

General Warning

The purpose of this fact sheet is to give general introductory information about the complaints process. It does not contain legal advice.

WARNING: Alternative legal action should be considered before making a complaint. What is included in a complaint may be relevant to any current or future legal proceedings. If you are involved in legal action you should immediately see a lawyer and not proceed with a complaint.

If you (or the complainant, if you are complaining on their behalf) want financial compensation, support or money you should see a lawyer before making a complaint.

General complaint information

Complaints are rarely about just one thing. When you have a problem, it may be that a number of things have gone wrong. Below are some of the common areas where issues may arise that could lead to a complaint.

Discrimination	Disability and NDIS services	Policing, Custody and Detention
Seniors and Aged Care supports and services	Consumer and Business disputes	Phone and Internet services
Banking, Insurance and Superannuation	Energy and Water services	Housing and Real Estate
Health Care services	Employment issues	Education and Training providers
Government Agencies and Departments	Child Safety and Protection	State Fines and Debts
Corruption	Privacy and Access to Information	Media and Publications

There are different complaint bodies to handle different types of complaints. You should consider the different pathways available to decide the most appropriate pathway for your circumstances. One event could lead to multiple complaints. That means you may need to lodge more than one complaint to have all of your concerns addressed.

[The online triage tool on this website can help you to identify the different complaint bodies that may be able to assist you.]

It is usually quickest and easiest to try to resolve a complaint directly with the person or body you are having a problem with. Many complaint handling bodies will not act on a complaint unless you have tried to resolve your complaint directly. If you do not feel it is safe or appropriate to complain directly, you should contact the relevant complaint body to discuss your situation.

Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints that about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis of: race; sex; gender; disability; age; sexuality;

relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

WARNING: The state and federal bodies that handle discrimination complaints have different rules, including time limits. You can make a complaint to both the state and federal complaint bodies, but they may decide not to address your concerns if you have already complained elsewhere. For example, if you have already lodged a discrimination complaint to anti-discrimination NSW, it is likely that Australian Human Rights Commission will decide not to act on your complaint. Please carefully review the discrimination factsheets for information about your options before making a discrimination complaint.

Western Australia Police Force — Employee Misconduct Complaints / Police Conduct Investigation Unit

This factsheet explains how you can make a complaint about WA Police Force employee misconduct or poor WA Police service delivery.

The Police Conduct Investigation Unit ('**PCIU**') is part of WA Police. It records, assesses, allocates and monitors complaints or incidents that may require internal investigation.

Some issues may also involve other pathways. The Corruption and Crime Commission can receive reports about WA Police misconduct, including corruption and serious misconduct. Ombudsman WA may be relevant if your issue is about police administration. If your complaint involves discrimination or harassment, the Equal Opportunity Commission WA and the Australian Human Rights Commission may also be relevant.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation and Policy Documents:

- [Police Act 1892](#)
- [Police Force Regulations 1979](#)
- [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [WA Police Code of Conduct](#)
- [Western Australian Public Sector Code of Ethics](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003](#)
- [Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003](#)
- [Fraud and Corruption Control Plan and Policy 2022-2025](#)
- [Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971](#)

Key terms:

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction where a response or resolution is wanted, expected or required.

Complainant: A person who has made a complaint.

Disciplinary action: Internal action that may be taken if a disciplinary offence is determined. Possible outcomes can include caution, reprimand, fine, demotion, salary reduction, suspension, discharge or dismissal. This is not necessarily a personal remedy for you.

Formal investigation: A more serious internal complaint process. WA Police says formal investigations are undertaken by appointed investigators who may take statements, call witnesses and gather relevant evidence.

Police administration: Administrative decision-making or service action by WA Police. Ombudsman WA may be relevant where your issue is about police administration, rather than officer misconduct.

Police misconduct: Misconduct by a WA Police Force member, Police Department employee, or seconded person performing Police Department functions or duties. It also includes reviewable police action.

Police personnel: A plain-English umbrella term used in this factsheet to refer to WA Police officers, WA Police employees, and people seconded to perform Police Department functions or duties.

Respondent: The person you are complaining about. For this factsheet, the respondent should be a WA Police officer, WA Police employee, or person seconded to perform Police Department functions or duties.

Reviewable police action: Action by WA Police personnel that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory, taken for an improper purpose, based on irrelevant grounds or considerations, or where reasons should have been given but were not.

Seconded person: A person seconded to perform functions, services or duties for the Police Department. This category is included in the statutory definition of police misconduct.

Serious misconduct: Under the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 (WA), serious misconduct includes police misconduct.

Unprofessional conduct: Conduct by WA Police personnel that falls short of expected professional standards. WA Police uses this language in its complaint process and says complaints of serious unprofessional conduct may be dealt with by formal investigation.

WA Police employee / employee of the Police Department: A person employed by the Police Department. This can include non-sworn WA Police personnel. The statutory definition of police misconduct includes misconduct by an employee of the Police Department.

Step 1: What type of Complaints can be made to this body?

The PCIU handles complaints regarding poor experiences with WA Police or reports regarding the actions or behaviour of our employees. This may include:

Sub-category	Example
Service dissatisfaction or poor WA Police service delivery	You should make a complaint if you are unhappy with a WA Police service you received, or with how WA Police staff handled your request for help. This can include poor communication, failure to respond, delay, or poor handling of a non-urgent police service. This pathway is not for emergencies, new crime reports, or requests for police to attend an incident now. <i>Examples:</i> <i>Tito called police several times about repeated late-night parties next door. The issue was no longer urgent, but no one from the local station followed up or explained what was happening. Tito wants to complain about the lack of response and communication.</i> <i>Priya reported property damage to her local police station and was told she would receive an update. Weeks later, she had received no contact and was told there was no record of the follow-up she had been promised. Priya wants to complain about how her matter was handled.</i> <i>Daniel attended a police station to ask about the progress of a non-urgent report. The staff member spoke to him aggressively, refused to check the file, and told him to leave without explaining what he could do next. Daniel wants to complain about the service he received.</i>
Unprofessional, unlawful, unreasonable or discriminatory conduct by WA Police personnel	You should make a complaint if a WA Police officer or employee behaved in a way that appeared improper, unlawful, unreasonable, unfair, oppressive, discriminatory or abusive. This can include excessive force, unlawful arrest, unreasonable use of police powers, disrespectful treatment, or discriminatory comments or conduct. <i>Examples:</i> <i>Omar was stopped for a breath test. During the stop, an officer grabbed him around the neck and pulled him from the car, even though Omar was confused and trying to comply. Omar wants to complain about the officer's use of force.</i> <i>Amanda was filming police speaking to another person in a public place. An officer handcuffed her, took her to the station, and did not explain any lawful reason for the arrest. Amanda wants to complain about the officer's conduct and use of police powers.</i> <i>Nico was searched by police during a street stop. During the search, one officer made racist comments about Nico's background and laughed when Nico asked why he had been</i>

	<i>stopped. Nico wants to complain about discriminatory and disrespectful police conduct.</i> <i>Sammie was held in police custody and repeatedly told officers he needed insulin. His requests were ignored for several hours until he became seriously unwell. Sammie wants to complain about how police treated him while he was in custody.</i>
Integrity, corruption, misuse of confidential information or misuse of police position	You should make a complaint if you believe a WA Police officer or employee misused police information, a police database, police powers, or their position. This can include disclosing confidential information, accessing police systems for a personal reason, acting dishonestly, or using police authority to benefit themselves or someone else, or to disadvantage another person. <i>Examples:</i> <i>Leila found out that a police officer accessed her address from a police database and then used that information to contact her socially. Leila wants to complain about misuse of police information.</i> <i>Ben was a witness in a criminal matter. He later learned that details from his police statement had been shared with someone connected to the suspect. Ben wants to complain about confidential information being disclosed.</i> <i>Maya owns a small bar. After she refused to give a police officer's relative a job, the officer repeatedly parked a breath-testing unit outside her business without any clear policing reason. Maya wants to complain that the officer misused their position to punish her business.</i> <i>Grace saw a police officer take a payment from a business owner after promising to "make a problem go away". Grace wants to report suspected corrupt conduct by a WA Police officer.</i>

Step 2: What is the Jurisdiction of the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
State	This body has powers to hear complaints under the law of Western Australia
Geographical Scope	This pathway is a Western Australia Police Force pathway. It is most likely to apply where the conduct involved WA Police personnel, a WA Police service, or police action connected to Western Australia.
Time Limitations	There is no time limit for complaining about police, but it is usually best if you make your complaint as soon as possible. It is important to note that if your complaint relates to police administration and you decide to refer it to the Ombudsman WA, the Ombudsman WA may refuse to investigate the complaint if it is more than 12 months old unless there are 'special circumstances'.

Exclusions	• Jurisdiction: This pathway is not for emergencies, immediate police attendance, new crime reports, or reporting criminal activity anonymously. Those matters use separate WA Police or Crime Stoppers channels. • Police administration: If your issue is mainly about police administration, such as a delay or decision-making practice in providing services, Ombudsman WA may be a separate pathway. This is not the same as a police misconduct complaint. • CCC: Serious misconduct, corruption, misuse of information, excessive force, unlawful arrest and other police misconduct may also be relevant to the Corruption and Crime Commission.
Exercise of discretion	The process used for your complaint usually depends on the nature of the unprofessional conduct and the issues involved. Complaints of serious unprofessional conduct may be handled by formal investigation.

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
WA Police officers	A WA Police officer is a member of the WA Police Force. You can complain about their conduct if your concern is about a WA Police service, police powers, professional standards, integrity, misconduct, or reviewable police action.
WA Police employees	This includes employees of the Police Department. You can complain where the issue is about their conduct, professional standards, service delivery, integrity, or possible misconduct connected to WA Police functions.
People seconded to perform WA Police / Police Department functions	This means someone who is not ordinarily a WA Police employee but has been seconded to perform functions, services or duties for the Police Department. They may fall within the police misconduct framework while performing those functions.
Exclusions	This pathway should not be used for complaints about people who are not WA Police officers, WA Police employees, or people performing WA Police / Police Department functions. For example, complaints about Australian Federal Police, private security, courts, prisons, local councils, or private businesses need a different pathway.

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	Anyone who has received a service from WA Police, or has experienced misconduct, can make a complaint.

Pre-requisite steps	There are no specific steps that must be completed before making a complaint. However, for less serious complaints (e.g. an officer being rude to you at your local police station), it may be more efficient to first raise the issue directly with your local police station. If you still cannot resolve the issue, you can lodge a complaint with the PCIU.
Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?	Yes. You can make a complaint on behalf of another person, if that person cannot lodge the complaint online, via the phone, via email or in writing themselves.
Assistance	Help is available if you need support to lodge your complaint. This can include help filling in a form or arranging an accredited interpreter in the language you are most comfortable with.
Additional information you need to know	If your complaint relates to an offence you have been charged with, get legal advice about whether to complain now or wait until the court case has finished.

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
Service correction or improvement	Your complaint may help WA Police identify and correct staff or service delivery deficiencies. This can improve service delivery, but it is not a guaranteed personal remedy for you.
Formal investigation outcome	Serious unprofessional conduct may be dealt with by formal investigation. Appointed investigators may take statements, call witnesses and gather relevant evidence before the outcome is decided.
Disciplinary action against a WA Police officer or certain police personnel	If a disciplinary offence is determined under the Police Act 1892 (WA), possible internal outcomes can include a caution, reprimand, fine, demotion, salary reduction, suspension, discharge or dismissal. These outcomes are about the officer or employee. They may not give you a personal remedy.
eg. Report to CCC review or examination of complaint matters	Investigation files and complaint matters may be subject to further review or examination by the Corruption and Crime Commission. This is an oversight outcome, not a personal remedy from WA Police.

Step 6: Preparing your complaint. What should it include?

Requirement	Description
Format	You can lodge the complaint using the WA Police Force employee misconduct online form, email, phone or a local police station. If you use the online form, it guides you through separate sections.

Personal Details	You need to provide your full name, residential address, and preferred contact method (email or phone). You can choose to remain anonymous however your report may not be actioned.
WA Police employee(s) details	Include as much information as known to you about the WA Police employee(s), including their name, rank, badge number, police station or general description.
Relevant Facts	Provide as much information about your complaint as possible. This may include such things as when and where the incident occurred, the names of the officers concerned, the details of witnesses, documents and other evidence that supports or provides evidence of the complaint. You may or may not also be asked to provide a written statement or participate in a recorded interview.
What NOT to include	Making a false complaint or creating a false belief may be an offence under the Criminal Code or the Corruption and Crime Commission Act.
Additional information you need to know	If you have been hurt, you should: • See a doctor straight away. You may need to get a medical report.; • Get someone to take photographs of your injuries.; • Write down as much as you can about who hurt you including their name, badge number, rank and the police station where they work.; • Write down the name of the last person to see you before you were hurt and the first person to see you afterwards. Ask them to write their own notes as soon as possible.

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	Misconduct complaints to the PCIU can be made: • Online: by using the online form here. • Via email: by emailing police.complaints@police.wa.gov.au. • In person: by attending your local police station, locations available here. • By phone: by calling the PCIU on (08) 6372 6000. Service delivery complaints can be made online, using the General enquiry form, available here.

	Assistance is available if you need help to lodge a complaint. This could include help filling in a form or arranging for an accredited interpreter in the language you are most comfortable with.
Acknowledgement / response	If you have not received a response within seven days, contact 6372 6000. The complaint process usually depends on the nature of the unprofessional conduct and the issues involved. Serious unprofessional conduct may be dealt with by formal investigation.
Formal investigation	A formal investigation may involve appointed investigators taking statements, calling witnesses and gathering relevant evidence. Formal investigations usually take longer. During a formal investigation, you can contact the investigator and ask about the status of the inquiry.
Outcome	At the end of a formal investigation, you should receive written advice of the outcome. Reports are prepared and submitted to senior officers. Investigation files and complaint matters may be subject to further CCC review or examination.

Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?

Avenue	Description
Corruption and Crime Commission	You can report WA Police misconduct, serious misconduct or corruption to the CCC. CCC receives and investigates police misconduct involving WA Police Force members and staff. CCC can investigate, cooperate with another body, refer the allegation to another authority, or take no action. CCC is not a personal compensation pathway. It may make recommendations about prosecution, disciplinary action or other action, but it does not determine guilt or innocence.
External review/ remedies	If your issue is about police administration, you can complain to Ombudsman WA. Police administration includes decision-making practices and actions by public authorities in providing services to the public. Ombudsman WA can investigate WA Police and its members only where the matter relates to administration and affects you personally. Ombudsman WA generally cannot investigate complaints more than 12 months old, or complaints you can take to a court or tribunal, unless special circumstances apply. Ombudsman WA also expects you to contact the agency first before complaining to them.
Equal Opportunity Commission WA	If your complaint involves discrimination or harassment by WA Police in Western Australia, you may also have a separate discrimination pathway through the Equal Opportunity Commission WA. Complaints can be lodged online or by emailing eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au

	EOC WA complaints must be in writing and generally must be about discrimination, harassment or victimisation covered by WA equal opportunity law. The complaint process information states that the complaint must usually be made by the person who experienced the discrimination or harassment, unless they are a child or unable to complain because of disability.
Australian Human Rights Commission	If your complaint involves discrimination or a human rights breach, you may also have a federal pathway through the Australian Human Rights Commission. The AHRC only accepts written complaints and allows online, email or post lodgement options.
Additional information you need to know	If you want compensation or damages, or your complaint is connected to criminal charges, court proceedings or possible legal action against police, get legal advice before relying on the complaint process.

Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about policing related complaints

Complaint body	Description
Australian Human Rights Commission	The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) can handle complaints about discrimination that occurs in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation, sport or the administration of Commonwealth laws and services. If you have experienced discrimination, bullying or harassment on the basis of you sex, disability, race, age or sexual preference the AHRC may be able to help. There are also State Government discrimination complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) can handle complaints about the way personal information has been handled by Australian Government agencies and some private organisations. The OAIC can also review freedom of information decisions that are made by Australian Government agencies and ministers. There are also State Government privacy and information complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
National Anti-Corruption Commission	The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) handles complaints about serious or systemic corruption in the Australian Government public sector. There are also a State Government corruption complaint bodies who may also be able to assist.
Public Sector Commission	The Public Sector Commission's job is to develop a future fit public service for the people of Western Australia by strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and capability of the public sector to meet existing and emerging needs and deliver high quality services. Website: https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/public-sector-commission

Phone: (08) 6552 8500

Need help to preparing or pursuing your complaint?

Below are organisations that may be able to help you to make your complaint, provide support or advocacy during the complaint process or give you more information.

Organisation	Contact Details	How they can help
PCIU	Website: https://www.wa.gov.au/service/security/law-enforcement/report-wa-police-force-employee-misconduct Telephone: (08) 6372 6000 Email: police.complaints@police.wa.gov.au	You can contact the PCIU if you have questions about the complaints process, need more information before making a formal report, have further information about an existing complaint or you have changed your mind about an existing complaint.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: www.tisnational.gov.au Telephone: 131 450	Provide support to people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: www.accesshub.gov.au	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.

Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
How to make a complaint	Guidance on how to make a complaint available on the Government of WA website.
Call It Out	Online register for racism and discrimination towards First Nations people. Please note that this is not an official complaints body.
Law Society of WA: How can a lawyer help me?	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.