

# Making a Complaint against the Police

## Complaints about the Police

Anyone can make a police complaint. You need not be a victim as such of police misconduct. You might, for example, have been a witness to an incident, which you feel should be the subject of a complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with your treatment by the police, the first thing to do is to get as many details as possible about the officer(s) who dealt with you: their names, numbers, car number and so on, as well as details of any witnesses. Such information will be important. Write down what happened as soon as you can; again this will help later.

Before making a complaint you should consider the following points:

- Complaints should be made within one year of the incident. Do not allow yourself to be pressurised by the police or anyone else into making your complaint on the spot and seek advice if you are worried about it.
- Your complaint must be about a particular officer or officers, not about general police practice or policy. This is why it is important to try to identify the officer involved.
- If you have a general complaint concerning policing practice, you should raise the matter with your MP and the Home Office. Complaints about local policing policy can be taken up through your Police Authority, or Greater London Authority for the police in London.

Before making your complaint against the police, it is a good idea to get advice from a solicitor, Law Centre or Citizens' Advice Bureau, particularly if you are also considering a civil action against the police.

If you do not have much money, you should consult a solicitor who offers Community Legal Service advice. This advice will be free, or virtually free, depending on your income and savings.

## Useful contacts:

**Community Legal Service helpline** (for details of solicitors and advisors in your local area)  
Tel: 0845 608 1122

**Law Centres Federation**  
18-19 Warren Street  
London W1P 5DB Tel: 0207 387 8570

**The Independent Police Complaints Commission**  
90 High Holborn,  
London WC1V 6BH Tel: 08453 002002 (Local rate)  
[www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk)