

**Factsheet 12:** This factsheet provides information about when the Ombudsman can help a respondent during the course of a complaint.

The role of the Service Complaints Ombudsman is to provide independent and impartial oversight of the Service complaints process. Anyone can contact the Ombudsman's office (the OSCO) but how we can help will depend on who is contacting her and why.

The Ombudsman is limited in how she can help a respondent to a Service complaint i.e. a person who is the subject of a complaint. When an individual who is a respondent to a Service complaint contacts our office we can do the following:

- Provide information on the Service complaints process.
- Provide information on our processes and timeframes.
- Refer an intention to make a Service complaint if the individual wishes to make a complaint of their own (following a written application and consent).
- Receive feedback on our website, services and processes and take steps to improve these where required.

The Ombudsman is unable to accept an application to investigate any aspect of a Service complaint on behalf of the respondent. Only the person who made the Service complaint can ask the Ombudsman to investigate. This is because the legislation that created the Ombudsman does not give her the power to do this.

It is open to a respondent to make their own complaint. If the complaint is about the complaint raised against them, then their own complaint would need to be about how they have been treated or the impact the process has had on them.

If you want to know more about this topic further information on the OSCO, including the different types of applications, timelines for making an application and OSCO processes, can be found on our website

[www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk](http://www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can I contact the Ombudsman's office (OSCO)?**

Yes, anyone can contact the Ombudsman's office for information. However, only the person who made a complaint can ask the Ombudsman to investigate.

### **Why can't the Ombudsman investigate if I contact the Ombudsman as a respondent?**

The Ombudsman can only act where she has the legal power to. The Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Act 2015 does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate matters raised by a respondent to a Service complaint.

### **If I want to make a Service complaint of my own can I ask the Ombudsman for a referral?**

Yes. Even though you are the respondent in a Service complaint you can still ask the Ombudsman to refer your intention to make a Service complaint of your own.

### **If the Ombudsman investigates a complaint I am named in, how long will it take?**

How long an investigation takes depends on the type of investigation. You can find information on our time frames [on our website](#).

### **If the Ombudsman investigates a complaint I am named in, how will the decision affect me?**

A decision made by the Ombudsman is binding on all parties. How an individual decision will affect you will depend if you are affected on the specific findings in the investigation. A copy of the decision will be sent to you.