

Complaints about UK government
departments and agencies, and
some UK public organisations

2015-16



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Foreword from the Chair and Ombudsman

When I became Ombudsman we made a commitment to provide more impact for more people who are affected when public services fall short. In 2015-16 we have kept this commitment, by conducting eight times as many investigations into UK government departments, agencies and other UK public organisations as in 2012-13. As a result of our decision to meet demand for our service we now have a much better picture of the performance of public services.

Failures in public services, such as delays, flawed decision-making, poor communication or incorrect advice can have a profound effect on members of the public, in some cases leaving people unable to work or separated from their loved-ones. In publishing this overview of our casework we want to provide government departments with the insight to scrutinise their performance at all levels.

In 2013 we encouraged Permanent Secretaries and departmental Boards to look at three areas to determine the customers' experience of the service they provide: the outcomes of complaints and whether there are any trends that need to be acted on; the learning that can be harnessed from complaints and whether this has led to service improvements; and people's experience of complaining, including how the organisation performs against relevant service standards and what customers, Parliament's Ombudsman and others are saying about the public's experience of making a complaint.

Our report demonstrates why it is so important for Boards to consider these areas:

- Our statistics show that there is an upward trend in poor communication as a factor in the complaints we uphold.
- Departments fail to pick up on clusters of issues that are raised through complaints and therefore fail to identify potential problems with service delivery – this year, for example, we reported on failings by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in assessing people's fitness to drive, leaving them unable

to work and cutting them off from their friends and families.

- Over a third of the complaints we upheld (34%) were about complaint handling, so there is more public organisations need to do to improve people's experience of making a complaint.
- We upheld a significant number of complaints about discretionary decisions, including in relation to DWP's Access to Work programme and visa decisions made by UK Visas and Immigration.

If public services identified and acted upon these issues, they would have a positive impact on peoples' experience of the service and reduce the need to complain.

From research with our complainants we also know that fewer than half of the people (44%) who bring their complaint to us found out about our service at the end of the local complaints process from the organisation they complained about. We are concerned that there are a significant number of people who may not be getting justice because they are not aware that they can come to us.

There is more that public services can do to communicate their complaints processes clearly, including escalation to the Ombudsman. This, alongside more transparent decision-making, better management of complainants' expectations and better communication of final decisions would greatly enhance procedural justice.

Looking forward, we are optimistic about the positive work that has been embarked on by the Cabinet Office and other government departments to improve the customer experience and consistency in the complaints process. Our vision is that people can be confident in complaining, that they find it straightforward and fair, and that they feel listened to.

Dame Julie Mellor, DBE
Chair and Ombudsman
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Introduction

Our role

We look into complaints where an individual believes there has been injustice or hardship because an organisation has not acted properly or fairly, or has provided a poor service and not put things right.

Our report *Complaints about UK Government departments and agencies and some UK public organisations 2015-16* provides a summary of the key statistics we have collected about the complaints we handled, and the investigations we undertook in 2015-16 that involved UK government departments, agencies and some other UK public organisations.

Our process

First step (intake): We conduct initial checks and gather some basic information about the person and their case, in order to work out whether the complaint is one we are able to look at. If it is not ready for us to investigate we will signpost members of the public back to the organisation or to a relevant advocacy group.


Second step (assessment): Here we look in more depth at what has happened and decide whether we could or should investigate. There are some cases that we cannot look at, for example there is normally a time limit of a year on complaints, and we also need to consider whether legal action is more appropriate.

Third step (investigation): If after an assessment we decide that it is appropriate we then begin a formal investigation. When we complete an investigation, we can fully uphold, partly uphold or not uphold the complaint. If we fully or partly uphold the complaint, we can make recommendations to the organisation concerned to put things right.

Our statistics

Just under 18% (676) of all our investigations last year were about UK government departments, their agencies and other UK public organisations, compared to just over 82% (3,185) about the NHS in England. This marks a slight decrease compared to the previous year.

There are many different factors that influence the number of complaints that we receive about an organisation, such as the specific function of the organisation, the nature of the services it provides, and the extent to which it has direct interaction with the public. This report should therefore not be seen as trying to rank departments on the number of complaints they receive; its purpose is to help organisations consider how they handle complaints and deliver public services.



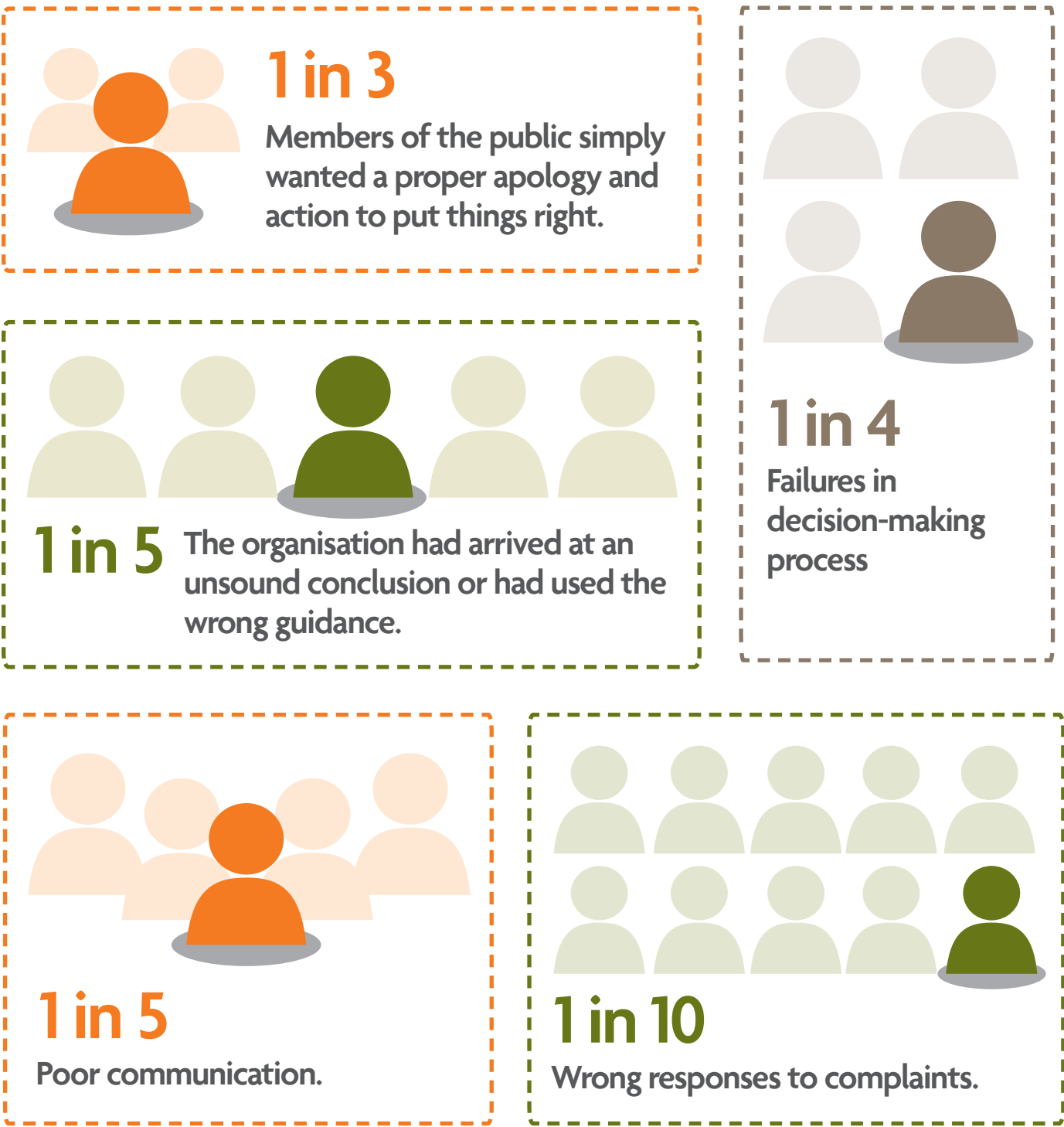
If we fully or partly uphold the complaint, we can make recommendations to the organisation concerned to put things right.

Complaints about UK government departments and agencies, and some UK public organisations

Our casework in 2015-16



Reasons for upheld complaints



Overview of complaints about UK government departments and agencies and some UK public organisations

Meeting demand for our service

In 2013 we changed the way we handle complaints and lowered the threshold for investigating complaints, so that we now investigate every complaint where there is any indication of someone being let down by a public service and experiencing hardship or injustice.

As a result of the changes, we have moved from investigating hundreds to thousands of complaints, giving more people a final decision on their unresolved complaint.

Some of our investigations involve complaints about more than one organisation. Last year (2015-16), we completed 676 investigations into 748 organisations about UK government departments, their agencies and other UK public organisations. This is an eight-fold increase from 2012-13 when we completed 84 investigations into 105 organisations.

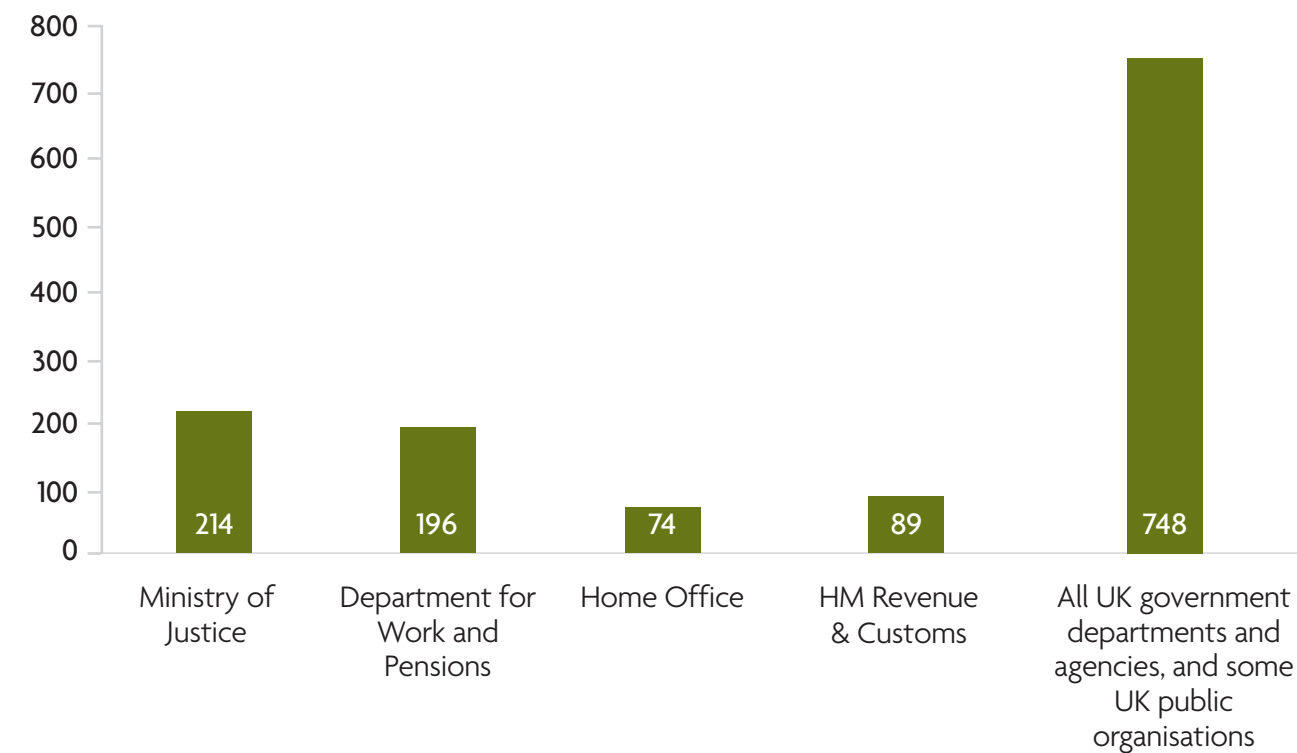
Four government departments and their agencies accounted for more than three quarters of the investigations (77%) that we completed in 2015-16: the MoJ, DWP, the Home Office and HMRC.

The Ministry of Justice alone accounted for almost a third of the investigations we completed. DWP, the Home Office and HMRC have in common that they deliver public services on a large scale directly to people through the benefits, immigration and tax systems.

The MoJ delivers public services indirectly to a significant number of people through agencies that deal directly with the public such as HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass).



Number of completed investigations



Department	Number of completed investigations in 2012-13	Number of completed investigations in 2013-14	Number of completed investigations in 2014-15	Number of completed investigations in 2015-16	Rate of increase, 2012-13 to 2015-16
Ministry of Justice	38	116	348	214	5.6
Department for Work and Pensions	16	83	201	196	12.3
Home Office	20	60	158	74	3.7
HM Revenue & Customs	11	55	138	89	8.1

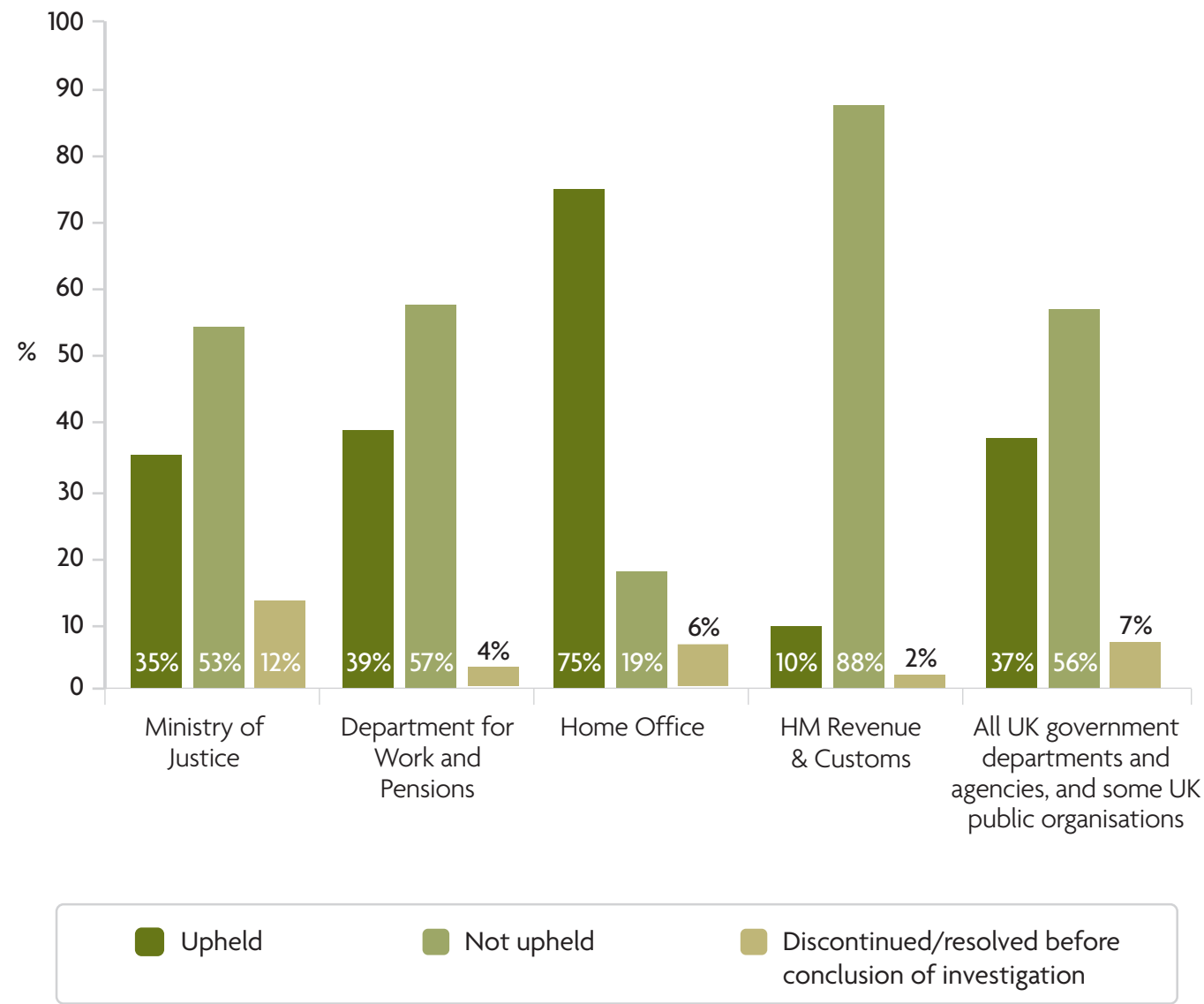
Outcomes of our investigations in 2014-15

Overall, we upheld 37% of the complaints that we investigated about UK government departments, their agencies and some UK public organisations in 2015-16.

This is an increase from 2014-15, when we upheld 33% of complaints overall; since the number of investigations we undertake changes from year to year this small increase is not in itself a concern. This is also slightly less than the 40% of complaints we upheld about the NHS in England in 2015-16.

We upheld only one in ten (10%) complaints about HMRC but more than a third (35%) of complaints about the MoJ, 39% of complaints about DWP and three out of four (75%) complaints about the Home Office.

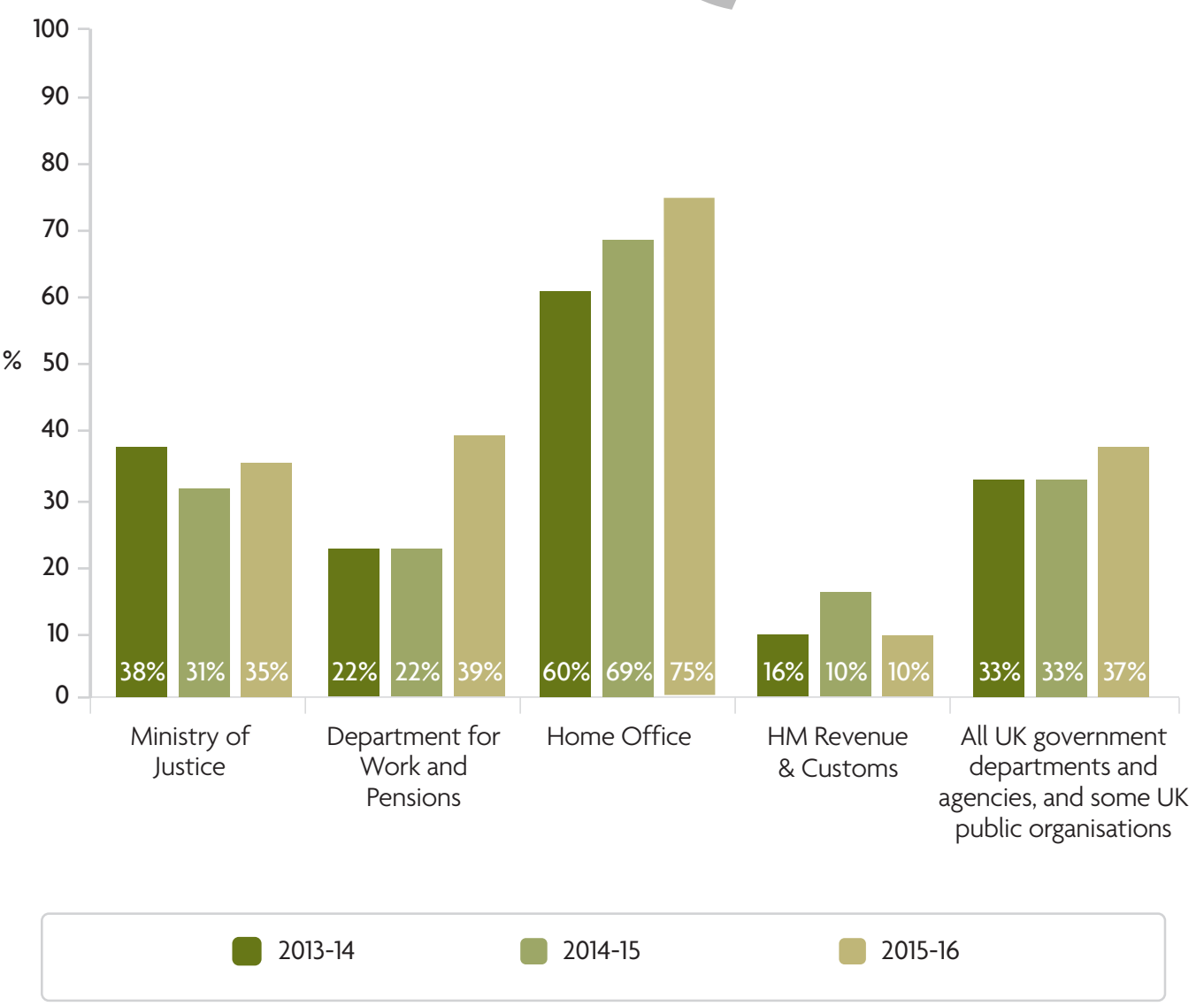
Outcome of investigations, 2015-16



A comparison of our data for the last three years shows us that while DWP, MoJ and HMRC have seen small variations in their uphold rates, our casework about the Home Office has seen a steady but significant increase in the uphold rate since 2013. Later on in the report we provide a more detailed analysis of our casework about the four main departments.

... we upheld 37% of the complaints that we investigated about UK government departments...

Changes in uphold rate

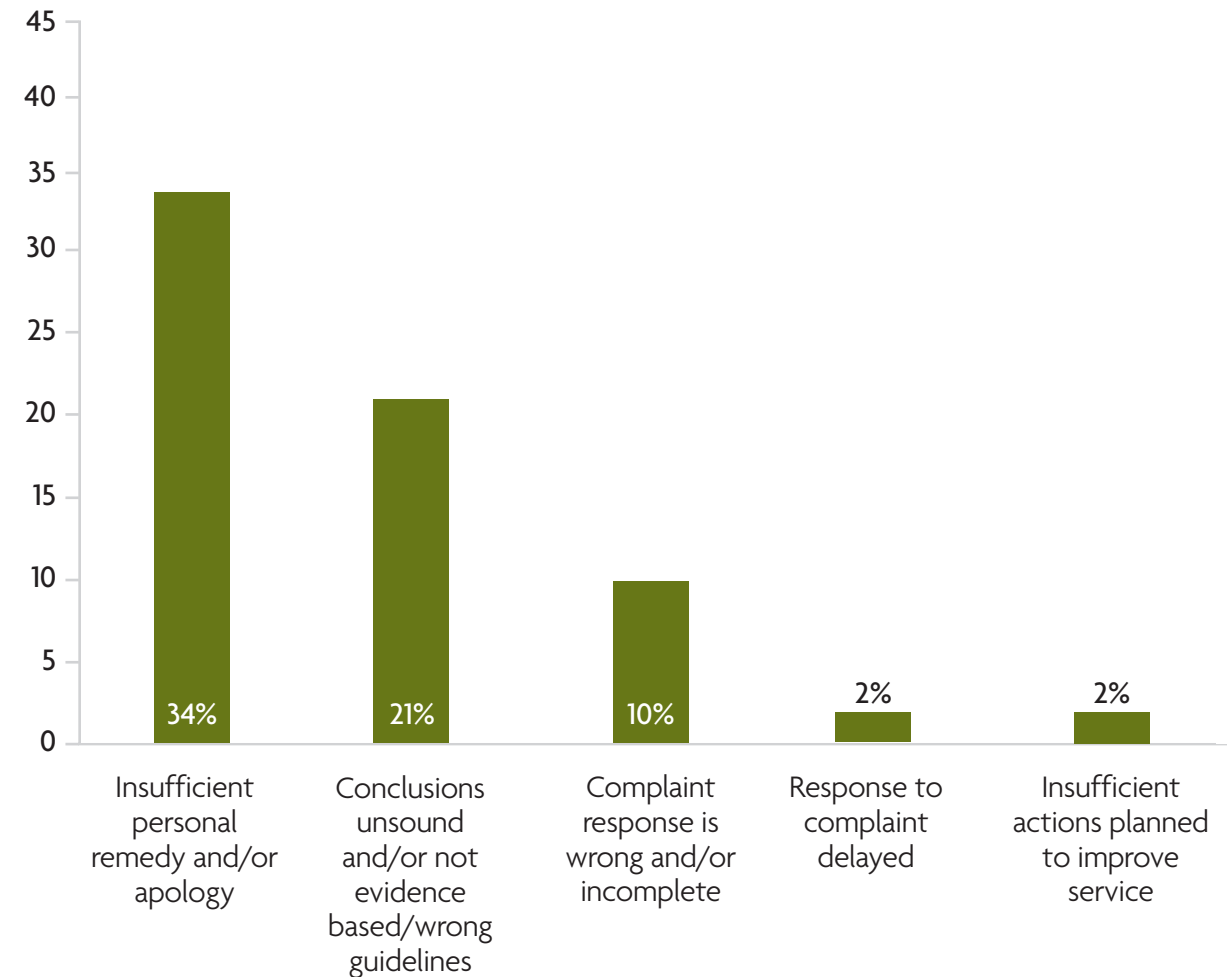


Reasons for complaints

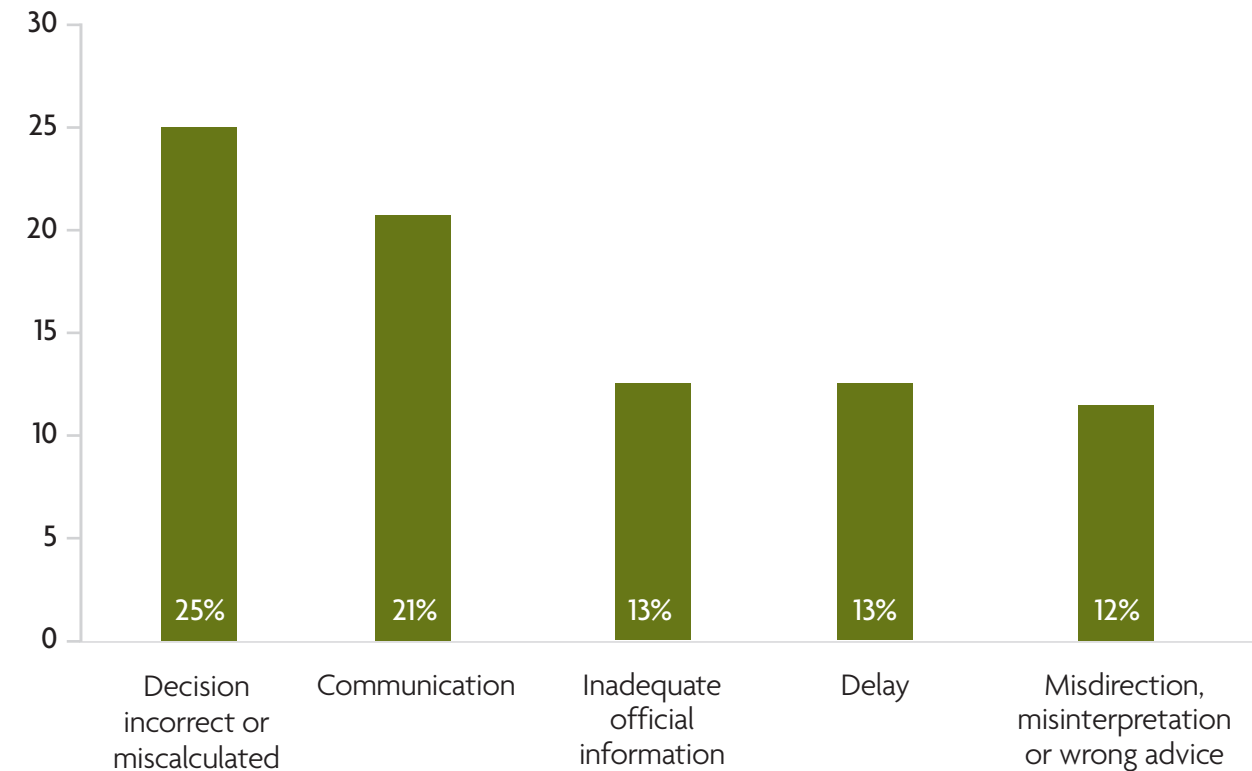
When we undertake an investigation, we record the reasons that led to the initial complaint. We also look at the reasons for the complaints that we uphold. By doing this, we can get a useful insight into the elements of service that are failing members of the public. It also allows the departments or organisations in question to learn from their mistakes.

Our casework shows clearly that there is more that local organisations can do to deliver good complaint handling. Most people escalate complaints to us because they do not feel that the organisation that provided the service did enough to put things right, such as giving a proper apology, acknowledging mistakes or providing sufficient financial remedy. A third of complaints (34%) that we upheld in 2015-16 were brought to us for these reasons.

Most common concerns about handling complaints that were raised in the complaints we upheld about government departments, agencies and some UK public organisations, 2015-16



Most common concerns about service that were raised in the complaints we upheld about UK government departments, their agencies and some UK public organisations, 2015-16



Our casework also shows which particular aspects of public services give rise to complaints. In 2015-16 the main reason why people complained to us about a public service was that they thought the organisation had made an incorrect decision, including where it had room for discretion. This accounted for more than a quarter of all complaints that we upheld in 2015-16. Another important reason for complaints was poor communication, which was the main factor in nearly a quarter (21%) of the complaints we upheld.

Our casework shows clearly that there is more that local organisations can do to deliver good complaint handling.

Communication

Communication was the second biggest concern across all of the complaints that we investigated (19%), and in those that were upheld or partly upheld (21%) in 2015-16.

What this tells us is that often the quality of communication between a government department and someone who uses its service falls short of what we would expect. Poor communication can in itself constitute a serious failing, or make worse an injustice where something has gone wrong. But even where no actual administrative error has been made, our casework shows us that poor communication and a lack of explanation can leave complainants distressed, frustrated or worried.

There is more that public organisations can do to communicate their decisions clearly. Furthermore, having an independent second tier for complaints, such as HMRC's Adjudicator and DWP's Independent Case Examiner, is not in itself a guarantee that concerns about communication will be resolved.

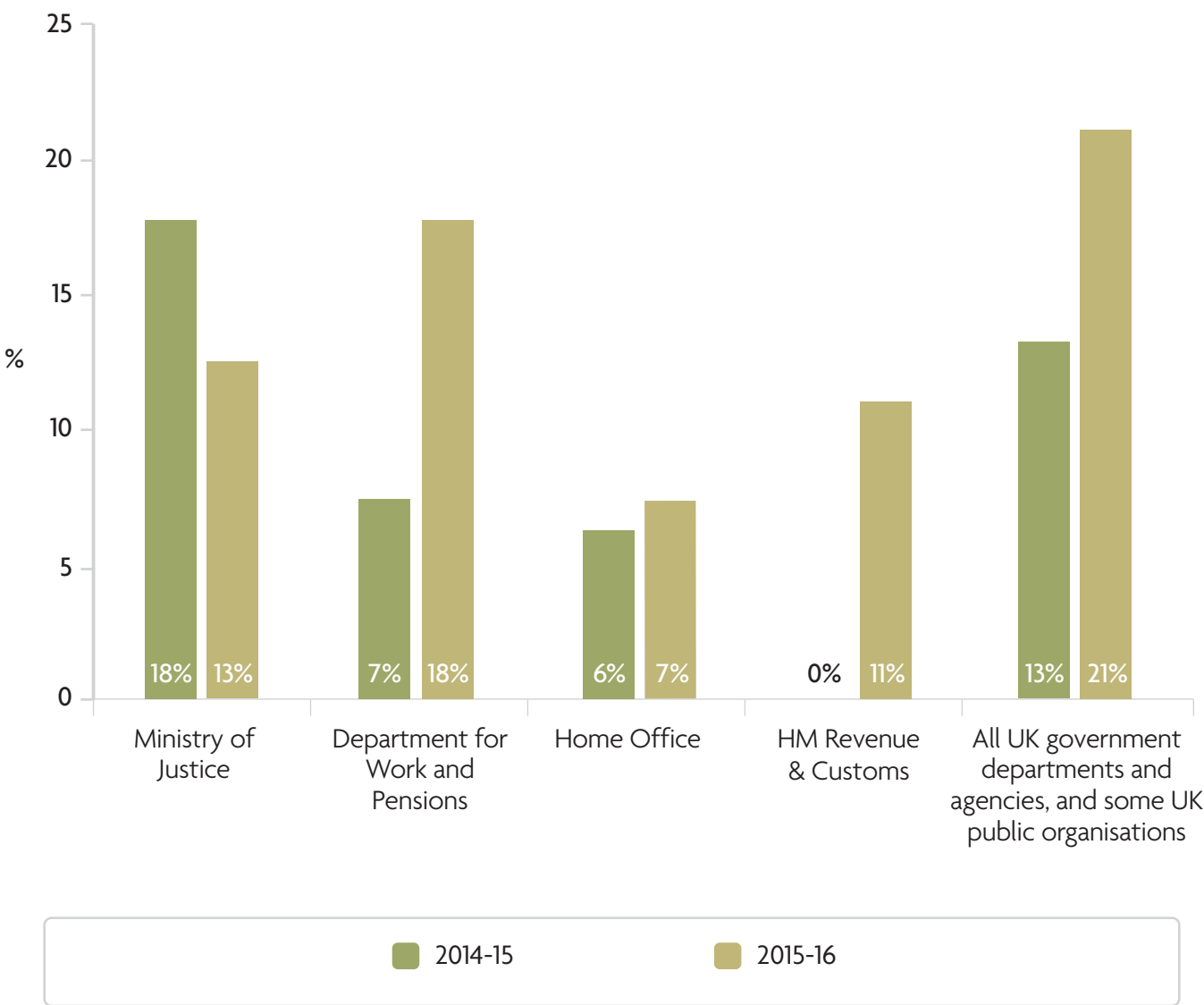
Our casework shows that while second tiers may resolve the substantial issue of the complaint, so that we do not uphold, the escalation of the complaint to us shows that complainants may not have understood how organisations have come to a decision.

Our data suggests that communication has become a greater issue of concern in our upheld investigations. In 2014-15 concerns about communication featured in 41 cases, or 13% of the complaints we upheld. In 2015-16 this proportion increased to 21%, or in 58 of the complaints that we upheld.

The increase in the relevance of communication as an issue of concern was particularly noticeable in complaints about the Ministry of Justice (from 19% to 26% of all complaints we investigated) and about the Department for Work and Pensions (from 7% to 18% of all complaints we upheld).



Communication raised as a concern in % of all upheld complaints



Case studies show us that the costs of poor communication when delivering a service can be severe, but are also avoidable. Government departments must take the time to make sure that members of the public understand what they are being asked to do and that the guidance they use is both accurate and up to date.



Case Study

Wrong visa advice stranded man for two months

What happened

Mr W had indefinite leave to enter the UK. He and his wife, a British citizen, decided to visit South America but when he tried to board the plane with a new passport to fly back to the UK, the airline would not let him board.

Visa staff at two British embassies incorrectly told them that Mr W's visa had expired, and that he needed to reapply for settlement. When he submitted a settlement application, they told him it was the wrong application and that he needed to apply for a returning resident visa, which he then did. He could then return to the UK.

Putting it right

Errors by staff caused delay and a great deal of stress and anxiety. Mr W also lost about two months' earnings because he was unable to return to the UK and go back to work immediately after his holiday, and both Mr and Mrs W struggled financially during that time.

UKVI apologised to Mr W, agreed to reimburse him £2,088 for his lost earnings and to make a consolatory payment of £1,000 in recognition of the distress and extra costs he incurred as a result of its mistakes. We partly upheld this complaint.

An airline has the right to refuse to carry a passenger if it is uncertain about their immigration status, so Mr W would have had to apply for a returning resident visa once the airline refused to let him board. However, he was misadvised several times by the visa staff at two different embassies and was mistakenly told to submit a new settlement visa.

Case Study

CPS error led to collapse of trial

What happened

In spring 2013, Ms A was verbally threatened by a man known to her (Mr R) while she was at work. According to Ms A, Mr R threatened both her, and her teenage daughter. Ms A reported the matter to the police and Mr R was arrested. However, due to an administrative error, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) failed to tell Ms A about the court hearing.

As a result, she did not attend and the CPS prosecutor offered no evidence, and the alleged offender was acquitted. Ms A complained to us about what had happened and said the CPS had failed to meet its responsibilities to her as set out in the Victims' Code.

She said she felt threatened by the alleged offender, particularly as he had been released. She said she had lost confidence in the justice system and felt she was in a worse place than if she had not reported the crime in the first place.

Putting it right

Following our investigation, the CPS paid Ms A £2,000 in recognition of the injustice she had suffered. Its error had led to no evidence being offered at the hearing.

Although we could not say what the outcome would have been if the hearing had gone ahead, we felt Ms A's uncertainty about this was a significant injustice in itself.

We also found the CPS' failure to meet its obligations under the Victims' Code meant that Ms A had been let down by the system specifically designed to protect people in her position.





Case Study

Poor communication led to thousands of pounds in lost farm income

What happened

New European Union farm subsidy rules in 2005 meant fruit, vegetable and potato farmers could apply for financial help through the Single Payment Scheme. Mr W, an organic farmer, called the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) helpline to check what code to use for a field of mixed peas and lupins. He used the information he wrote down from the call. But he had been given the wrong information. Years later RPA discovered that they had overpaid Mr W more than £15,000 because of their mistakes. From 2009 to 2012 RPA took back over £29,000 in subsidy.

Putting it right

RPA misdirected Mr W about the crop code information; we found no other accessible source of information that he could have used. It was RPA’s misdirection that led Mr W to make mistakes in his 2005 subsidy claim.

By the time RPA had given him accurate information about what he should have done, he had lost the opportunity to make valid claims based on correct codes. Recovery of the money it had overpaid him lost him the use of that money. He also had to spend more time working on his subsidy claims than he would have done if RPA had acted properly

Following our investigation the RPA reimbursed Mr W more than £15,000 that it had previously recovered and paid him over £4,000 that he should have received in 2005. It also paid interest on the money it incorrectly recovered. RPA also updated the text of its letters about overpayments so that its customers could more easily understand decisions related to recovering subsidies, including that they had a right of appeal.

Insight into selected government departments

Ministry of Justice

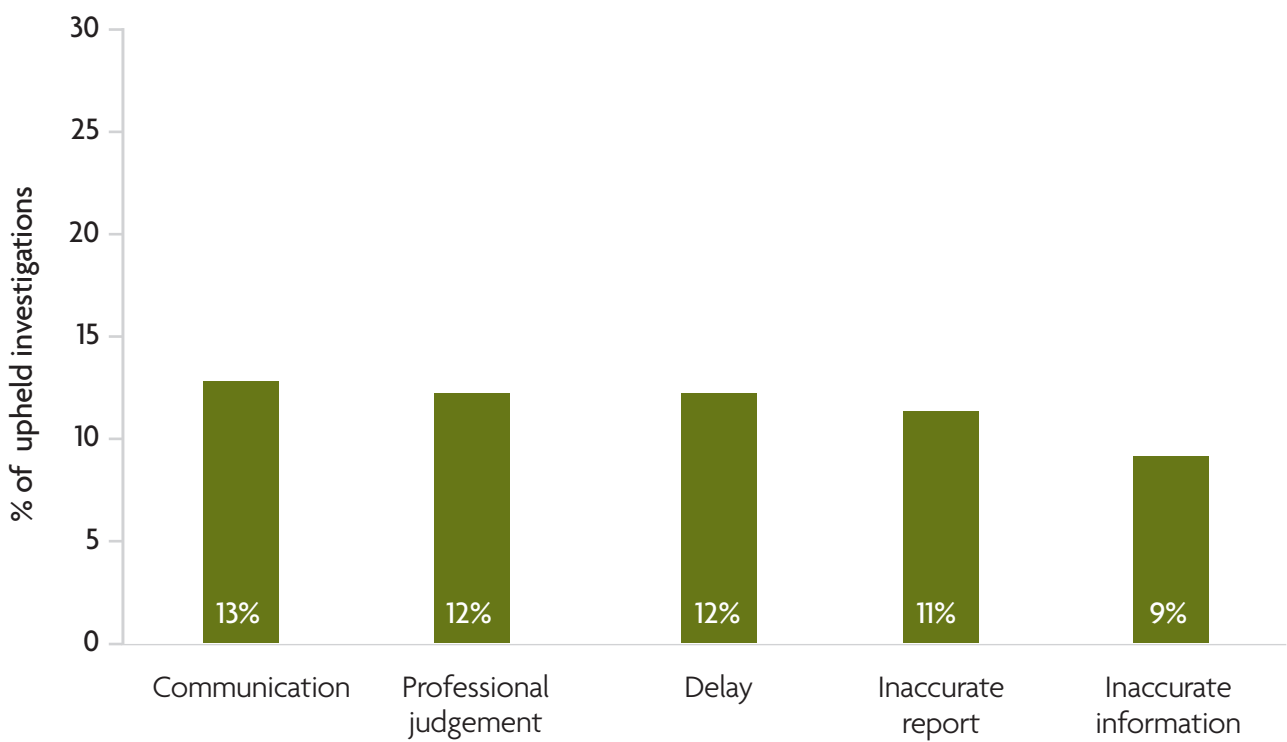
- Number of investigations dropped from 347 in 2014-15 to 214 investigations in 2015-16 in line with the overall fall in our investigations.
- We fully or partly upheld 35% of investigations.
- 2015-16: 19 upheld and 59 partly upheld complaints.
- 2014-15: 22 upheld and 85 partly upheld complaints.
- We upheld 43% of complaints about HMCTS.
- We upheld 36% of complaints about the Legal Aid Agency.
- The uphold rate for Cafcass was 37%.
- In 16% of complaints we found that the failure had already been put right.

It is important to remember that we only see a snapshot of the interactions between government departments and members of the public. However, in a number of cases that we have seen about the Ministry of Justice, complainants have had to put their lives on hold in order to try and resolve their complaint.

Delays and administrative mistakes, particularly where the case is about child custody or tribunals, have a profound impact on the wellbeing, happiness and family lives of complainants. It is imperative that when failings do happen, learning takes place at all levels of the organisation to improve and work towards a more consistent service.

Delays, especially in relation to processing court documents, were a key issue in the complaints we investigated about HMCTS. We also saw complaints about wrong and/or confusing advice being given by the courts, and we identified some poor complaint handling by HMCTS at local court level. This meant that the central team of HMCTS had to sort out issues that should have been dealt with locally.

Most common concerns about service raised in the complaints we upheld about the Ministry of Justice, 2015-16

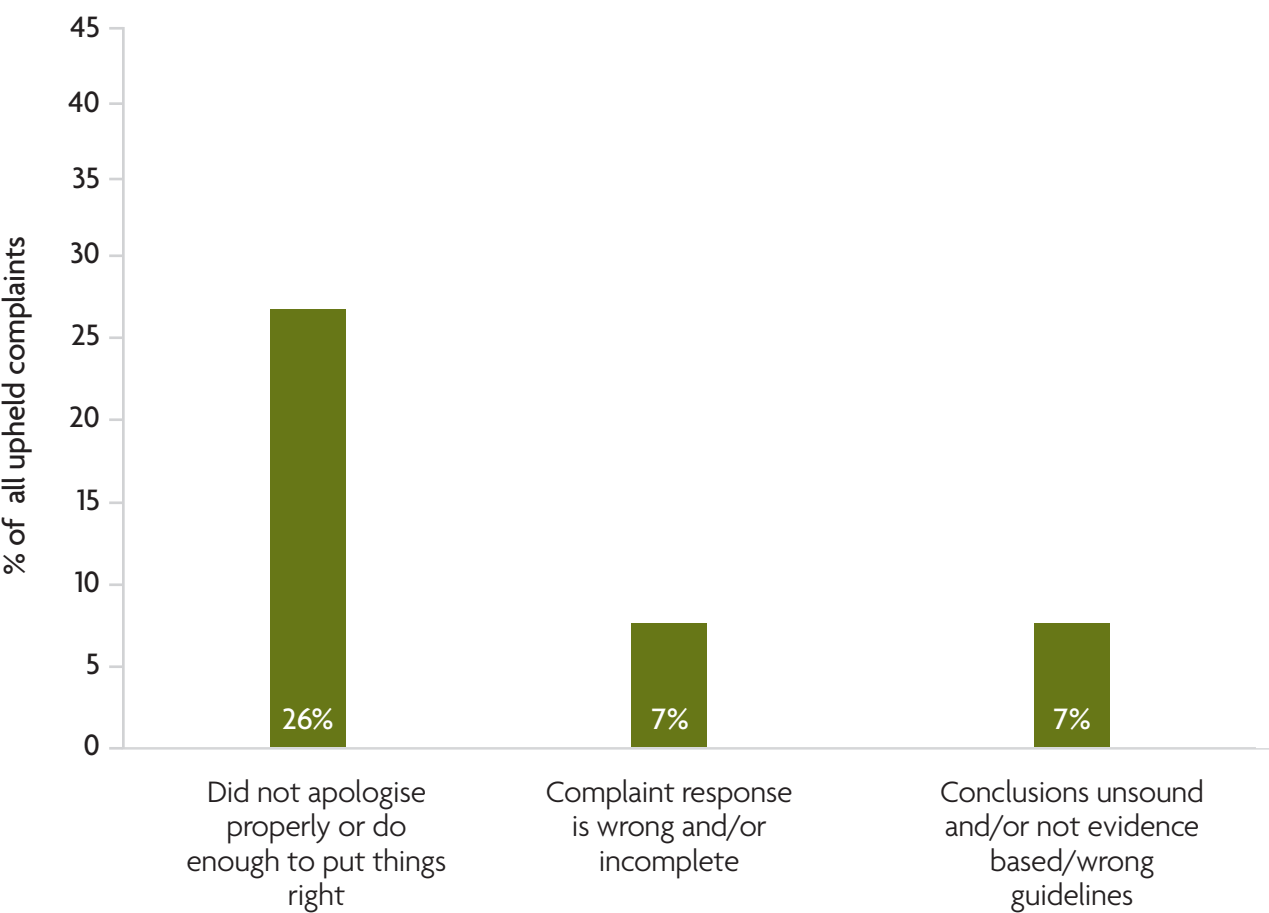


The main issues we saw in our casework about the Legal Aid Agency were delays and poor complaint handling. Our casework suggests that the Agency struggled to respond to our requests, possibly because of significant changes to their complaint handling team.

Complaints about inaccurate reports and delays were particular issues in the cases we investigated about Cafcass. Specifically, we saw several examples of where parents had complained about the quality of court reports and administration, or where repeated errors had led to considerable delays to proceedings. There were also a number of cases where Cafcass had responded poorly or not done enough to remedy complaints.

With regard to complaint handling, not apologising properly or not doing enough to put things right was the main reason for complaining in 27% of our upheld complaints about the Ministry of Justice and its agencies. This is an important process for the complainant; often, it is only after they have received an apology or the appropriate remedy that they can draw a line under what has happened.

Most commons concerns about handling complaints that were raised in the complaints we upheld about the Ministry of Justice, 2015-16



Complaints about inaccurate reports and delays were particular issues in the cases we investigated about Cafcass.



Case Study

Failure to keep information confidential led to significant distress

What happened

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) mishandled personal information it had previously agreed to keep confidential. Mrs M was involved in a court case relating to contact arrangements for her children. Because Mrs M had made allegations of domestic abuse against her former partner, she asked Cafcass to keep her current whereabouts confidential.

Cafcass agreed to do this. However, a report it later wrote to the court included information which was shared with Mrs M's former partner and which would have made it easy for him to trace her current address. When Mrs M complained to Cafcass about this, it apologised for the error. However, Mrs M did not feel Cafcass' apology went far enough given the distress she had suffered as a result of its error.

Putting it right

We partly upheld Mrs M's complaint. Cafcass apologised again to Mrs M and paid her £2,000 because of the distress she had suffered.

We were pleased that Cafcass recognised its error, but agreed with Mrs M that it had not done enough to put matters right for her. Although we found no evidence that Mrs M had come to harm as a result of this information being released, she continued to live with the prospect that this may happen in future. This was an injustice to her.

Case Study

Cafcass caused seven month delay to custody decision

What happened

Ms B said that Cafcass severely delayed court proceedings and then failed to deal with her subsequent complaint about that. Ms B said she was mentally and physically drained by the situation and incurred significant financial costs.

Ms B's ex-partner, Mr D, had applied to the court for a residence order and a prohibited steps order (PSO), preventing Ms B from removing their children from his care. The court granted the PSO. At a hearing in mid-summer 2010, the court made a number of orders including that Cafcass submit a report about the children's welfare (a section 7 report) by autumn 2010.

However, due to an office move and workload pressures, Cafcass took over six months to produce the report. It missed several deadlines and extensions. The Cafcass family court advisor (FCA) then did not attend a court hearing to answer questions about the report because she no longer worked for Cafcass.

The court criticised Cafcass for the delay it had caused, the quality of the report and the FCA's failure to attend the hearing. The court also recorded that this had caused serious financial implications for the parents, who had to pay for their own legal fees.

Putting it right

We agreed that Cafcass had caused a seven-month delay to proceedings. We thought that Cafcass' agreement to pay seven months' worth of Ms B's total legal fees was a reasonable remedy for her wasted costs.

Cafcass also complied with our recommendations and apologised to Ms B for failing to deal with her complaint properly and paid her £750 in recognition of the distress and frustration its mistakes caused her.



Department for Work and Pensions

Completed 196 investigations in 2015-16.

We fully or partly upheld 39%, up from 22% in 2014-15.

2015-16: 25 upheld and 52 partly upheld complaints.

2014-15: 21 upheld and 23 partly upheld complaints.

Many complaints are resolved by the Independent Case Examiner (ICE) before they come to us.

Incorrect decisions, policy issues in relation to the Access to Work programme and assessments are the key issues in complaints about DWP.

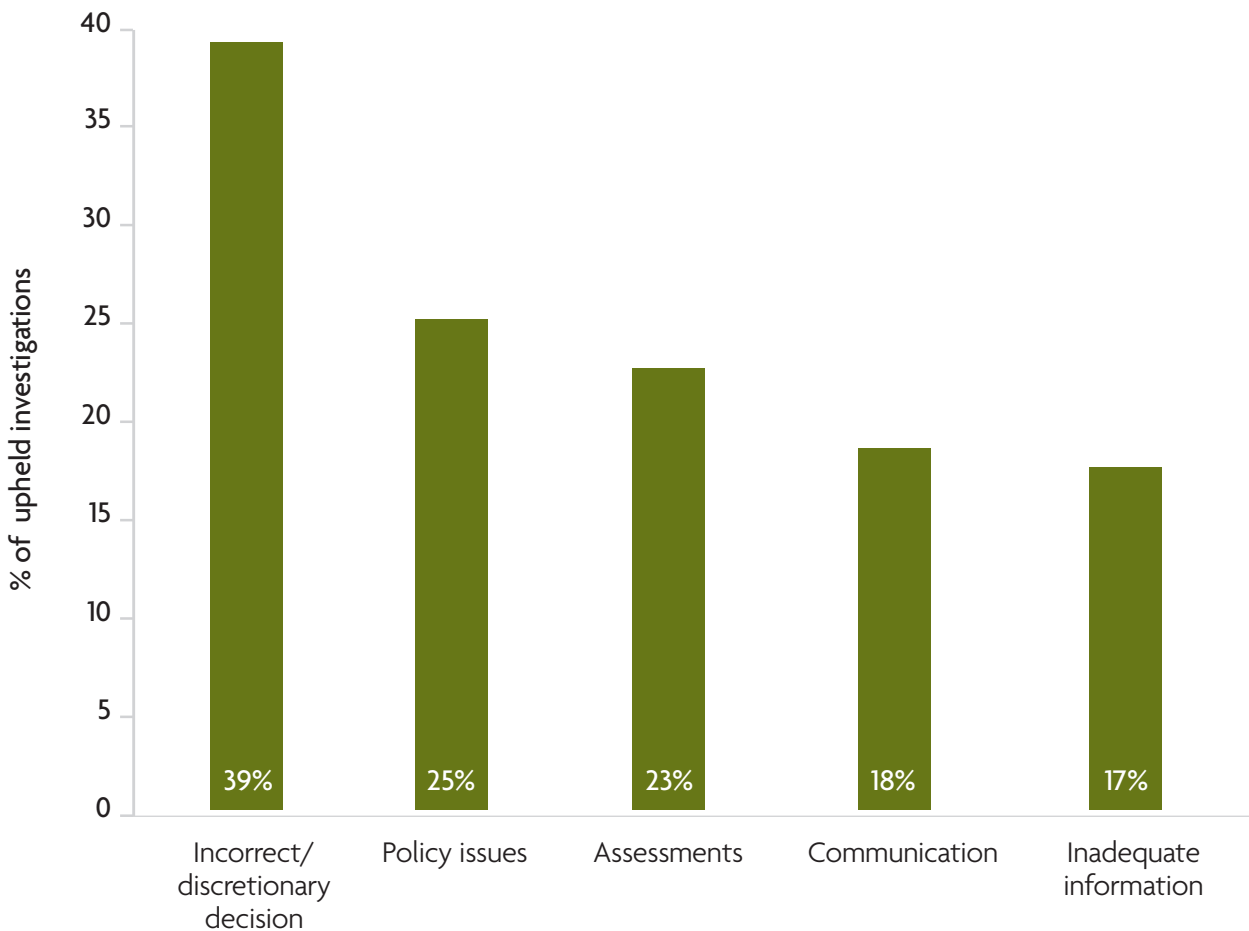
DWP continues to demonstrate leadership in encouraging learning from complaints across Whitehall.

The reason for the increase in our uphold rate in 2015-16 is that we upheld a significant number of investigations about the Access to Work programme. This programme provides people who have a disability, health or mental health condition with grants, so that they can pay for practical support to help them start working, stay in work, move into self-employment or start a business.

In our investigations we found failings in the way DWP made changes to how they consider requests for funding under the programme, which had a serious financial, professional and emotional impact on people using this support scheme.

Our casework shows that where we do uphold complaints about DWP, the most commonly cited reason for complaints in 2015-16 were incorrect decisions, including decisions where DWP had discretion. This featured in more than a third (39%) of the complaints we upheld. Policy issues (25%) and assessments (23%) feature roughly in a quarter of all complaints we upheld. All three themes relate to the investigations we upheld about DWP's Access to Work programme.

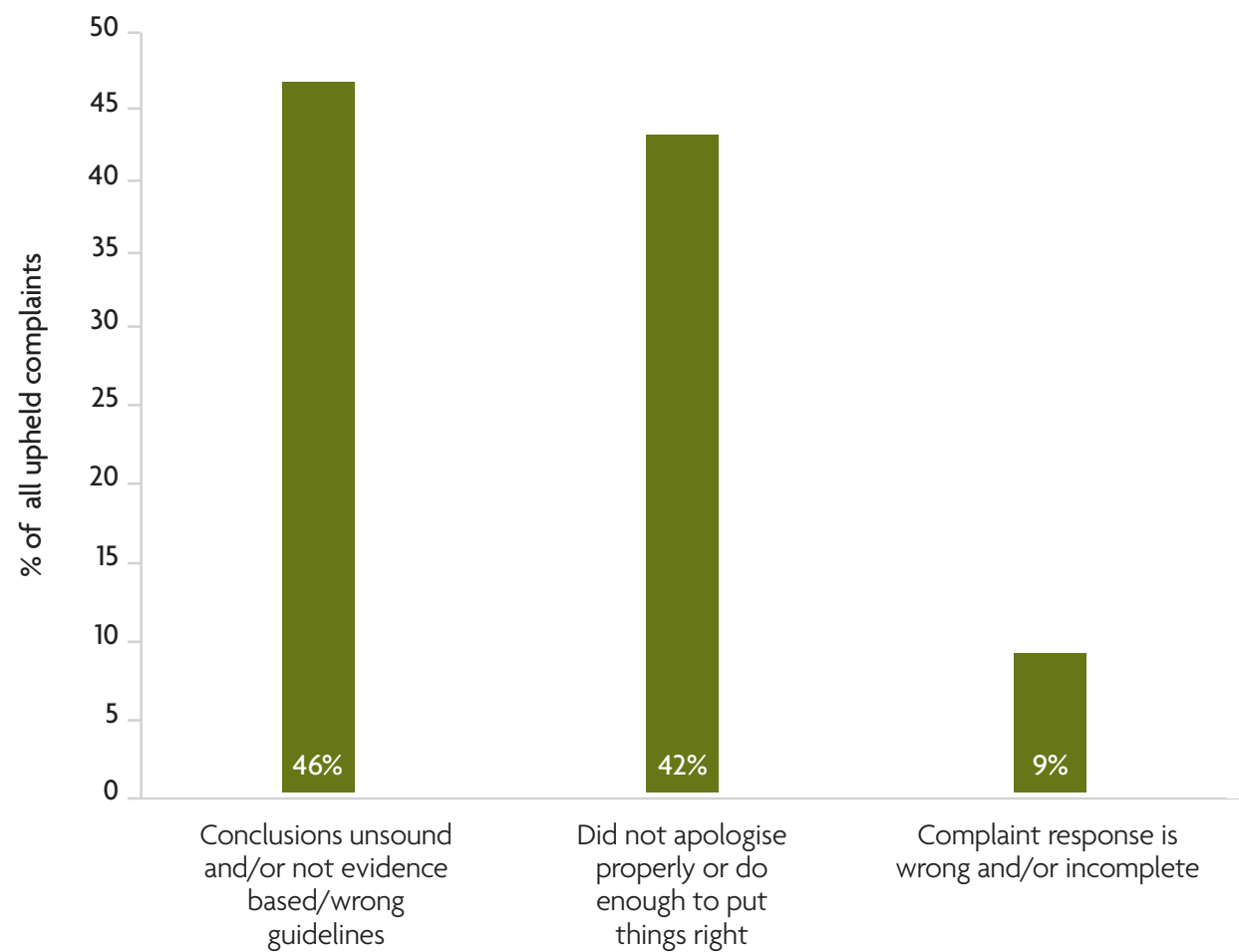
Most common concerns about service that were raised in the complaints we upheld about the Department for Work and Pensions, 2015-16



In terms of complaint handling, reaching unsound conclusions and using the wrong guidelines were the key reasons for complaining in almost half (46%) of our upheld investigations into DWP and the ICE. We upheld or partly upheld 35 cases about this issue, which shows that in a significant number of cases DWP can do more to take the opportunity to learn from mistakes.

In 32 of the cases we investigated there was a lack of a sufficient personal remedy or apology (42%). Our case studies show us that in failing to put things right, DWP prolonged the process for the complainant, making a difficult situation more stressful and requiring the complainant to do more to get the right decision or remedy.

Most commons concerns about handling complaints that were raised in the complaints we upheld about the Department for Work and Pensions, 2015-16



In 32 of the cases we investigated there was a lack of a sufficient personal remedy or apology (42%).



Case Study
Jobcentre Plus mistakes left complainant traumatised

What happened

Ms Y made a claim for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) because she was unable to work due to ill health. Ms Y filled in an ESA questionnaire before attending a capability assessment with Atos Healthcare and submitted it to Jobcentre Plus. However, when she attended the assessment, the doctor noted that he had not got the ESA questionnaire. Based on the Atos Healthcare report, Jobcentre Plus then refused her ESA claim and stopped her benefit immediately.

Ms Y appealed against that decision on the basis that the Atos Healthcare assessment had been conducted poorly. Atos Healthcare looked into Ms Y’s complaint and found that Ms Y’s assessment had not been conducted properly by its doctor. Ms Y then complained to ICE (the organisation that investigates complaints about Jobcentre Plus) and while it looked into the matter, Jobcentre Plus implemented Atos Healthcare’s recommendations and offered Ms Y a fresh assessment.

Ms Y attended the assessment with the original ESA questionnaire she had completed. At the same time, a tribunal decided not to uphold her case. Despite the tribunal’s decision, Jobcentre Plus concluded from the new assessment that Ms Y should have had ESA and incorrectly paid Ms Y arrears of over £800.

Putting it right

We upheld Ms Y’s complaint about Jobcentre Plus, and partly upheld her complaint about ICE. There were failings by both organisations and the whole process left her exhausted and she felt traumatised.

Jobcentre Plus apologised to Ms Y for its poor handling of her case and acknowledged that it had made a wrong decision by paying her ESA. Jobcentre Plus agreed not to ask Ms Y to repay the £800 that had been paid to her by mistake. ICE also apologised for not looking into all aspects of Ms Y’s complaint.

Home Office

74 completed investigations in 2015-16.

We fully or partly upheld 75%, up from 60% in 2013-14 and 69% in 2014-15

2015-16: 11 upheld and 44 partly upheld complaints

2014-15: 39 upheld and 70 partly upheld complaints.

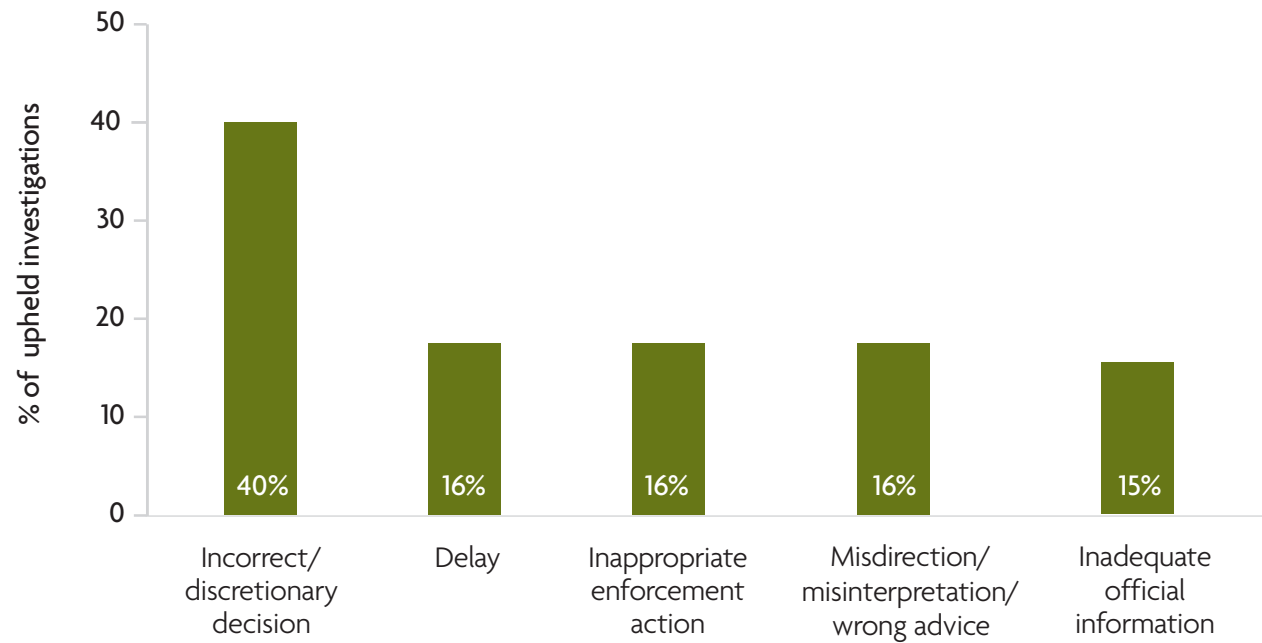
40% of all of the complaints we upheld included concerns about decisions, up from 26% in 2014-15.

The high uphold rate for complaints about the Home Office was similar across all of its immigration directorates. It is important to stress that the Home Office decides successfully on a vast number of cases every year, and that the only cases we see are about unresolved complaints. However, our casework shows clearly that there were some failings in a majority (75%) of the cases that we investigated.

The Home Office must make learning from complaints a priority. The fact that the uphold rate has increased steadily over the last three years suggest that opportunities to improve are being missed. It is important that members of the public understand how decisions have been made; we also want them to feel confident that if they complain, their concerns will be listened to fairly, acted upon appropriately, and in good time.

The fact that the uphold rate has increased steadily over the last three years suggest that opportunities to improve are being missed.

Most common concerns about service raised in the complaints we upheld about the Home Office, 2015-16



We upheld a number of cases where people had concerns about the way in which visa decisions had been made. Our case studies about UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) show that where mistakes about visa decisions were made, they were sometimes made worse by a failure to understand and deal adequately with the impact that they had on individuals and their families.

We have seen several instances of people being unfairly separated from loved ones, and suffering from severe uncertainty and financial hardship as a consequence of an incorrect decision. Financial hardship occurred, for example, because UKVI did not compensate the complainant appropriately for their suffering as a result of a loss of earnings and did not refund their court or legal fees.

In relation to the way the Home Office handles complaints, the main reason why people complained to us in 2015-16 was that they did not feel that the Home Office had done enough to put things right or apologise properly. This was the main factor in 31% of the investigations we upheld.

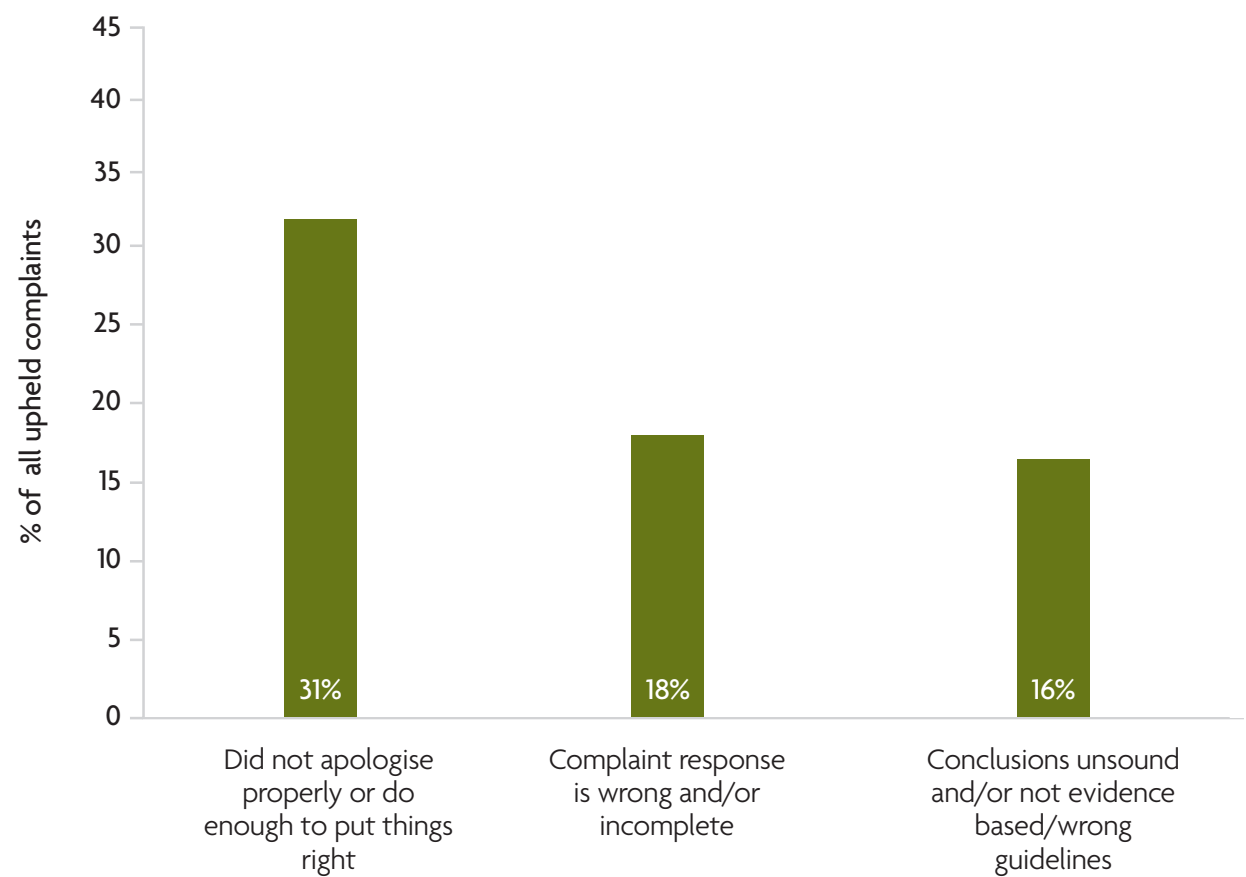
This indicates that in a significant number of cases we looked at, the Home Office had rightly identified failings but did not remedy the complaint in the right way.

This is also a concern in our cases about Border Force, where the uphold rate increased from 25% to 82% between 2013-14 and 2015-16. It is important to note that of these complaints we fully upheld only one. However, in almost all of the cases that we partly upheld (12), there were significant concerns about the handling of complaints. In a majority of these cases we found that the decision by Border Force to detain someone or to refuse them entry to the UK was properly made, but the quality of complaint handling was not good enough.

Our casework shows repeated issues such as poor communication, delay or a failure to meet timeframes, a lack of response and misplaced or lost records. Where a complaint is handled poorly it is highly unlikely that the complainant will receive an apology or the appropriate remedy.

This process can be frustrating and exhausting for members of the public. Often, those who complain simply want an acceptance that something went wrong, and to see that steps have been taken to stop the same thing from happening to someone else.

Most common concerns about handling complaints that were raised in the complaints we upheld about the Home Office, 2015-16



Case Study

UKVI did not compensate enough for hardship

What happened

Mr K came to the UK as an asylum seeker in 2002. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) refused his asylum application and in 2007 he was sent back to his home country. However, while he had been in the UK he had become a father, and in early 2010 Mr K returned to the UK illegally. He applied for permission to stay in the UK so he could keep seeing his daughter, but UKVI rejected his application and told him to leave the UK. Instead Mr K appealed against the decision.

In early 2012, a tribunal ruled Mr K could stay in the UK as being returned to his home country would breach his human rights. UKVI should have implemented the tribunal decision and without the papers to prove he could stay and work in the UK, Mr K became destitute. He was homeless and did not even have the bus fare to visit his daughter. In autumn 2012, Mr K got help from a solicitor under the legal aid scheme.

A month afterwards, UKVI dealt with Mr K's case and gave him 30 months' discretionary leave to remain in the UK, but this did not allow him to claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) while he found work. Mr K appealed against UKVI's decision. In early 2013 Mr K's solicitors told UKVI they intended to take legal action if it did not compensate Mr K for the losses he had suffered while he had waited for it to conclude his case. UKVI did not respond to that letter.

Putting it right

UKVI apologised to Mr K for the delay in implementing his tribunal appeal decision. It paid him around £2,500 for the JSA he had lost, and £1,000 for the distress and hardship its delay had caused him. UKVI should have taken the action that the tribunal told them to take in early 2012.

And, when UKVI finally did this in winter 2013, it gave Mr K the wrong type of leave so he could not apply for JSA. When UKVI considered Mr K's claim for compensation it did not deal with it properly.

Case Study

UKVI’s wrong decision left woman in her eighties stranded abroad

What happened

UKVI refused to grant a returning resident visa to a British citizen’s mother, leaving her stranded in Eastern Europe for eight weeks. Mrs P was an East European citizen who had indefinite leave to enter the UK. When she and her late husband visited Eastern Europe in 2009 he became ill and could not travel back to the UK.

After Mr P’s death in 2013, Mrs P applied to return to the UK to live with her daughter and son-in-law but her application was refused. Mrs P was severely sight impaired with a number of other diagnosed health problems. Her daughter and son-in-law were not able to remain with her in Eastern Europe and were extremely anxious about her health and welfare. Mrs P’s grandson had to go to Eastern Europe to care for her.

UKVI reviewed its decision six weeks later and revoked the refusal, granting her a returning resident visa. UKVI did not properly and fully consider Mrs P’s application at first. It should have taken into account Mrs P’s strong ties with the UK and the fact that her stay in Eastern Europe was prolonged through no fault of her own.

Putting it right

UKVI accepted our findings, apologised and paid Mrs P’s daughter, son-in-law and grandson £3,429 in respect of their additional expenses. It also made a consolatory payment of £500 to Mrs P, her daughter and son-in-law in recognition of the distress and anxiety caused.



HM Revenue & Customs

89 complaints investigated in 2015-16.

Low uphold rate of 10%.

2015-16: 2 upheld and 7 partly upheld complaints.

2014-15: 3 upheld and 11 partly upheld complaints.

HMRC and the Adjudicator continue to demonstrate clear willingness to learn from complaints.

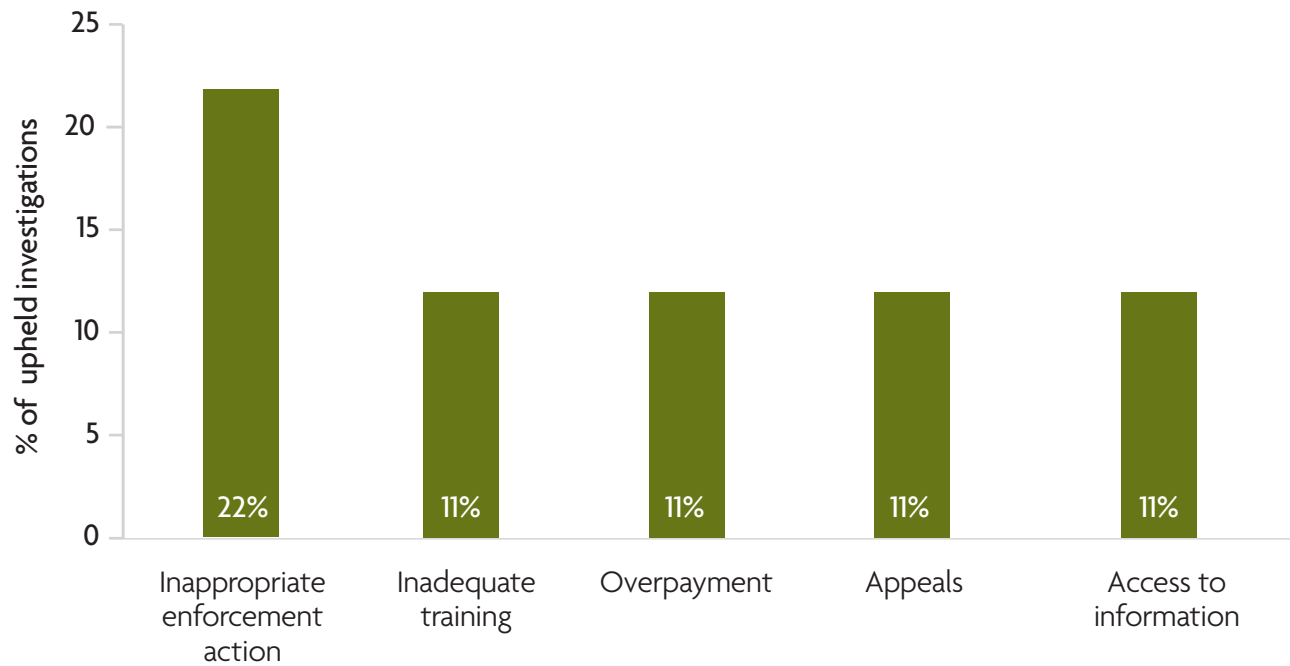
Complaints about HMRC pass through a second tier of complaint handling, the Adjudicator’s Office, before they come to us, and it is likely that as a result, a lot of the issues raised in complaints are resolved at that stage. The small number of complaints that do reach us are often where the complainant is not happy with the response that they have received.

By looking at the large number of investigations that we did not uphold, we can get an understanding of where HMRC may be doing well. A third (33%) of all complaints brought to us about HMRC that we investigated in 2015-16 included a claimed incorrect decision as a factor in the complaint.

This is mainly a result of the way HMRC applied its concessions before deciding not to waive either an overpayment of tax credits (under Code of Practice 26) or an underpayment of personal tax (under Extra Statutory Concession A19). Our casework strongly suggests that HMRC generally applied the relevant concession reasonably and correctly. It may be that members of the public have not found this process fully clear and thus, have escalated their complaint to us.

Both HMRC and the Adjudicator’s Office demonstrated that they were willing to learn from the complaints we investigated last year, including by responding positively to our recommendations. We welcome the leadership that HMRC has shown in valuing and learning from complaints not just within the department, but also across Whitehall.

Most common concerns about service raised in the complaints we upheld about HMRC, 2015-16



Both HMRC and the Adjudicator's Office demonstrated that they were willing to learn from the complaints we investigated last year

Case Study

HMRC kept giving wrong information

What happened

Incorrect information given by HMRC affected Mr J both financially and emotionally, and on every occasion, HMRC got something wrong. Mr J complained that HMRC had not handled his tax affairs correctly, which had led to an underpayment in tax and subsequent requests for repayment.

He asked HMRC to tell him how much tax he owed in spring 2011, but he did not receive a response to this request. Despite the delay in notifying Mr J of the repayment he was only given a part concession and HMRC did not explain fully why the provisions did not apply fully in his case.

Putting it right

We partly upheld this complaint. HMRC apologised to Mr J for having repeatedly given him incorrect information. It refunded just over £53 of his 2010-11 underpayment.

In addition, HMRC sent Mr J a formal notification showing his settled liability for the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 tax years. It also paid Mr J a further £100 to acknowledge the errors identified in our report and the impact these had had on him. The Adjudicator's Office apologised to Mr J for missing the opportunity to put things right for him.

Annex A: Data considerations and caveats

Using this information

It is important to recognise that our data should not be seen as a measure to rank organisations on their performance or the quality of their service. The purpose of this report is to provide statistical insight into the complaints that we receive, and to help organisations and their Boards consider what this data says about how they handle complaints and deliver public services. When interpreting the information contained within this report, it is important to consider the following caveats.

The number of complaints we receive about different government departments varies significantly, reflecting the very different nature of the work undertaken by them. Some parts of government, such as DWP, the Home Office or HMRC, deliver services for millions of people and as a result, we receive a number of complaints about them.

Other departments, such as the Cabinet Office, have a different role and more limited interaction with the public, and the number of complaints we receive about them is correspondingly small. The number of complaints we receive is also influenced by the accessibility of the complaints system; some organisations are better at explaining their complaints processes and encouraging feedback from their customers.

The level of complaints about individual departments or organisations therefore should not be looked at in isolation, as taken on its own it is not an effective measure of organisational performance. Complaints need to be seen in the context of the relevant organisation, its role and the nature of the services it delivers.

Some complaints we receive relate to more than one organisation or business area. In these cases, we count the complaint more than once. For example, if a single complaint from an individual relates to three separate organisations or business areas in a department, we count this information three times in order to get an accurate picture of what the complaint is about.

This may differ from how we report our casework in other reports, including our Annual Report, where information is reported on the basis of individual complainants. This should be considered when comparing the findings of this report to other reports we publish, including our Annual Report.

Reasons for complaints

There can be many reasons for a complaint, both in relation to the service that people experienced and the way that their complaint was handled. In addition, we update from year to year our methodology for collecting data, including in relation to the way we categorise and record the reasons why people bring their complaints to us. This means that our data on the reasons for complaints does not give a complete picture of why people may complain about public services, and that readers should be cautious in comparing this year's data to data used in previous reports.

Annex B: Complaints about UK government departments, agencies and some UK public organisations

Tables for 2015-16 and 2014-15



Figure: 1. Complaints about government departments and agencies and other public organisations in 2015-16

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Cabinet Office	16	6	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Cabinet Office	16	6	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Charity Commission	29	13	8	1	3	1	1	16.7%
Crown Estate Office	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	442	80	44	8	24	0	1	24.2%
Adjudicator to HM Land Registry	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Child Protection In Sport Unit	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Companies House	13	1	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Competition and Markets Authority	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Construction Industry Training Board	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	19	4	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Higher Education Funding Council for England	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Independent Adjudicators for Companies House	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Independent Complaints Reviewer (for the Land Registry)	11	10	6	0	6	0	0	0.0%
Insolvency Service	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Land Registry	31	5	4	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Medical Research Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Official Receiver	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Skills Funding Agency	12	7	2	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Student Loans Company Ltd	320	43	29	6	10	0	1	35.3%
Technology Strategy Board	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
UK Intellectual Property Office	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
UK NARIC	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Communities and Local Government	64	31	4	1	4	0	0	20.0%
Department for Communities and Local Government	16	5	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Homes and Communities Agency	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Leasehold Advisory Service	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Local Government Boundary Commission for England	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Planning Inspectorate	40	23	4	1	4	0	0	20.0%
Valuation Tribunal Service	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	25	7	3	0	3	0	0	0.0%
Arts Council of England	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
British Library Board	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
British Museum	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	12	4	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Gambling Commission	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Sport England	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0.0%
The Equality and Human Rights Commission****	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Department for Education	31	15	11	0	6	0	1	0.0%
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service*****	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Department for Education	19	10	8	0	4	0	1	0.0%
Education Funding Agency	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
National College for Teaching & Leadership	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of the Children's Commissioner	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Office of the Schools Adjudicator	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Equality and Human Rights Commission****	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	99	51	23	12	11	1	2	46.2%
Animal and Plant Health Agency	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Consumer Council for Water	10	2	1	0	0	1	0	0.0%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	20	8	1	0	0	0	0	N/A

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Environment Agency	36	12	4	4	5	0	0	44.4%
Natural England	14	14	12	2	2	0	2	33.3%
Rural Payments Agency	12	9	4	6	4	0	0	60.0%
The Marine Management Organisation	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for International Development	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for International Development	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Transport	469	61	25	20	13	0	1	58.8%
Civil Aviation Authority	6	2	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Department for Transport	15	4	3	7	1	0	0	87.5%
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency	338	39	18	10	9	0	1	50.0%
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	69	6	2	0	1	0	0	0.0%
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Highways Agency	6	2	1	2	0	0	0	100.0%
Highways England	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Independent Complaints Assessor	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of Rail Regulation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of the Traffic Commissioner	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Rail Passengers' Council	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Work and Pensions	1492	289	117	77	112	2	5	39.3%
Child Support Agency	305	15	8	7	3	0	0	70.0%
Civil Service Appeal Board	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Debt Management Unit	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Work and Pensions	329	15	5	13	2	0	0	86.7%
Health and Safety Executive	40	15	5	3	4	0	0	42.9%
Health Assessment Advisory Service	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Independent Case Examiner	211	182	76	21	96	0	3	17.5%
Jobcentre Plus	397	30	19	30	4	2	1	81.1%
Medical Services ATOS Healthcare***	16	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Pension Protection Fund	11	4	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Pensions Ombudsman	16	14	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	151	6	0	3	1	0	0	75.0%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
The Pensions Regulator	6	6	2	0	2	0	1	0.0%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	22	7	3	5	1	0	0	83.3%
Carillion Energy Services	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Coal Authority	5	1	1	3	0	0	0	100.0%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	16	6	2	2	1	0	0	66.7%
Department of Health	183	111	17	5	11	0	1	29.4%
Care Quality Commission	65	22	8	5	8	0	0	38.5%
Department of Health	34	16	6	0	1	0	1	0.0%
Health Education England	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Health Research Authority	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Public Health England	78	69	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Electoral Commission	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Food Standards Agency	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	40	11	6	1	4	0	1	16.7%
British Council	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	38	10	6	1	4	0	1	16.7%
Forestry Commission	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	50.0%
HM Revenue & Customs	1030	174	73	9	78	0	2	10.1%
Child Benefit Office	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Revenue & Customs	805	25	6	5	1	0	1	71.4%
National Insurance Contributions and Employer Office	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Adjudicator's Office	176	146	66	4	76	0	1	4.9%
Valuation Office Agency	33	3	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
HM Treasury	26	10	5	0	5	0	0	0.0%
Equitable Life Payment Scheme	10	5	4	0	2	0	0	0.0%
HM Treasury	15	5	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Royal Mint	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Home Office	1019	302	115	56	14	4	0	75.7%
Gangmasters Licensing Authority	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Passport Office	131	26	9	5	0	3	0	62.5%
Home Office	107	9	2	1	2	0	0	33.3%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Independent Complaints Monitor	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Police (Under Victim's Code)	13	6	4	2	0	0	0	100.0%
Security Industry Authority	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Disclosure and Barring Service	63	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
UK Border Agency	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
UK Border Force	75	37	19	14	3	0	0	82.4%
UK Immigration Enforcement	11	6	4	4	0	0	0	100.0%
UK Visas and Immigration	578	206	75	30	9	1	0	75.0%
Law Officers	29	20	6	1	3	0	0	25.0%
Crown Prosecution Service (Under Victim's Code) - Attourney General's Office	16	12	3	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Treasury Solicitor	13	8	3	0	3	0	0	0.0%
Ministry of Defence	33	11	3	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Ministry of Defence	26	5	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Veterans UK	7	6	2	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Ministry of Justice	1172	435	160	78	114	14	8	36.4%
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	244	100	55	28	36	11	2	36.4%
Civil Justice Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	15	5	2	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Cumbria Probation Trust	2	3	2	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company Limited	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Courts & Tribunals Service	452	151	47	31	37	1	1	44.3%
HM Prison Service	45	4	0	2	0	0	0	100.0%
Information Commissioner	120	57	11	2	10	0	0	16.7%
Lancashire Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Legal Aid Agency	93	32	15	8	12	1	1	36.4%
London Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Marston Group	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Ministry of Justice	19	6	1	2	0	0	0	100.0%
National Offender Management Service	36	3	1	2	1	0	0	66.7%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
National Probation Service	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Parole Board	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	N/A
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman	88	52	16	1	10	1	4	6.3%
Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The National Archives	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Office of the Public Guardian	38	17	7	1	5	0	0	16.7%
The Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Unknown Probation Trust	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
West Mercia Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Monitor	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Northern Ireland Office	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Northern Ireland Parades Commission	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)	19	9	4	2	6	0	0	25.0%
Office of Communications (OFCOM)	10	9	4	1	2	0	0	33.3%
Office of Fair Trading	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	40	8	6	1	1	0	1	33.3%
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)	7	7	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
The Supreme Court	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
UK Statistics Authority	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office for National Statistics	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Unknown Government Department*****	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Total	6404	1673	642	279	423	22	24	37.30%

- * These are complaints where we start an investigation but are able to resolve the complaint without having to formally complete the investigation.
- ** These are complaints where we end the investigation for a variety of reasons, for example, because the complainant asked us to.
- *** These organisations are not in our jurisdiction, but their actions on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions are.
- **** Sponsorship of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) transferred from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice in April 2014.
- ***** Enquiries where we are unable to determine the department or organisation concerned.

Figure: 2. Complaints about government departments and agencies and other public organisations in 2014-15

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Cabinet Office	14	3	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Boundary Commission for England	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Cabinet Office	13	2	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Charity Commission	30	5	4	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Crown Estate Office	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	403	38	22	3	18	0	0	14.3%
Adjudicator to HM Land Registry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Companies House	10	2	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Competition and Markets Authority	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Construction Industry Training Board	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	17	2	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Economic and Social Research Council	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Higher Education Funding Council for England	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Independent Complaints Reviewer (for the Land Registry)	9	6	3	0	4	0	0	0.0%
Insolvency Service	16	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Land Registry	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Official Receiver	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Ordnance Survey	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Science & Technology Facilities Council	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Skills Funding Agency	8	2	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Student Loans Company Ltd	297	14	11	3	4	0	0	42.9%
Technology Strategy Board	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
UK Intellectual Property Office	7	2	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Department for Communities and Local Government	70	23	3	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Department for Communities and Local Government	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Homes and Communities Agency	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Leasehold Advisory Service	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Local Government Boundary Commission for England	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Planning Inspectorate	49	19	3	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Valuation Tribunal Service	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	32	16	8	1	6	1	0	12.5%
Arts Council of England	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Big Lottery Fund	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
British Library Board	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Gambling Commission	5	6	4	1	3	1	0	20.0%
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
National Museum of Science and Industry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Sport England	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Equality and Human Rights Commission****	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Department for Education	24	7	4	2	2	1	0	40.0%
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service*****	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Department for Education	13	2	1	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Education Funding Agency	8	4	3	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
National College for Teaching & Leadership	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.0%
Office of the Children's Commissioner	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Equality and Human Rights Commission****	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	99	29	17	17	7	0	0	70.8%
Animal and Plant Health Agency	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Consumer Council for Water	13	3	1	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	11	1	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Drinking Water Inspectorate	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Environment Agency	36	14	7	3	0	0	0	100.0%
Natural England	17	6	5	0	3	0	0	0.0%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Rural Payments Agency	13	4	4	13	2	0	0	86.7%
The Marine Management Organisation	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Transport	383	57	29	12	20	1	0	36.4%
Civil Aviation Authority	9	4	3	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Department for Transport	10	3	2	4	0	0	0	100.0%
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency	298	35	15	3	10	1	0	21.4%
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	34	8	4	2	4	0	0	33.3%
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Highways Agency	23	6	4	1	4	0	0	20.0%
Independent Complaints Assessor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of Rail Regulation	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Office of the Traffic Commissioner	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Vehicle Certification Agency	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Department for Work and Pensions	2162	329	235	45	156	0	0	22.4%
ATS Community Employment***	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Capita Business Services Ltd***	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Child Support Agency	434	15	12	10	6	0	0	62.5%
Debt Management Unit	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department for Work and Pensions	285	13	11	2	0	0	0	100.0%
Health and Safety Executive	24	9	5	0	3	0	0	0.0%
Independent Case Examiner	303	202	145	18	137	0	0	11.6%
Independent Living Fund	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Jobcentre Plus	801	58	53	10	8	0	0	55.6%
Medical Services ATOS Healthcare***	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Pension Protection Fund	12	8	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Pensions Ombudsman	18	7	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	245	13	8	5	2	0	0	71.4%
The Pensions Regulator	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department of Energy and Climate Change	34	15	7	5	0	0	0	100.0%
Carillion Energy Services	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Coal Authority	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	100.0%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	26	9	3	1	0	0	0	100.0%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Nuclear Decommissioning Authority	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Department of Health	179	30	12	1	6	0	0	14.3%
Care Quality Commission	70	21	10	0	6	0	0	0.0%
Department of Health	35	5	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Public Health England	71	4	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Electoral Commission	8	2	1	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Food Standards Agency	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	37	6	5	0	2	0	0	0.0%
British Council	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	35	6	5	0	2	0	0	0.0%
Forestry Commission	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Revenue & Customs	1000	163	125	14	120	2	2	10.1%
Child Benefit Office	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Revenue & Customs	790	29	19	11	12	0	0	47.8%
National Insurance Contributions and Employer Office	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Adjudicator's Office	163	132	106	3	108	2	2	2.6%
Valuation Office Agency	28	2	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Treasury	30	10	3	0	3	0	0	0.0%
Equitable Life Payment Scheme	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Treasury	19	6	2	0	3	0	0	0.0%
Royal Mint	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Home Office	851	145	68	109	45	3	1	69.0%
Government Equalities Office	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
HM Passport Office	123	11	6	4	4	0	0	50.0%
Home Office	66	3	1	3	0	0	0	100.0%
Learn Direct	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner	8	3	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Police (Under Victim's Code)	8	3	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Security Industry Authority	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Disclosure and Barring Service	44	1	1	1	1	0	0	50.0%
UK Border Agency	62	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
UK Border Force	89	20	15	17	10	0	0	63.0%
UK Immigration Enforcement	16	9	4	4	5	1	0	40.0%
UK Visas and Immigration	422	94	41	79	24	2	1	74.5%
Law Officers	17	4	3	0	1	0	0	N/A
Crown Prosecution Service (Under Victim's Code) - Attorney General's Office	13	2	2	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Treasury Solicitor	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Ministry of Defence	39	4	1	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Ministry of Defence	26	1	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
Veterans UK	13	3	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Ministry of Justice	1437	465	317	107	191	40	9	30.8%
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	327	131	115	37	49	33	2	30.6%
Court Funds Office	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	15	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Cumbria Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Gloucestershire Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Greater Manchester Probation Trust	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	100.0%
HM Courts & Tribunals Service	589	146	81	36	31	2	1	51.4%
HM Prison Service	40	3	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Independent Complaints Reviewer (for The National Archives)	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Information Commissioner	149	69	52	8	55	1	0	12.5%
Legal Aid Agency	77	37	26	11	23	1	1	30.6%
Legal Services Complainants Commissioner	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Merseyside Witness Care Unit	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Ministry of Justice	33	10	3	2	2	0	0	50.0%
National Offender Management Service	46	12	9	6	6	1	1	42.9%
National Probation Service	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.0%
Parole Board	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman	97	33	18	4	16	1	2	17.4%
South Yorkshire Probation Trust	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0.0%
Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%

Organisation	Enquiries received	Complaints assessed	Complaints accepted for investigation	Investigations upheld or partly upheld	Investigations not upheld	Investigations resolved without a finding*	Investigations discontinued**	Uphold rate
Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	100.0%
The National Archives	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
The Office of the Public Guardian	37	15	6	1	3	1	1	16.7%
The Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Unknown Probation Trust	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Wales Probation Trust	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Youth Justice Board for England and Wales	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Monitor	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)	25	14	9	1	5	0	0	16.7%
Office of Communications (OFCOM)	7	5	5	1	4	0	2	14.3%
Office of Fair Trading	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)	8	5	2	0	2	0	0	0.0%
The Supreme Court	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
UK Statistics Authority	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Office for National Statistics	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Unknown Government Department*****	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	50.0%
Total	6987	1384	885	323	596	48	14	32.9%

* These are complaints where we start an investigation but are able to resolve the complaint without having to formally complete the investigation.

** These are complaints where we end the investigation for a variety of reasons, for example, because the complainant asked us to.

*** These organisations are not in our jurisdiction, but their actions on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions are.

**** Sponsorship of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) transferred from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice in April 2014.

***** Enquiries where we are unable to determine the department or organisation concerned.

If you would like this report in a different format, such as DAISY or large print, please contact us.

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Ombudsman**

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