



UK Central Government

# Complaint Standards



**Ideas about the rules government organisations should follow when they look at a complaint**



# About Complaint Standards



All government organisations must have a **policy** that says what they will do when someone makes a **complaint**.



Government organisations look after service like transport, housing, health, education and jobs.



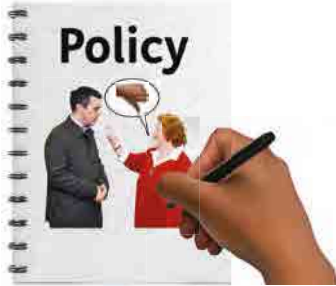
A **policy** is a list of rules. It tells staff what they must do.



A **complaint** is when you tell an organisation or service you are unhappy about something that has happened.



The **Complaint Standards** are the important things an organisations should put in their policy.



All organisation must use the Complaint Standards to help write their policy.



This means all government organisations will handle complaints in a similar way.



This booklet tells you what we think should be included in the Standards.



We would like you to read our ideas and tell us what you think. We have a questionnaire that goes with these Standards.

# What the Complaint Standards do

The Standards say how organisations will:



- learn from complaints



- make it quicker and easier for people to complain



- treat people fairly



- find out the facts



- use complaints to make services better



The Standards say how staff must:

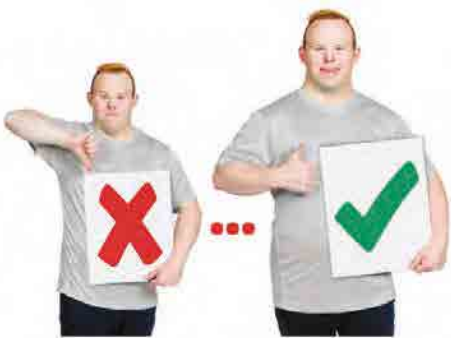
- communicate with the person who has complained



- find out what happened



- tell you what is happening to your complaint, and what to expect



- make sure the organisation learns from the complaint

# Who the Standards are for

The Standards help everyone who is involved in a complaint:



- the person who makes the complaint, and anyone who is supporting them



- the person or organisation being complained about

- the people who deal with the complaint.

# What the standard will tell organisations to do

The standard is split into 4 main areas. For each area we have looked at what should happen.

Complaint Standards	
1	~~~~~
2	~~~~~
3	~~~~~
4	~~~~~



# 1. Learning from complaints



Complaints help organisations to learn more about the experiences of people who use their services.

What we want to happen:



- organisations will understand that complaints are helpful. Complaints can help organisations to work in a better way



- senior leaders will make sure that things they learn from complaints make a difference.

For example, by writing a plan for how to make their services better.



- people who investigate complaints will get good training and support.

Investigate means:



- looking closely at what has happened and talking to people involved



- looking at the facts



- asking people who have been involved in complaints what it was like



## 2. Welcoming complaints

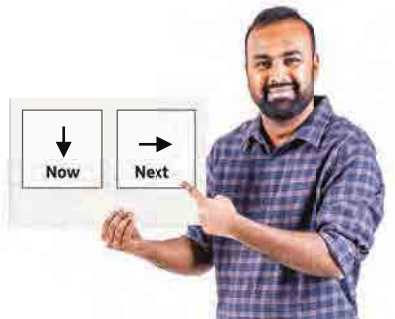
Organisations will make it quick and easy to complain. They will tell people:



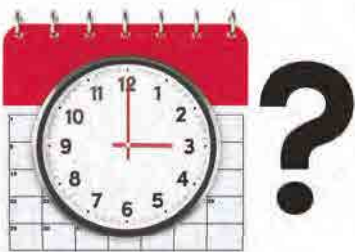
- how to complain



- who can complain



- what will happen next



- how long it will take to sort out the complaint



- how to get advice and support



People who complain will know that they will not be treated unfairly because of the complaint.



Making a complaint will be made as easy as possible. For example, by:

- making Easy Read and audio versions of information

or



- accepting complaints by phone instead of using a form



### 3. Being thorough and fair

Complaints often involve lots of different opinions and feelings. It is important to find out all the facts.

People who investigate complaints will:

- have enough training and time to do a good job



- listen to the person making the complaint



- find out about what happened, and what the person wants to happen next





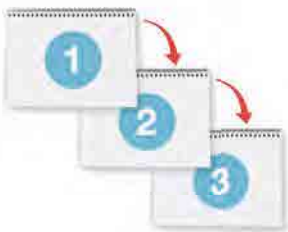
- tell the person how long it will take to investigate the complaint



The person who investigates the complaint cannot have been involved in what happened.



If a complaint is about more than 1 organisation, they will work together to find out what happened.



All organisations will have a complaints procedure.



This is about:

- how to make a complaint



- how complaints will be investigated



- what will happen, and when



- people who have been complained about will be told about what is happening. They will know where get support if they need it

## 4. Communication and making things better



Responses to complaints are shared. If something needs to be better, then this happens.



A response to a complaint is says what happened, and what will be done about it.



Responses will:

- be clear, fair, and based on facts
- show that the organisation understands how the person has been affected by what happened







- say what should have happened and how it will be put right



- say what the organisation has learned and how they will make things better



- say how they are following the law



Organisations will apologise when something has gone wrong. They will make sure it doesn't happen again.



Organisations will share their plans for how to make things better.



If the person who complained is not happy with the response, they will be told about what to do next.

For example, they could go to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.



## What happens next

We want to know what you think about our ideas for the standard.



We have a questionnaire that goes with this booklet.

Please fill in the questionnaire and send it back to us.