

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

MAKING A COMPLAINT

We aim to provide a good service but there may be times when things go wrong, even in a well-run organisation. So if you are not happy with the service you receive we would like to put things right quickly and to your satisfaction.

This leaflet gives you details of the probation complaints procedure.

It is for you to use if you are not satisfied with something the probation service has done or decided – or has failed to do or to decide - and if you are one of the following:

- an offender under probation supervision or in probation accommodation
- someone for whom the probation board has been responsible for writing a pre-sentence report
- a victim of a person convicted of offences
- someone who has suffered physical injury or distress, or theft or damage, as a result of the action of a person on a community order or released from prison on licence whilst carrying out activities under probation supervision
- the immediate family of anyone in the above categories who has died.

These arrangements do not apply where the courts or other legal authority are still considering the subject of your complaint.

You cannot make a formal complaint about something that was more than a year ago, or that you could reasonably have known about more than a year ago. Nor can you complain about something the probation service is no longer responsible for.

Dealing with complaints informally

Often it is better to try to sort out the matter with the member of staff involved. If you want you can write to or telephone the local probation office to speak to the member of staff involved or his or her manager. They will contact you to discuss the problem and you will receive a letter describing the outcome of this discussion.

Making a formal complaint

If you don't want to use the informal system you can write direct with details of your complaint to the Chief Officer, at 2 Swan Street, Warwick, CV34 4BJ. You can also write direct to the Chief Officer if you are unhappy with the way your complaint was dealt with informally but in this case you must do this within ten working days of receiving your letter explaining the outcome of the informal consideration.

The Chief Officer will write within five working days to tell you that your complaint has been received and how it will be handled.

If your complaint is about the Chief Officer personally you should write with details to the Secretary of the Probation Board at Chief Executive's Department, Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall, Warwick who will arrange to investigate.

The Chief Officer will usually ask a senior officer not directly involved to investigate your complaint. The complaint will be investigated and the outcome, with reasons, sent to you in writing within 20 working days of acknowledgement of the complaint. If more time is needed, the Chief Officer will write to you setting out the reasons for the delay.

Making an appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can write to appeal against it, setting out why you are not satisfied. You must do this within 15 working days.

Write to the Secretary of the Probation Board at Chief Executive's Department, Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall, Warwick. The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within five working days.

A panel including a probation board member will consider your appeal and will send you the result within 20 working days. If they need longer time they will let you know. They may also ask to meet you if they think that will help them consider your appeal.

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

If you are or have been under probation supervision or living in probation accommodation, or have had pre sentence reports prepared about you, and are not satisfied after making your complaint, you can complain to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

Details are available from your local probation offices or from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ. The telephone number is 020 7276 2876.