

Making a complaint

We try very hard to provide a good service but even in well run organisations, things can sometimes go wrong. If you are not happy with the service you receive, please tell us. We will take your complaint seriously and do all we can to help you.

However, there are some circumstances where we cannot look into your complaint. Examples of when you cannot complain to us are as follows:

You cannot complain:

- if the matter is being investigated by the police
- if it is subject to a decision by the Courts, statutory tribunal, Parole Board, Crown Prosecution Service or the Criminal Cases Review Commission
- if the incident you are complaining about happened more than 12 months ago
- if the Probation Service is no longer responsible for the matter you are complaining about.

You can complain:

- if you are, or have been, under supervision by the Probation Service or you are living in Probation accommodation
- if a Pre-Sentence Report or a Specific Sentence Report has been written about you
- if you are the victim of an offender being supervised by the Probation Service
- if an offender being supervised on a prison licence or community order causes you physical injury or distress, steals from you or damages your property whilst undertaking activities run by the Probation Service
- if you are closely related to anyone in the above categories who has died.

How to complain

Step One

Talk to the member of Probation staff or his/her manager first. If you still wish to make a complaint, please complete the attached tear-off form and return as directed. You will receive an acknowledgement letter within 10 days of your complaint being received.

Step Two

If you are unhappy with this decision or you do not wish to discuss your complaint informally, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the Assistant Chief Officer (Pre Trial Services, Performance and Planning) of the Cheshire Probation Area. Please complete the attached formal complaint form and send it to the address at the bottom of the form. If your complaint is about the Chief Officer, please send it to the Secretary of the Probation Board at the same address.

Step Three

Within five working days of receiving your form, the Assistant Chief Officer will write to you explaining how your complaint will be handled and a date when you can expect a decision.

- If you are unhappy with the decision of the Assistant Chief Officer you can appeal within 15 working days. Write to the Secretary of the Probation Board, explaining why you want to appeal
- In some cases, if you are still unhappy following an appeal, you can write to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. Further information is available from the Assistant Chief Officer.

Abuse of Complaints Procedure

Where we believe that you may have abused the Complaints procedure we may refuse to process your complaint until the abuse has been investigated by an independent senior manager. Where the senior manager believes you may be abusing the Complaints Procedure he/she will write to you to give you the opportunity to explain your side of the matter before a final decision is made.

Formal Complaint Form

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other (please specify) _____

Surname: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Telephone number: _____

Your date of birth: _____

Name of Probation staff member involved: _____

Have you spoken to this person or their manager about your complaint?

Yes No

If No, please follow Step One under the "How to complain" section.

Continues overleaf