



Making a complaint: an explanatory guide

The West Mercia Probation Trust works to high standards. We hope this is reflected in how we work with you and your feedback is important to us.

I have a complaint - what do I do?

To be considered, your complaint must be about an action or decision taken by probation staff, the local Probation Board, a Board member, contractor or agent/volunteer working for the West Mercia Probation Trust. You can also complain about a failure to take action or make a decision by any of these people.

You can complain if you:

- Are/have been under the supervision of West Mercia Probation Trust;
- Have had, or are about to have, a pre-sentence report written about you by a member of West Mercia Probation Trust staff;
- are a victim of someone convicted of an offence;
- have suffered physical injury, distress, theft or damage to property as a result of the conduct of someone carrying out activities under probation supervision as part of a community order or prison licence;
- you are a parent, spouse, live-in partner, brother, sister or child of a person in the above categories who has died.

Your complaint won't be considered if:

- It is about something that happened, or you could have known about, more than 12 months ago;
- It is about something that is being investigated by the police or awaiting a decision of a court, statutory tribunal, Parole Board, Crown Prosecution Service or Criminal Cases Review Commission.

How can I make a complaint?

You can make a complaint face to face, or by telephone. You can do this directly with the person involved or you can ask to discuss it with a more senior member of staff. You will most likely be directed to the line manager of the person you are complaining about as they are usually the person who can easily access information about your case. **This is called "Stage 1" or "Informal Stage"** and is a good place to start as the complaint can often be resolved very quickly using this part of the process. Going through this stage does not stop you from asking for a formal investigation if you are not happy with the response you receive.

You can make a formal complaint but you should do this by writing to the Chief Executive. You can find the address details on the back of this leaflet. **This is called "Stage 2" or "Formal Stage"**. Within 5 working days of receiving your complaint the Chief Executive will write to you to explain how your complaint will be handled and the date when you should expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. Formal investigations do take longer – up to 25 working days is the expected timescale.

My complaint has been investigated and I am still not happy.

You can appeal against the Chief Executive's decision by writing to the Secretary of West Mercia Probation Trust Board. **This is called "Stage 3" or "Appeal Stage"**. You will need to explain why you are not happy with the Chief Executive's decision. The Secretary will write back to you, within 5 days of receiving your letter. He/she will then ask a panel of people, including at least one local Board member, to consider your appeal. They may ask to meet you as part of this process. The appeal process should be completed within 20 working days of receipt of your appeal letter and the Secretary will write to you with the decision of the appeals panel.

I want someone else to look into my complaint.

Your complaint must be fully investigated by the West Mercia Probation Trust **before** you can ask for help from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman. They will not consider any complaint from you unless your complaint has been formally investigated and an appeal process completed.

If you are an offender who is not happy with the decision of the appeal panel you can write to the Prison and Probation Ombudsman. This must be done within one month of the date of the appeal decision.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ

Email: mail@ppo.gsi.gov.uk

If you are a victim who is not happy with the decision of the appeal panel then the Parliamentary Ombudsman can consider your complaint if you are:

- Receiving services from a probation trust under the Victim Contact Scheme, or
- A family member of a victim who has died and you are receiving services from a probation trust under the Victim Contact Scheme.

You can write to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman at:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Email: Phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Contact West Mercia Probation Trust at:

For Stage 1, Informal complaints:

Contact your local probation office.

For Stage 2, Formal complaints, write to:

Chief Executive
West Mercia Probation Trust
Head Office, Stourbank House
90 Mill Street
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY11 6XA

Or Email: wmp-complaint@west-mercia.probation.gsi.gov.uk

For Stage 3, Appeals, write to:

The Board Secretary
c/o West Mercia Probation Trust Head Office

at the above address.