



Information for Complainants

Help and Advice

Reference number:

Classification of Complaint:.....

Investigating Officer:

Officer's email:

Contact details:

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Information for Complainants

Complaints about the way Cumbria Constabulary work are a vital way for us to learn, show us how we can improve our service and correct any potential issues as quickly as possible. An experienced officer will work with you to resolve your complaint, whether it's explaining our processes or finding ways to improve them as a result of your experience. Below is more information on the complaints process, how to make a complaint, how we investigate complaints and how you can appeal an outcome if you need to.

Part 1

What is a complaint?

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction". Complaints are formal statements containing negative aspects of a person's direct or indirect experience with a Cumbria Constabulary officer, member of staff, contractor or volunteer. Receiving complaints is a valuable method to help us learn and improve, where an experienced officer will investigate and work with you directly to resolve the issue. Find out below what constitutes a complaint, when you should make one and the best way to do it.

Part 2

Who can I make a complaint about?

You can complain about anyone employed by Cumbria Constabulary, from police officers to members of staff. You don't have to know their name or collar number – if you can give us a detailed description of what happened we can look into it.

You can also make a complaint about the way a particular case was handled, the quality of an investigation or just Cumbria Constabulary in general.

Please note

You can make a complaint on someone else's behalf if they are under 16 and you are their legal parent or guardian; or if you have their written consent.

Part 3

What could my complaint be about?

Please make a complaint if you feel you have:

- Experienced inappropriate behavior from a Cumbria police officer, member of staff, contactor or volunteer
- Witnessed in person an incident where a Cumbria police officer, member of staff, contactor or volunteer acted inappropriately
- Been adversely affected by a Cumbria police officer, member of staff, contactor or volunteer acting inappropriately, even if you were not directly involved.

We would define inappropriate behavior as:

- Rude or aggressive
- Causing distress
- Causing inconvenience
- Causing property loss or damage
- Causing danger or risk

Part 4

How do I make a complaint?

You can make a formal complaint by either:

Completing the online complaints form at www.cumbria.police.uk

In writing:

Professional Standards Department
Cumbria Constabulary
Carleton hall
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 2AU

Phone:

Call 101 and ask for Professional Standards Department.

In person:

Visit any local police station where a senior officer on duty will talk with you.

Through other agencies**Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**

90 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6BH

0300 020 0096
www.ipcc.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Visit your local citizens' advice bureau, who can advise whether you have grounds for a complaint. www.citizensadvice.org.uk

You can also contact a solicitor or member of parliament or ask someone else to put forward your complaint. This might be a friend or neighbour, as long as they have a letter from you authorising them to do so.

Information to include in a complaint

Please include as much detail as possible in your complaint. It should include:

- What happened?
- What was done or said
- Whether there were any witnesses and their contact details
- What proof exists of any damage or injuries? For example were photographs taken or medical treatment given or advice sought?
- Your contact details.

Part 5

Investigating your complaint

Once you have made a complaint there are several possible outcomes. Sometimes a phone call from one of our experienced officers is all that's needed to clear up a misunderstanding. Other times, a complaint could lead to a change in the day-to-day working of Cumbria Constabulary. Every complaint is different, but we will follow the process below to try and find a solution that you can be satisfied with.

Part 6

What happens after I make a complaint?

When the reasons for your complaint are clear and no investigation is needed, we will update you as soon as possible with an explanation. If we need to look into your complaint in more detail, we will pass it on to our Complaints and Misconduct Manager. They will record it and contact you directly to explain the next stage.

If your complaint requires further investigation, it will be allocated to one of our skilled investigators who will contact you. They will discuss with you your specific requirements and agree a Complainant Service Agreement with you. This ensures that we respond to your needs and update you regarding your complaint in a timely and responsive manner.

If you make a complaint to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) about Cumbria Constabulary, they will forward it to us. We will then look into it in the same way as above.

Part 7

What happens after my complaint is recorded?

After recording your complaint, our Complaints and Misconduct Manager will assess its nature and seriousness.

They will then allocate a person who isn't connected to your complaint to look into it. They will get in touch with you directly to clarify any missing details and answer any questions you may have. Based on your conversation, they will work with you to agree an action plan and an agreed "Complainant Service Agreement". Some complaints we receive must be forwarded to the IPCC. The IPCC oversee the police complaints system in England and Wales and sets the standards by which the police should handle complaints. Examples include action (or lack of action) that led to a person's death or serious injury, serious assault, serious sexual offence, or serious corruption.

Part 8

How will my complaint be resolved?

We may talk to you about the local resolution of your complaint. This involves working with you at a local level to understand your concerns and provide an agreed outcome to your complaint.

In this instance, a police or staff manager at your nearest police station may manage your complaint. They will liaise with you and the officers or staff featured in your complaint.

For more serious complaints, where disciplinary action or even criminal proceedings could be involved, a Complaints and Misconduct Investigator will handle your complaint. They will keep you informed as the investigation progresses, with agreed updates as part of your "Complainant Service Agreement".

Part 9

Outcomes and Right of appeal

Our experienced officers will work with you to try and resolve your complaint, but if you can't agree on an outcome, the next sections will explain to you what happens at the end of the process and how to appeal the outcome if you need to.

Part 10

What outcome can I expect from my complaint?

The outcome to your complaint will be based on what you have agreed with the Complaints and Misconduct Manager, Complaints and Misconduct Investigator or local resolution team.

In the case of local resolution, a member of Cumbria police or staff could provide you with an explanation, offer an apology and identify learning to prevent the same thing happening again in the future.

For any outcome, we will provide a summary of what we did, what we found and how we reached our conclusions. We will also include:

- Whether your complaint was upheld
- Whether we found any of our officers or staff to be unprofessional
- Any learning opportunities resulting from your complaint
- Any action taken against our officers or staff.

Finally we will let you know any follow- on actions, such as:

- Improvement or changes to our procedures
- Giving formal advice to improve individuals performance
- A referral to the Crown Prosecution Service for criminal charges
- Formal misconduct proceedings, which could lead to dismissal

Part 11

What is an appeal?

An appeal is a review of how the investigation into your complaint was completed. Where we do accept an appeal for review, we don't reinvestigate the complaint itself. Following a review, we will always let you know if the appeal has been upheld or not.

Part 12

How do I appeal the outcome of a complaint?

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you might be able to appeal. At the end of our investigation we will let you know how to submit an appeal and the deadline for submission.

The Professional Standards Department deals with all aspects that relate to:

- Complaints which have been dealt with under local resolution
- Complaints which haven't resulted in formal misconduct or criminal proceedings.

The IPCC deals with appeals about:

- Our failure to record a complaint
- The outcome of a local or supervised investigation.

Part 13

Other Agencies/ Support

CUMBRIA TOGETHER

Cumbria Together is a website that provides an information portal bringing together services and information about what is available for those affected by crime irrespective of whether the crime has been reported or not. The Cumbria Together website can be searched via geographical area, crime type or directory and links can be made directly to agency websites. A dedicated section is available for children/young people and there is a multi-lingual facility. <http://www.cumbriatogether.com>

VICTIM SUPPORT

We give emotional and practical help to people who have been affected by crime in Cumbria and can advocate on their behalf.

You can contact us for support regardless of whether you've contacted the police, and no matter how long ago the crime took place. We'll help you for as long as it takes to overcome the impact of crime.

Our support is free, confidential and we can support all victims of crime.

<http://www.cumbriatogether.com/directory/victim-support-cumbria/>

Citizens Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Part 14

Check List

Have we

- Given you help and advice?
- Explained the process of making a complaint?
- Provided you with written details of the name and contact details of the investigator dealing with your case?
- Provided you with your unique reference number
- Explained what further contact you should expect – when – how, frequency and who by?
- Established a “Complainants Contract Agreement” with you?

Part 15

How did we do?

In Cumbria we want to do our best for you. Your feedback helps to shape the Cumbria Constabulary, so whether you would like to say thank you, make a complaint, or make a suggestion, we would like to hear from you.

We would welcome your feedback on the way we provide our service to you, we believe it is essential that you have confidence in the police and are satisfied with the advice we give you. With this in mind, we would like to hear from you. How did we do?

You can do this by using any of the methods below:

You can contact Cumbria Constabulary

By Phone: call 101

In person: at your local police station

Letter to:

Professional Standards Department

Police Headquarters,

Carleton Hall,

Penrith,

Cumbria CA10 2AU

Part 16

This is for your use

Please use this page to keep a record of any additional thoughts you may have.

For example:

- Anything you have remembered and wish to bring to our attention with regard to the complaint
- Anyone who has given you information about your complaint
- Any questions you may have for us.

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