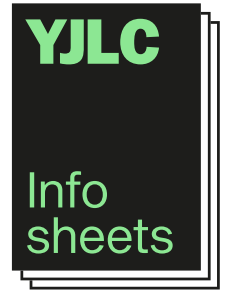


Police Complaints

Making a police complaint

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This factsheet explains how to make a complaint against the police for misconduct.

What can I complain about?

A complaint can be made about any conduct of police officers which has had an adverse effect on you.

Examples include:

- Unlawful stop and search
- Wrongful arrest and detention in police custody

- Assault
- Detention in police custody for longer than necessary
- Discrimination

When should I complain?

A complaint should be made as soon as possible and in any event within 12 months of the alleged misconduct.

How do I make a complaint?

- In person at a police station or by calling 101
- Online
- In writing

You can direct a complaint to:

- The police force
- The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

What should I include in my complaint?

Your complaint should include the following information:

- Your full personal and contact details
- Who you are complaining about
- The factual background of events
- The basis of the complaint
- What outcome you are seeking

You have a right to insist your complaint is recorded; you should do this as there is **no right of review for a non-recorded complaint.**

What happens next?

- A police officer will contact you and explain how your complaint will be dealt with
- A decision will be made whether your complaint is referred to the IOPC, or investigated by the police force
- An investigating officer should make contact with you every 28 days

What are the outcomes?

- The officer(s) may be subject to disciplinary procedures
- If a criminal offence is found to have been committed by a police officer, a referral should be made to the CPS for a charging decision
- In reality, sanctions against officers are rare, and tend to be minor
- If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you will be able to appeal the decision (a 'right of review')
- You should lodge an appeal within the timeline provided otherwise your appeal may not be considered
- It is advisable to seek legal advice before lodging such an appeal to advise on specific points that should be raised

Who can help me make a complaint?

- Anyone can make a complaint and you do not need legal representation to do so
- However, if you require assistance to make a complaint, you may want to contact one of the following:

A friend or relative

**Your social worker
or key worker**

**An advocacy
organisation**

**Your local Citizens
Advice Bureau**

**Your local law
centre or specialist
law firm**

Your local MP