

We are often contacted by respondents who want to know what the Ombudsman can do for them. This factsheet provides the key information about what the Ombudsman can and can't do.

### Can respondents contact the Ombudsman's office?

Yes. Anyone can contact the Ombudsman's office for information. But what we can do will depend on who is contacting us and why.

### If I ask the Ombudsman to investigate undue delay, substance (merits) or maladministration in a complaint I am named in, can she do it?

No. The way the current legislation is written, only the person who made a Service complaint can ask the Ombudsman to use their powers of investigation.

### Can the Ombudsman do anything for me?

Yes. If you contact our office we can:

- Provide information on the Service complaints process
- Provide information on our processes and timeframes
- Refer your intention to make a Service complaint of your own
- Receive and respond to feedback on our website, services and processes

### If the Ombudsman can refer my intention to make a Service complaint, does that mean I make a complaint about the complaint I am named in?

If you believe you were treated unfairly or improperly as part of the complaints process, then you can make a Service complaint about that.

However, you can't make a Service complaint about the complaint itself. That includes the decision to accept the complaint for investigation and the outcome of the complaint.

## If the Ombudsman investigates a complaint I am named in, will I be contacted?

That will depend on the type of investigation being conducted and whether the investigator needs information from you that isn't available from the complaint file in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

If you are contacted you will be given clear information about why you are being contacted, what information is required and how long the process will take.

## How will a decision made by the Ombudsman affect me?

Decisions made by the Ombudsman following a review or investigation are binding.

How you would be affected by a decision will depend on the specific findings and recommendations made. If you are affected, you will be informed.

## What are my rights as a respondent?

Put simply, you have the right to be:

- treated fairly
- appointed an assisting officer
- kept updated on the progress and outcome of the complaint

More information about the rights and responsibilities of respondents in the Service complaints process can be found in JSP831. Each of the Services has also published a leaflet specifically for respondents on what they can expect as part of the complaints process.

**For more information on the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces  
visit our website [www.scoaf.org.uk](http://www.scoaf.org.uk)**

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