

# Complaints Policy

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	<p><i>A substantial consultation took place with the Trade Unions. Written feedback was provided and a meeting held in January 2016.</i></p> <p><i>The policy and procedures were sent to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman and some suggestions sent back.</i></p> <p><i>Managers throughout the organisation were consulted.</i></p>
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## Alternative Formats

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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## **1. Rationale**

PBNI is an effective and efficient organisation that works with all communities and aims to provide a high quality service to all. This policy is in place to ensure that external complaints are dealt with in a consistent, fair and transparent manner and that the organisation learns any relevant lessons from them. Complaints are a valuable source of feedback for PBNI; they provide an audit trail and can be an early warning of failures in service delivery. When handled well, complaints provide an opportunity to improve our service and reputation.

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities, and/or as a result of any statutory or legal obligations placed on PBNI.

Any anonymous or informal complaints received by PBNI which require a response but for which no form of address is sought will be treated as a concern rather than a complaint under this policy and procedure. This can be a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about PBNI or its staff not explicitly expressed as a complaint. In some cases it may not be possible to identify the person raising the concern.

## **2. Aim**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is a fair and effective process in place for the receipt, recording, investigating and response to external complaints.

## **3. Objectives**

- a) To ensure there is clear governance arrangements in place which set out roles and responsibilities of staff and ensure lessons are learnt and disseminated to staff.
- b) To ensure PBNI deal with complaints promptly, professionally and sensitively, bearing in mind the needs and individual circumstances of complainants.
- c) To ensure a range of PBNI staff are trained and empowered to act decisively to resolve complaints.
- d) To ensure both the Complainant and the person being complained of are kept up to date and informed of progress and the outcome of the complaints process.
- e) To build confidence internally and externally in PBNI's complaints handling process.

## **4. Programmes and Projects**

PBNI Complaints Procedures are in place.

## **5. Resources**

There is a need for training to be carried out of Investigating Officers which may incur a cost.

## **6. Communications and Training**

All Probation staff will be trained on complaints handling through a mandatory e-learning course. There will be specific training provided for all staff who may act as Investigating Officers.

### **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will also be kept under review to ensure it is in keeping with current legislation and good practice.

### **8. Review**

This policy will be reviewed four years from the date of approval. Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, and or identified changes in practice.

### **9. Non compliance**

Breach of the Board's Policy by employees may merit consideration under the Board's Disciplinary Policy.