me make a complaint?

We want to make sure that everyone can get help from us. If you need support then you can get in touch with us and we will help you.

Can I make my complaint in a different language?

Yes. You can get this leaflet in different languages and in other ways.

You can do this by



Telephone

08453 002 002



Website

www.ipcc.gov.uk

Do I have to make my complaint straight away or is there more time for me to do it?



You can make your complaint whenever you like but it is better if you can do it as soon as you can. If more than a year goes by before you tell us what happened then it is harder for us to help you.

How long will it take for my complaint to get sorted out?



We cannot say how long it will take. It depends on what happened and how much we need to find out. We will stay in touch with you and let you know how things are going. We will do this at least once a month.

Can the IPCC help me get money from the police if they have treated me in a bad way?



We cannot get money for you. If you want to do this then you will have to go straight to the police force you are complaining about. You can ask a police lawyer to help you if you want to.

The **Citizen's Advice Bureau** can help you with this too. The Citizen's Advice Bureau are a group that know a lot about the law and **your rights**. **Rights** means things the law says you should have in your life. The Citizen's Advice Bureau can give you advice. You can find them in the telephone book or on the internet.

Can I make a complaint to the IPCC if the police give me a caution?



A **caution** is when the police think you have done something against the law and they give you a warning not to do it again. If the police have given you a caution you can still make a complaint to the **Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**.

You can get more advice on this from the **Citizens Advice Bureau** or a **lawyer**.

Can the IPCC take information about things from the Criminal Records Bureau?



The **Criminal Records Bureau** is information that the **government** keep about people who have done things that are against the law.

We **cannot** find out information about you from the Criminal Records Bureau.

If you have a complaint about the Criminal Records Bureau then you have to make a complaint to them.

Can you help me if the police have not found out extra information about a crime that I have told them about?



If you are not happy about the way the police are investigating a crime then you can ask us to help you. This does not mean that we can change what happens but we can have a look at how things are going.

Can you help me if I have told the police about a bad thing that has happened but they will not look into it?



If you think that the police are not helping you on purpose then we might be able to help you. You can make a complaint about this.

The government has rules about what to do if this happens. The best thing is to go to the police where the bad thing happened and make a complaint before you come to us.

Find out more



You can find out more about the work we do and how to make a complaint. There is lots of information on the website to help you.

www.ipcc.gov.uk



You can also send an email to

enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk

Contact us



Post **Independent Police Complaints
Commission (IPCC)
90 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6BH**



Telephone **08453 002 002**

Fax: **020 7404 0430**

Minicom **020 7404 0431**

Text Relay **18001 0207 166 3000**



Email **enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk**



Website: **www.ipcc.gov.uk**

**Thanks to Photosymbols for the pictures
Mencap helped to make this easy read**

Other people who can help you

You can get help from the **Citizen's Advice Bureau**.

The **Citizen's Advice Bureau** can give you advice on lots of things. You can find them in the telephone book or on the internet.

To find out where the **Citizen's Advice Bureau** is where you live you need to go to

www.citizensadvice.org.uk