

Professional Standards Department

Once your complaint has been referred to the Professional Standards Department, your complaint will be assessed and you will usually receive contact within 10 working days to let you know how they intend to progress your complaint.

Once this initial assessment has taken place, your complaint will usually be dealt with either by:

- Professional Standards Department Investigation – this is usually undertaken for the most serious complaints whereby the allegations, if proven, could justify the bringing of misconduct proceedings
- Otherwise than by investigation – your complaint will usually be referred to the Countywide Complaints Unit whereby they will complete reasonable and proportionate enquires in order to provide a response to your complaint
- No further action – you may receive this response where the Professional Standards Department do not intend to take any further action. You could receive this outcome for a number of different reasons, including that your complaint has previously been addressed, that you have received an appropriate response from the Customer Service Team or that your complaint is better addressed through another process

Throughout the Professional Standards Department complaints process you will receive an update at least every 28 days from the date you receive initial contact from them.

Contact us

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Darby House
Darby Close
Wellingborough NN8 6GS
Phone: 01604 888881
Web: www.northantspfcc.org.uk/complaints
Email: customerservice@northantspfcc.gov.uk

Right to a review

Should you feel you have not been afforded a reasonable and proportionate response to your concerns, at the bottom of your final letter you will find information on how to submit a request for a review, which must be submitted within 28 days from the date of your final response. Depending on the nature of the complaint you will either be directed to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or to the Independent Office for Police Conduct for more serious allegations.

Where the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is the relevant review body, all requests are received and assessed by the Customer Service Team.

Our role within the review process is to look at the Force's original handling of your concerns as well as the response received from the Professional Standards Department to ensure that you have been afforded a reasonable and proportionate response; that appropriate lines of enquiry have been followed and all areas of dissatisfaction have been appropriately addressed.

If the OPFCC find that that is not the case, we can make recommendations to the force, with a view to resolving the complaint to your satisfaction. We may also give suggestions on what we feel could be done to assist you. We aim to complete all reviews within 28 days, however we will be in contact should there be any delays.

Please be mindful that the Force do not have to accept our recommendations as they are just that, recommendations. They may feel something else could be done to offer resolution or they may find that they have exhausted all avenues available and decline to assist further.



Complaints about Northamptonshire Police

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has taken on responsibility for the recording of complaints, initial contact with the complainant and the service recovery of less serious complaints in order to increase transparency and oversight of the police complaints process.

This leaflet explains the complaints process and details what happens next.



Complaints

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has taken on responsibility for the recording of complaints, initial contact with the complainant and the service recovery of less serious complaints in order to increase transparency and oversight of the police complaints process.

In order to carry out these responsibilities the PFCC has set up the Customer Service Team who will review all concerns raised, discuss with you the problems you have faced and do our utmost to assist you. We appreciate that mistakes can happen and it's our role to try and get you the answers you feel may be outstanding.

It is important we let you know that, depending on the severity of the allegations raised, we may not be the right person to help you. When we assess your complaint, if we deem this requires a more formal complaint process, our role will be to record your complaint and pass it to the Professional Standards Department to undertake the appropriate steps to help you.

Any complaint received is assessed in line with the Independent Office of Police Conduct Statutory Guidance which came into force February 2020 (IOPCSG). To understand how we assess whether you are firstly eligible to raise a complaint and whether your concerns are something we can help you with, please take the time to view their guidance.



What is a complaint?

We appreciate that, when dealing with Northamptonshire Police, you may not always receive the outcome or response you were hopeful for and that this can be frustrating.

The complaints process is not always the appropriate avenue to utilise, however we will be able to offer advice about the appropriate channels available to you, including:

- The Information Commissioners Office where you remain dissatisfied with the information disclosed to you as a result of a Subject Access Request or Freedom of Information Request
- Victims Right to Review whereby you can request a review of a police decision not to charge a suspect
- Victims Right to Review for CPS charging decisions

The complaints process has been set up for situations whereby you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from Northamptonshire Police. It may be that you need a further explanation, you may wish to pass on feedback regarding your recent experience or you may have a serious allegation relating to the Force. Once you have established that you feel you do have a complaint the next thing to consider is whether you are in fact eligible to raise a complaint.

Eligibility to raise a complaint

In order to have your complaint formally recorded you must meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Independent Office for Police Conduct Statutory Guidance.

You are deemed eligible to complain if you are:

- A member of the public who was adversely affected by the matter complained about
- Someone acting on behalf of someone who was adversely affected by the matter complained about

If your complaint is about the conduct of an individual, you would be deemed eligible to complain if you:

- Claim to be the person in relation to whom the conduct took place against
- Claim to have been adversely affected by the conduct
- Claim to have witnessed the conduct
- Are acting on behalf of someone who satisfies one of the above three criteria

If you fall into any of the criteria listed above, but don't feel comfortable raising a complaint, please be aware that you can give someone else (i.e. a family member, friend or representative) permission to raise the complaint on your behalf. All we would need is written consent from you however, if this is not feasible for any reason, we will work with you to obtain your consent in the most appropriate way for you.

If you do not meet the criteria stated above, you will not be eligible to raise a complaint, however we would still encourage you to contact us as we may be able to assist you, for example, by providing an appropriate explanation or passing feedback to a line manager or department.

What happens next?

Once you have been identified as an eligible complainant the next step will be for the Customer Service Team to record your complaint which we aim to do within 2 working days. You will be provided with a unique reference number and we ask that you use this reference on all future correspondence with our department.

Where appropriate, the Customer Service Team will try to service recover your complaint. This process could include making contact with relevant departments, where applicable obtaining and reviewing Body Worn Video and the use of any other scoping options available in order to resolve your complaint. We hope to be able to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and to your satisfaction, however, should you remain dissatisfied, you do still have rights and it's important you are aware of what those are.

If you believe you have not been provided a reasonable and proportionate response; that areas of your concerns have not been appropriately addressed or if you wish to pursue the formal complaints process, you can request that your concerns be referred to the Professional Standards Department.