



Making a comment or complaint

ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS



DfC

Department
for Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk



Do you have a comment?

We welcome any comments you may have on the service you receive. Please tell the office you have been dealing with.

Do you have a complaint?

TELL US IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH:

- the quality of our service
- something we have done
- something we have not done

We want to know how we can put things right. If we have made a mistake, we want to learn from it so that we can improve our service.

WE WILL DEAL WITH YOUR COMPLAINT QUICKLY

- If you ring us, we will take the details and reply by phone, or in writing if you prefer, within 10 working days.
- If you write to us, we will acknowledge your letter within two working days of receiving it. We aim to provide a full reply within 10 working days. If this is not possible, we will keep you up to date with our progress.

How to make a complaint

STAGE ONE

The first thing you should do is contact the Officer who is dealing with your case, or the Office Manager, and give them the details. They are the best people to deal with your complaint. You will find their addresses and phone numbers on any letters they have sent you.

STAGE TWO

If you are not satisfied with their response to your complaint, you can write to the Senior Manager responsible. We will give you their name and address in the response to your original complaint.

STAGE THREE

If you feel that the Senior Manager has not settled your complaint, you can write to the Deputy Secretary.

The reply you receive from the Senior Manager will tell you who to contact.

STAGE FOUR (SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS ONLY)

If you have written to the Deputy Secretary and are still not satisfied, and you want an independent person to look into your complaint, you can phone or write to the Independent Case Examiner. The Independent Case Examiner is not part of the Department, and the service is free. For more information about the Independent Case Examiner you can visit their website: www.ind-case-exam.org.uk

OMBUDSMAN

Even though it is not part of our complaints procedure, you can pass your complaint to the Ombudsman when you have exhausted our internal complaints process.

If we are responsible for a mistake

Although we do everything we can to get things right, occasionally we get things wrong. If this happens we will:

- explain what has gone wrong
- apologise for our mistake
- take action to put things right
- consider paying you compensation if appropriate

There is more information in the 'Financial Redress for Maladministration Guide' which you can see at any of our Jobs & Benefits or Social Security offices.

Contact Details

DEPUTY SECRETARY

9th Floor
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Email: customerservice.unit@communities-ni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 9051 5100

INDEPENDENT CASE EXAMINER

PO BOX 209
Bootle L20 7WA

Tel: 0345 606 0777

Email: ice@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.ind-case-exam.org.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast BT1 6HN

Tel: 0800 343 424