



Public Service

Ombudsman

What happens to the information you give us





Contents



About us

Page 4



What information do we collect about you?

Page 6



Why do we need information about you?

Page 7



Do we share your information?

Page 8



What happens if we do not look into your complaint?

Page 9



What happens if we do look into your complaint?

Page 12



How do we share information about what we find out?

Page 13



How do we use AI?

Page 15



What other ways could we use your information?

Page 16



How long will we keep your information?

Page 17



What information do we put on our website?

Page 18



Signing up to our email updates

Page 20



Your rights

Page 21



Find out more

Page 24

About us



Public Service
Ombudsman

We are called the Public Service Ombudsman.



We look at **complaints** about UK government services and the NHS in England.



A **complaint** is when someone is unhappy and tells an organisation.



This paper explains what happens to the information you give us. And how we look after it.



We follow rules and laws to keep your information safe.



These laws are called:

- the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- the Data Protection Act 2018.



What information do we collect about you?



When you first contact us we will write down:

- your name and address
- your phone number and email address
- information about your complaint.



We could write this on paper and on a computer.



If you contact us by phone, we may record the call so we can remember what was said. You will be told if we do this.



We will also make a summary of what the call was about.



We also ask you some questions to find out more about you. These are called **demographic data** questions.



Demographic data questions are about things like your ethnic group, race or religion, and if you have a disability.



You do not have to answer these questions if you do not want to.



Why do we need information about you?



We need information to help us decide if we can look at your complaint.



For example, we need to talk to the organisation you have complained about.



This is so we can find out what has happened with your complaint so far, and the best way for us to look at it.



We ask the demographic data questions to understand who uses our service.
We want to make sure our service is fair.



Do we share your information?



We will look after your information carefully.



We need to share some information with the organisation you have complained about. This is so we can find out more.



We may share your information with other people who can help us. For example, we may talk to a doctor if your complaint is about healthcare.



Tell us straight away if you do not want us to share your information. That is fine. But it can stop us doing all the work we need to.



What happens if we don't look at your complaint



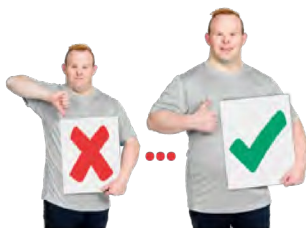
We may decide that we cannot look at your complaint.
If this happens, we will send you a letter to tell you why.



We may also send a copy of the letter to your **MP** if they signed your complaint form.



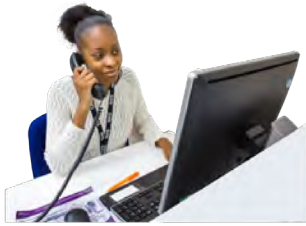
An **MP** is a person who works in Parliament to help make our laws.
Your MP may have signed your complaint form.



We may also send a copy of the letter to the organisation you complained about.
This is so it can learn from the complaint and think about doing things better.



What happens if we do look at your complaint



We must tell the organisation you complained about.



We need to tell them your name and information about your complaint.



We usually ask for more information about your complaint. This could be information about your health if your complaint is about the NHS.



We may get more information from other people who can help us. For example, someone in your family who can tell us how this problem has affected you.



Sometimes complaints are about both health and social care.



For example, older people may be looked after by social care and health services.



In this case, we may work with another organisation called the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.



We will ask you if this is OK first.



How do we share information about what we find out?



Before we make a decision, we will tell you what we think about your complaint by writing a report.



We will give you this report to ask what you think about it.



This report must be kept private by law. The only people who can see the report are:

- you
- us
- the organisation you complained about
- people who can check the report is right and true. For example, someone in your family.





When everyone has checked the report and told us what they think, we will write a final report.



We will send the final report to:

- you
- your MP if they asked us to look at your complaint
- the organisation you complained about.



We may tell other organisations and the public what we find out. We do this when we think it will help organisations do better work in the future.



We take out information that is about you when we share reports with the public.

This includes information like your name and address.



How do we use AI?

We will use **AI** to help us understand the information in complaints.

AI is a type of computer technology.



For example, we might use AI to make a summary of emails or meetings.



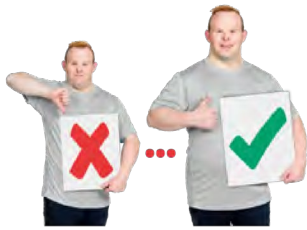
We look after the information we get from AI in the same way that we look after information you give us.



We do not share the information we get from AI with any other organisation that trains AI to get better.



What other ways could we use your information?



We might use information about your complaint to make our work better.



For example, we might use your information to give our staff training or to test new technology.



Or we might ask another organisation to get in touch with you to find out what you think of our work.



This organisation is called Opinion Research Services (ORS).



How long will we keep your information?



We keep information about you and your complaint for only as long as we need it. As soon as we can, we will delete it.

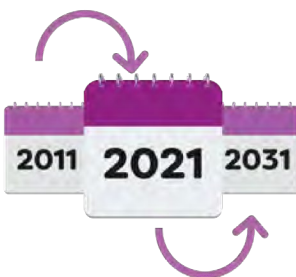


We will only keep for longer:

- the final report about your complaint
- some basic information about you and your complaint.



For example, your name and address, the organisation and what you complained about, and our decision.



This will help us know who you are if you need our help again in the future.



What information do we put on our website?



We write reports about different things that we find out when we look at lots of complaints.



For example, we wrote a report about mental health complaints we had seen.

We put these reports on our website.



Sometimes we give the reports to Parliament so that people who make decisions about laws can see if anything needs to be done better.



We make sure we do not put the names of people who made a complaint in these reports.



We also put the decisions we make about complaints on our website. But these do not have names in them.



We put our decisions on our website because it helps people to understand what we do and how we do it.



It also helps people to learn from the complaints we see.



We put a copy of any questions that we have been asked by the public on our website.



We do this as part of a law called the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.



Signing up to our email updates



We work with a company that sends email updates to people about our work.



If you have asked to sign up to these updates, your name and email address will be shared with them.



They will not share this information with anybody else without asking you first.



You can choose to stop getting these emails by clicking on the link at the bottom of one of their emails.



Your rights



You have rights under a law called the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).



You have the right to:

- know how we use your information
- ask us for a copy of the information we have about you.



We will give you this when we can.
You will not have to pay for this.



You also have the right to:

- ask us to get rid of information we have about you
- stop using information about you.



For example, if you do not want us to share your information with other organisations.



We will tell you if this is not possible and why. For example, we may need to keep some information about you by law.



You can contact us by email:

informationrights@ombudsman.org.uk

Or write to:



Information Rights
Public Service Ombudsman
Citygate
47-51 Mosley Street
Manchester
M2 3HQ



You might make a complaint about how we are using your information and not be happy with our reply.



You can then contact an organisation called the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).



You can call the ICO 08456 30 60 60 or visit their website: www.ico.org.uk



We will not sell your information to other people or use it to make money.



We will keep checking this document. We may change some things in the future.



Find out more



You can contact us to find out more about how we use your information.

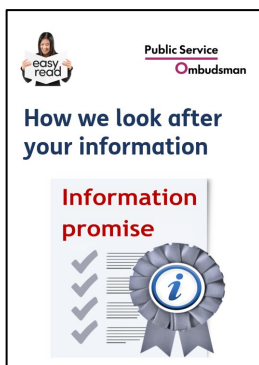
Email: dpo@ombudsman.org.uk



Phone: 0345 015 4033



Write to:
Data Protection Officer
Public Service Ombudsman
Citygate
47-51 Mosley Street
Manchester
M2 3HQ



If you want to know more about how we keep your information safe, you can read our Information Promise leaflet.