



Making a
Complaint about
The Public
Prosecution Service

PUBLIC
PROSECUTION
SERVICE

Building a Service
for the Future

PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the service provided by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS).

Please note that separate arrangements apply if you wish to ask the PPS for reasons for prosecution decisions or if you wish to have a prosecution decision reviewed (see Page 9 for further details).

The PPS complaint procedures are set out in full on the PPS website (www.ppsni.gov.uk).

ABOUT THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is the principal public prosecuting authority for Northern Ireland.

The PPS is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. Subject to the full implementation of the PPS (see below), the Director takes responsibility for all criminal cases previously prosecuted by the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Whilst the PPS works closely with the police and a range of other criminal justice agencies, it is wholly independent; its decisions are impartial, based on an independent and professional assessment of the available evidence and the public interest.

Developing the PPS

The PPS came into effect on 13 June 2005. As of that date, the full range of services which it will provide is not yet available throughout Northern Ireland. Work is ongoing to provide the full implementation of the Service by December 2006.

However PPS complaint procedures will apply to all regions across Northern Ireland.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

Any communication which expresses dissatisfaction with, or criticism of the services provided to the community by the PPS, is considered by the PPS as a “complaint”.

Such complaints may relate to:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the prosecution service (for example, the time taken to process a case or the promptness of payment of witness expenses).
- The manner in which a person was treated by a member of staff of the PPS or by someone acting on behalf of the PPS.
- Any failure to adhere to the prosecution service’s Code for Prosecutors or Code of Ethics which does not relate to a prosecution decision. (The PPS Code for Prosecutors, which includes the Code of Ethics, is available via the PPS website at www.ppsni.gov.uk).

WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Any person who has had contact with the PPS in whatever capacity can make a complaint. A complaint may be made directly by an individual or through their nominated representative (for example, a family member, solicitor, support group or public representative).

HOW CAN A COMPLAINT BE MADE?

There are a number of ways to make a complaint:

At a PPS Office

Please ask to speak to a Community Liaison representative. An office will be made available to ensure that the complaint can be made in private.

At Court

A complaint may be made by speaking to any member of staff of the PPS.

By Telephone or Fax

Please contact a PPS Community Liaison representative on the following telephone number giving details of the complaint:

Tel: 02890 897070

or submit a written complaint by fax to:

Fax: 02890 897069

Community Liaison staff will normally be available for telephone calls during office hours (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm). There will be an answering machine in operation outside of these hours.

By Letter

Write to the following address detailing the complaint:

**Community Liaison
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR**

By email

Please send the details of the complaint by email to:

complaints@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk

WHAT INFORMATION WILL I NEED TO PROVIDE?

To help us in dealing with your complaint, the following information would be appreciated:

- Name, full address and contact details of the complainant; this may include details of any representative of the complainant.
- Full details of the complaint, providing as much information as possible, including dates, the sequence of events which gave rise to concern and, if known, the names of persons involved.
- It would also be helpful if a preferred means of contact was included as well as some indication of the most suitable time for our staff to contact you.

In order to help you to provide all relevant information, a complaint form is available on the PPS website. Community Liaison will also forward a copy of the form by post on request.

Please note that depending on the nature and/or complexity of the complaint, it may be necessary to ask the complainant for further information.

HOW QUICKLY WILL MY COMPLAINT BE DEALT WITH BY THE PPS?

The PPS will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 5 working days and will seek to make a full response within 15 working days.

If it is not possible to meet this target, the complainant will be informed within 15 working days why a response has been delayed and given a revised target date for a full response.

IS THERE ANY APPEAL AGAINST THE WAY THE PPS HAS DECIDED TO DEAL WITH MY COMPLAINT?

There is an external independent assessor who will review a complaint where the complainant is not satisfied with the way in which the PPS has decided to deal with the complaint. Concerns in detail should be sent in writing to:

**Private Office of the Director
of Public Prosecutions
Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR**

Or by email to: [**complaints@ppsni.gov.uk**](mailto:complaints@ppsni.gov.uk)

The PPS will forward all the information you provide to the independent assessor who will contact you directly.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The PPS acts in partnership with a number of organisations to provide an extended range of services, for example to victims and witnesses. Complaints about the delivery of services by partner organisations should be directed in the first instance to these bodies. The PPS website includes a range of useful contact points in this regard.

CAN I ASK ABOUT PROSECUTION DECISIONS?

Separate arrangements apply if you wish to ask the PPS for reasons for prosecution decisions or if you wish to have a prosecution decision reviewed.

The PPS policy on the giving of reasons and the review of prosecution decisions is set out in full in the Code for Prosecutors.

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS: GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE PPS

- Complaints will be investigated and dealt with by individuals other than those about whom the complaint was made.
- Complaints will be considered fairly and impartially.
- Complainants will be dealt with professionally and with sensitivity and courtesy at all times.
- Complaints will be fully considered in line with the policy and procedures set out in the complaint handling policy.
- An internal Quality Assurance team will monitor complaints made about the PPS and how these complaints were dealt with.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For a copy of our Complaint Policy or the Code for Prosecutors, please contact:

Public Prosecution Service
Belfast Chambers
93 Chichester Street
Belfast BT1 3JR

Tel: 02890 897102

Fax: 02890 897030

Email: info@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.ppsni.gov.uk

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