

Dealing with the Police

Your legal rights



*Community
Legal Service*



Call or click for free high quality legal information
0845 345 4 345 www.clsdirect.org.uk

If you have a complaint about the way the police have treated you or someone else, there are things you can do about it.

This leaflet explains your rights, and the different types of action you can take.

● If you have a problem with the police	3
● If you are stopped and searched	3
● Your options for taking action	3
● Suing the police	3
● How to sue the police	12
● Making a complaint against a police officer	15
● How to make a complaint	15
● The result of your complaint	19

The leaflets in this series give you an outline of your legal rights. They are not a complete guide to the law and are not intended to be a guide to how the law will apply to you or to any specific situation. The leaflets are regularly updated but the law may have changed since this was printed, so information in it may be incorrect or out of date.

If you have a problem, you will need to get more information or personal advice to work out the best way to solve it. See 'Further help' on the back cover for sources of information and advice.

If you have a problem with the police

Most people know that the police have powers they can use against you if they think you have committed a crime or are about to commit a crime, but the police should treat you with courtesy and respect. If a police officer treats you badly or unfairly – or, even worse, injures you – you can take action against them.

If you are stopped and searched

The police have powers to stop and search you in many situations. The rules on when they can do so, and how long they can stop you for, are complicated. See 'When a search becomes an assault' on page 5 for an explanation of the rules.

Your options for taking action

You can take different types of action. What you can do will depend on:

- what happened to you; and
- what you want done about it.

What you want could include:

- an apology;
- compensation; and
- making sure that you, or someone else, isn't treated the same way in the future.

This leaflet looks in detail at the two types of action you can take, and when you can take them. They are as follows:

- **Suing the police (also called 'civil proceedings against the police')**. If you sue the police, you will get compensation if you win your case. You can only sue the police for very specific reasons. See below for more about this.

- **Making a complaint against an individual police officer.** This could get you an explanation or an apology, and it may also mean that the officer involved is disciplined. If he or she has committed a crime, they may even be prosecuted. You can't get compensation by making this type of complaint, but you can make a complaint about almost anything that you felt was unfair. See page 15 for more about this.

Suing the police

If you want to sue someone, you can do so only for certain reasons – what lawyers call 'causes of action'. When you sue someone, you have to show that what happened to you fits into one of these causes of action.

For example, if a police officer searched you legally on the street and was rude in doing it, you would not be able to sue the police, because your complaint would not fit with one of the 'causes of action'. However, you could make a complaint against the police officer.

Also, you can sue the police only for what they have done to you personally. So you can't sue the police if, for example, you see them assaulting someone else. Only the person who was assaulted can sue. However, as someone who saw the assault, you can make a complaint if you want to.

The 'causes of action'

Below are the nine main causes of action. If you have a complaint that you think fits with one of these and you want to sue the police, you will need expert advice to make sure that you can do so. The law on police powers is complicated and you should get help from a legal adviser who specialises in cases against the police (see 'Further help' on the back cover for more information).

The nine main causes are:

1. assault;
2. false imprisonment;
3. malicious prosecution;
4. misfeasance in a public office;
5. trespass;
6. trespass to goods or conversion;
7. negligence;
8. breaching the Human Rights Act; and
9. racial discrimination.

These causes of action are explained in the following paragraphs.

1 Assault

An assault (sometimes called 'battery') happens when someone touches you or uses force (violence) against you

when the law doesn't allow it. It also happens when someone makes you fear that they are about to assault you. It is not always against the law to touch someone, of course. For example, if you are walking along a crowded pavement and you brush against someone, that is not assault.

The rules on assault apply in the same way to the police as they do to anyone else. The police are allowed to use force only where the law allows them to. This includes:

- to protect someone from a crime;
- to stop someone committing a crime;
- to carry out a lawful arrest; and
- to prevent a breach of the peace.

The police also have the power to use force when they need to in other cases, including when they search someone under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act or the Terrorism Act.

Even when the police are allowed to use force, they commit an assault if they use more force than is reasonable in the circumstances. So, for example, if you were legally arrested, but then the police restrained (held) you with more force or for longer than they needed to, you may be able to sue the police for assault.

When a search becomes an assault

You can sue the police for assault if they search you when:

- they don't have the power to; or
- they don't follow the right procedures when they search you.

When are the police allowed to stop and search?

The police have the power to search you on the street when they have a good reason to believe that you:

- have items on you that are stolen;
- have items on you that could be used to steal, commit a burglary, take a car, commit deception or do criminal damage;
- have a weapon on you;
- have drugs on you;
- have an illegal firework on you; or
- are a terrorist.

There are also times where the police are allowed to search you even if they don't have a good reason to suspect you of any wrongdoing. These are:

- because they have good reason to think there will be serious violence nearby; or
- to stop someone committing a terrorist act.

Only a police officer in uniform can carry out searches in these two cases, and a senior police officer must have authorised it.

When the police stop and search you on the street, they may hold you for only a few minutes. You may be able

to sue them for false imprisonment if you are held for more than a few minutes without a good reason.

What is the procedure for stop and search?

When the police stop and search you, they must:

- show you some proof that they are a police officer, if they are not in uniform;
- give their name and the police station they are from;
- tell you what they are searching you for and why they believe you may have the item in your possession; and
- inform you that you are entitled to a copy of the search record.

The police must complete the search record when they do the search, unless this is really difficult. They may ask you for your name and address to include in the record but you don't have to tell them. If they make a record, they must give you a copy straight away.

If the police don't complete a record when they do the search, they must do so as soon afterwards as they can. You can ask for a copy of this for up to a year after the search.

If the police question you on the street but don't search you, they should complete an 'encounter record'.

If the police don't complete a search record or an encounter record, you could make a complaint – see 'Making a complaint against a police officer' on page 15.

What about searches under arrest?

If you have been arrested, the rules on when you can be searched are different. The police are allowed to search you:

- if they have a good reason to believe you may be a danger to yourself or to someone else;
- to check whether you have anything on you that could help you to escape;
- to check whether you have anything on you that may be evidence of a crime; or
- if they need to check what belongings you have on you when you arrive at a police station.

What about strip-searches?

Special rules apply to strip-searches. The police need to show that a strip-search was justified. Strip-searches should be carried out by someone of the same sex as you, and they should be done in private. There should usually be at least two other people there with you. You shouldn't have to take off all your clothes at the same time so that you are completely naked, but the police can tell you to strip first the top half and then the

bottom half of your body (or the other way round).

Is a wrongful strip search an assault?

A strip-search won't always mean the police will touch you (the police may simply tell you to take off your clothes). So you may not be able to sue for assault if the police strip-search you when they are not allowed to. You may be able to sue them under the Human Rights Act instead, for breach of your right to respect for your privacy. You will need expert legal help to know whether you will be able to do this. See the Community Legal Service Direct leaflet, 'The Human Rights Act', for more about this.

2 False imprisonment and wrongful arrest

You can sue the police for false imprisonment if they detain you when the law doesn't allow them to.

What is detention?

You will be detained if:

- you are arrested;
- the police stop you in the street and make it clear that you cannot leave (for more than a few minutes); or
- after going voluntarily to the police station you decide to leave, but the police won't let you go.

If the police arrest or detain you, they have to be able to prove that the law allows them to do this.

When is an arrest legally justifiable?

The law on the powers that police have to arrest people changed at the beginning of 2006. The information in this leaflet explains those new powers. If you were arrested before that date and you think the police may not have acted within their powers, you will have to get advice about the law at that time.

To arrest you, a police officer must first have a good reason to think that you are:

- about to commit an offence;
- committing an offence; or
- guilty of an offence.

The officer must also have good reason to think that it is necessary to arrest you:

- to get your name and address;
- to check your name and address, if they have good reason to believe that you have given false details;
- so that they can quickly investigate the offence that they believe you have committed;
- to prevent you injuring yourself or other people;
- to prevent you being injured;
- to prevent you damaging property;

- to prevent you doing something indecent or causing an obstruction;
- to prevent you harming a child or someone else who is vulnerable; or
- because you might disappear to stop them prosecuting you.

When a court decides if a police officer had good reason to think something, it will look at whether:

- the police officer truly thought it; and
- because of what they knew at the time, it was reasonable for them to think it.

The police can also arrest you to prevent a breach of the peace.

The police can arrest you if a court has issued an arrest warrant for you. If a police officer arrests you and you are the wrong person, you can sue them for false imprisonment. However, if you were arrested because the court that issued the warrant made a mistake, it is not the fault of the police.

There are other powers of arrest for specific offences or in particular circumstances.

If you are arrested, the police have to tell you why. If they can't tell you straight away, perhaps because you are violent, they have to tell you as soon as they reasonably can – otherwise the arrest is illegal.

When you can't legally be detained after being arrested

If you have been legally arrested, your arrest can become illegal if:

- there is no longer any reason for keeping you under arrest;
- you aren't charged even though there is enough evidence to charge you; or
- the police don't follow the rules set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which say when and how often they should look at whether they should continue to detain you.

'Habeas corpus'

If you have been detained illegally by the police, your family or friends can ask to have you released by what is called 'habeas corpus'. This is the name given to the order that the court can make to release a person in certain circumstances. Asking for this order involves a different procedure to suing the police.

3 Malicious prosecution

Many people go to court for offences and are not found guilty. You cannot automatically claim compensation when this happens. You can claim compensation only if you can show you have been a victim of a malicious (deliberately harmful) prosecution. You have to show all four of the following things to be able to claim compensation.

The prosecution caused you damage or harm

You have to show that:

- you were charged with an offence that you could be sent to prison for; and/or
- being prosecuted damaged your reputation; and/or
- defending the case cost you money.

You 'won' your case

You win your case if:

- you were found not guilty after a trial;
- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) dropped the case before it got to trial;
- the magistrates would not send your case to the Crown Court for trial;
- you were found guilty, but won your case on appeal; or
- you accepted a bind over at court (which means that you agreed to a legally binding order of the court).

The police did not have 'reasonable or probable cause' to prosecute you

You have to prove that:

- the police didn't believe you were guilty; or
- there wasn't a good reason for the police to believe that you were probably guilty.

In most cases it is difficult to show these two things.

The police acted 'maliciously'

You have to prove that the police prosecuted you for an unacceptable reason. Sometimes you can do this by referring to something that a police officer said or by showing that they wanted to cover up their own wrongdoing. Sometimes the circumstances make it clear that the police can't have been acting properly.

As well as claiming for malicious prosecution, you can get compensation for a miscarriage of justice if you were found guilty of a crime, and new facts have come to light which show that the conviction was wrong.

There is a similar cause of action of 'malicious process'. You don't have to have been prosecuted to bring a claim. You could use it where the police acted maliciously (causing you harm deliberately and without good reason) in getting a search warrant or an arrest warrant against you.

4 Misfeasance in a public office (abuse of position)

You may be able to bring a claim against the police if you can show that an officer used their position as a police officer for some improper purpose.

You will need to prove that:

- the officer was acting within their capacity as a police officer;
- the officer intended to cause you harm or knew or understood that they were acting beyond their powers;
- you were caused harm as a result; and
- the officer was aware that they would probably cause you harm.

5 Trespass

You can sue someone for trespass if they come into your property without your permission when the law doesn't allow them to. This includes a rented property if you are the tenant, as well as property you own. You can also sue someone you have let into your house or flat if they don't leave when you clearly ask them to. If you aren't the owner or tenant, you may be able to sue for trespass if it is clear that the owner or tenant gave you the power to stop people coming in.

The same rules apply to the police. You can sue the police for trespass if they go into your property (or stay there) and:

- they don't have your permission; and
- the law doesn't allow them to.

When can the police enter a property to arrest someone?

The law allows the police to go into private property to arrest you:

- under an arrest warrant issued by a court;
- if you have escaped from prison or anywhere else where you were legally detained; or
- for an offence that can be tried in the Crown Court and certain other offences. These include theft and criminal damage where the property damaged was worth more than £5,000.

In each of these situations, the police must have a good reason to believe that the person they are looking for is in the property. They can search the property only to check whether the person they are looking for is there.

When can the police enter a property to carry out a search?

The law also allows the police to go onto private property to carry out a search in such situations as these:

- A court has granted the police a search warrant.
- You have just come from the property, the police have arrested you for an offence for which you can be tried in the Crown Court, and they have a good reason to think there is evidence in the property relating to the offence you have been arrested for.
- The police have arrested you for an offence for which you can be tried in the Crown Court, and the property is your home or a place

you control (your business, for example).

In this last case, the police have to have a good reason to think that there will be evidence in the property relating to the offence for which they have arrested you or evidence of a similar or related offence. The police normally have to have a police inspector's permission to carry out such a search.

Why else can the police enter a property?

The police can also enter private property to:

- save people from being killed or injured;
- stop the property being seriously damaged; or
- stop a breach of the peace.

6 Trespass to goods or conversion

If someone damages or interferes with your property, you can sue them for 'trespass to goods' or 'conversion'. You can also sue them if they refuse to give your property back to you when they are not legally allowed to keep it.

When can the police take my belongings?

The law gives the police wide powers to take and keep people's belongings. In particular, they can take and keep

property if they have a good reason for thinking the property may be the proceeds of crime (such as stolen goods) or evidence of an offence.

The police are allowed to keep your property only for as long as they need to. This can include when they want to use the item as evidence at a trial – though they shouldn't hold onto something if a photograph or a copy would do. They can also keep something when they want to work out who the true owner is.

How can I get my belongings back?

If the police take property from you after you have been arrested, they should give it back to you when they allow you to leave the police station. The police can hold onto it only if they have a reason for thinking that it is the proceeds of crime or evidence of an offence.

If you sue the police for interference with your property and you win your case, you can expect to get compensation, as well as getting your belongings back. If you just want your belongings back, you can take out a summons in the magistrates' court under the Police (Property) Act 1897.

7 Negligence

You can sue someone for negligence if they cause you harm or damage when they should have been taking care not to. This is the cause of action you would use if you wanted to sue someone for injuring you or

damaging your car in a car accident, for example.

When can I sue the police for negligence?

The law allows you to sue the police if they are negligent in the way they carry out their normal work. So, for example, you can sue the police if a police car knocks you down.

You cannot normally sue the police if they are negligent:

- in the way they carry out an investigation; or
- when deciding whether or not to protect someone.

However, the rules are very complicated and you should get advice from a lawyer who is an expert in taking legal action against the police.

8 The Human Rights Act

Under the Human Rights Act 1998, you can sue the police if they act in a way that breaches your rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. For more about this, see the Community Legal Service Direct leaflet, 'The Human Rights Act'.

9 Racial discrimination

The police must not discriminate against people because of their race. If the police discriminate against you in this way, you can take action against them under the Race Relations Act 1976. For more about this, see the Community Legal

Service Direct leaflet, ‘Racial Discrimination – your legal rights’.

How to sue the police

If you have read about the ‘causes of action’ and you think you have a reason to sue the police, there are several other things you need to know before you can consider taking legal action. Remember, though, that to sue the police, you will need help from a legal adviser who specialises in such cases (see Further help on the back cover for more information).

There are time limits for bringing a case which are different for different types of case. But you should not wait until just before you reach the time limit to start your case. It is best to get advice on your case as quickly as you can, while events are fresh in your memory and in any witnesses’ memories. The time limits are as follows:

- If you are bringing a claim against the police for racial discrimination, you should start your action within six months. (If you are employed by the police and your claim relates to your employment, the time limit is three months.)
- If your case is under the Human Rights Act, the time limit will depend on the type of action you are taking. If you are applying for ‘judicial review’ (where you ask a

judge to decide whether the police have acted illegally), you should start your case, at the latest, within three months of when you first knew about the problem. Otherwise, the time limit is one year.

- If you are claiming compensation from the police for negligently injuring you, you have to start court proceedings within three years of the day you were injured.
- If your claim is for malicious prosecution, the time limit of six years will run from the day you won your original case.
- For all other cases, you have to start court proceedings within six years.

For most types of case you should try to give the police at least three month’s notice that you plan to start a case against them, unless doing this would put you outside one of these time limits. This is because you must give the police enough time to respond to your claim.

Who do I sue?

You would normally sue the Chief Constable of the police force of the officer you think was responsible. In London you’d sue the Metropolitan Police Commissioner or the Commissioner of the City of London Police.

You could sue the police officer if you wanted but this may make reaching a settlement more difficult.

Who will decide on my case?

If your claim is for false imprisonment or malicious prosecution, you have the right to have your case decided by a judge and a jury, unless the jury would have to study a lot of documents as part of the evidence or decide on complicated medical issues. You or your solicitor must ask for a jury trial at the correct time. Other cases are decided by a judge.

How much compensation can I expect to win?

In a case decided by a jury, the jury decides how much compensation you should get, although the judge will give them guidance on how much it should be. In other cases, the judge decides.

It is not easy to predict how much compensation you will win. Each case is different and the judge's or jury's decision will depend on the evidence they have heard. However, the Court of Appeal has given some idea of how much compensation you should get in false imprisonment and malicious prosecution claims.

- For false imprisonment, you should expect to get at least £600. If you are falsely imprisoned for 24 hours, the amount should be £3,500.

- For malicious prosecution, you should expect to get at least £2,400. If the prosecution goes on for two years, the amount should be £11,000.

If the circumstances of your case are particularly bad, a judge or jury can award 'aggravated damages' on top of the basic compensation. For example, they may do this if:

- the circumstances of your arrest were especially humiliating;
- the police were insulting or offensive to you either at the time or in the way that they defended your case;
- the police acted to cover up their own wrongdoing; or
- the police failed to apologise or acted unreasonably in defending your case.

Aggravated damages should be at least an extra £1,000, but they shouldn't usually be more than twice the basic compensation.

In some cases a judge or jury may award 'exemplary damages'. These are meant to punish the police when they have behaved very badly. For example, this would be if they:

- lied when they gave evidence; or
- subjected you to sexist or racist abuse.

Exemplary damages should be at

least £5,000, but no more than £50,000. When you add together basic, aggravated and exemplary damages, the total should not normally be more than three times the basic compensation.

In addition you can claim 'special damages'. This is compensation for loss you have suffered as a direct result of the incident which led to your claim. Examples of this loss are lost earnings following an assault by the police in which you were injured, or the cost of past and future medical treatment.

You won't always get compensation if your claim is under the Human Rights Act.

Making a complaint against a police officer

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) oversees complaints against police officers.

There are four main reasons why you might want to make a complaint against the police rather than sue them.

- You can complain about more things than you could sue the police for. For example, if a police officer is offensive or abusive towards you when they search you on the street, you can't sue them if the search is legal. However, you can make a complaint about the way the police treated you.

- You don't have to be a victim of wrongdoing (misconduct) by the police to be able to make a complaint. You can make a complaint if you witnessed wrongdoing by the police, or if you were badly affected by wrongdoing (for example, if you are a close relative of someone who suffered it).
- Only the actual victim can sue the police (though in some cases where the victim has died, a close family member can sue the police).
- If you have to pay a lawyer's costs, making a police complaint is likely to be a lot cheaper than suing the police.

However, you cannot get compensation by making a complaint. All you can get from a complaint is an apology, although it may also lead to the police officer concerned being disciplined, dismissed or even prosecuted. There is nothing to stop you making a complaint before deciding whether to sue the police as long as you don't miss the deadline for starting proceedings.

What can I complain about?

You can complain only about wrongdoing by individual:

- police officers;
- members of police staff; or
- special constables.

You cannot complain in this way about general police procedures or policies (known as 'direction and control issues').

How to make a complaint

You must make a complaint within one year of the incident you are complaining about. If it is later than a year, the IPCC or the police force dealing with your complaint may not look at it unless you have a good reason for the delay. Many people make complaints while they are still under arrest at the police station or just after they have been released. It is probably best to wait until after you have been released and have had the chance to get advice.

If the police have injured you, you should see a doctor so that they can make a note of your injuries. You should also get photographs of any injuries that you can see, like cuts or bruises.

You can make a complaint by phone or in person, but it is best to make your complaint in writing. You may want to get help with writing your letter from a solicitor or other adviser, or you can ask a solicitor, adviser or another person to make your complaint for you. You will need to give them written permission to make the complaint for you.

What to include in your complaint

Your complaint should include:

- your name;
- as much detail as you can about the events that have led to your complaint;
- information about any witnesses; and
- the name of the officer you are complaining about, if you know it. If you do not know their name, you should give the IPCC or police force details that will enable them to identify the officer. This could be, for example, the number on the shoulder of the officer's uniform, or the registration number of the police car they were driving.

Who to complain to

If you don't want to make your complaint directly to the police force of the officer you are complaining about, you can complain to:

- the IPCC; or
- any other police force or police authority.

See 'Further help' on the back cover for how to contact the IPCC.

The organisation you have sent your complaint to will pass it on to the appropriate police force or police authority. However, if you complain to the IPCC, it should normally get your permission before sending your complaint on. You will be told when your complaint has been passed on.

What will happen when your complaint is received

The appropriate police force (or police authority, if your complaint is about a senior police officer) must usually record (make a note of) your complaint, except when:

- your complaint is about something that you cannot formally complain about, such as 'direction and control issues' (matters of general police procedures or policies);
- action is already being taken against the officer involved for what you are complaining about; or
- you withdraw your complaint.

You should receive a copy of the record of your complaint. If you are told that your complaint has not been recorded, you should also be told why. If you don't agree with this decision, you can appeal to the IPCC. You have 28 days to do this although a late appeal might be considered if there is a good reason for the delay.

How your complaint will be dealt with

There are four ways your complaint can be dealt with:

- 'local resolution';
- a police investigation;
- a police investigation 'supervised' or 'managed' by the IPCC; or
- an IPCC investigation.

Each of these options is explained in detail on the following pages.

If your complaint is about a serious matter, the IPCC will decide how it will be investigated. For less serious matters, the police will choose between a police investigation and local resolution, although they may need to get the IPCC to agree to their choice. Your complaint can only be dealt with by local resolution if you agree to this.

Even after a decision has been made about how to deal with your complaint, the IPCC can decide at any time to take over the investigation itself.

Local resolution

Local resolution is a way of dealing with less serious complaints. It should not normally be used if your complaint could lead to a police officer being prosecuted for a crime or to disciplinary action against the police officer.

For your complaint to be dealt with by local resolution, you have to agree. If you don't want your complaint dealt with by local resolution, it will be dealt with by a police investigation. If you do agree to local resolution, you cannot change your mind about it later. However, the police can decide at any time to change the investigation into a police investigation.

Different police forces have different ways of dealing with complaints by local resolution. Before you decide whether to agree to local resolution, the police should explain these to you clearly and in person.

If the police agree with your complaint (it is 'upheld'), you may get an apology from the police. However, they can't make a police officer you have complained about apologise personally. The police cannot bring a disciplinary charge against the officer, and the officer will have no formal record on their file, although a record will be made of the complaint. You can get a copy of this record as long as you ask for it within three months of your complaint being dealt with.

You can appeal to the IPCC if you are not happy with the way the local resolution was handled. You must do this in writing within 28 days of your complaint being dealt with. You can appeal only if the police did not follow the procedures they agreed at the start. You cannot appeal because you are not happy with the decision about your complaint. If the IPCC agrees with your appeal, local resolution may be tried again, or your complaint may be investigated in a different way.

Police investigations

A police investigation is one run by the police force itself. If your complaint is about a senior police officer, then the police authority – rather than the police force – will run the investigation. A police authority is a body set up to monitor a police force, and the people on the police authority are not police officers. The police force (or police authority) will give a particular police officer the job of investigating your complaint. This police officer may come from a different police force.

Supervised or managed investigations

These types of investigation are for serious complaints.

The complaint is investigated by a police officer but the officer is either 'supervised' by the IPCC ('supervised investigation') or directed by it ('managed investigation'). The IPCC can insist that the police officer who investigates your complaint comes from a different police force from the one that the officer you are complaining about belongs to.

Independent Police Complaints Commission investigations

This type of investigation is done by members of the IPCC staff. It is used only for the most serious of cases – for example, where someone dies in police custody or is killed by the police.

The result of your complaint

At the end of all the investigations, the police or the IPCC write a report about it. They will send you the report, although this will not be straight away if sending it to you would interfere with any prosecution or disciplinary action against the officer you are complaining about.

If the investigating police officer or the IPCC uphold (agree with) your complaint, the report will be used to decide what should happen next.

If the IPCC or the investigating police officer thinks that the officer you complained about may have committed a crime, they should ask the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to decide whether to prosecute the officer. If the CPS are not involved, or after they have finished dealing with the case, the police will decide whether to:

- bring a disciplinary charge against the officer;
- give them a warning; or
- take no action against them.

Whoever investigates your complaint, you should be told regularly about how the investigation is going, and what happens after the investigation to the officer you have complained against.

If you disagree with the result of your complaint

If you disagree with the result of your complaint, you may be able to appeal against the decision. Where your complaint was dealt with by a police investigation or by an investigation supervised by the IPCC, you can appeal to the IPCC if:

- the police didn't properly tell you the result of your complaint;
- the police didn't send you their report;
- the police didn't give you enough information about the investigation as it was carried out;
- you believe that the police came to the wrong conclusion; or
- you are not happy with the steps that the police say they will take as a result of your complaint.

Further help

Community Legal Service Direct

Provides free information direct to the public on a range of common legal problems.

Call 0845 345 4 345

If you qualify for legal aid, you can also get free advice from a specialist legal adviser about benefits and tax credits, debt, education, employment and housing. You can also find a local legal adviser or solicitor.

Click www.clsdirect.org.uk to find out more.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission

phone: 08453 002 002

www.ipcc.gov.uk

Liberty

Liberty, the civil liberties and human rights organisation, has a legal helpline which may be able to help you. It is available Monday and Thursday 6.30pm to 8.30pm and Wednesday 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

phone: 0845 123 2307

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

www.yourrights.org.uk

The Community Legal Service

The Community Legal Service has been set up to help you find the right legal information and advice to solve your problems.

You can get help through a national network of organisations including Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres, many independent advice centres and thousands of high street solicitors. All of these services meet quality standards set by the Legal Services Commission, look for the Community Legal Service logo, shown below.

Many of the organisations offer some or all of their services for free. If you cannot afford to pay for advice you may be eligible for financial support through the Community Legal Service Fund (Legal Aid). You can order leaflets about funding from the LSC Leaflet line on 0845 3000 343. You can also use a Legal Aid eligibility calculator on the website: www.clsdirect.org.uk

*Community
Legal Service*



The Legal Services Commission (LSC)

The Community Legal Service and the Community Legal Service Fund are managed by the Legal Services Commission. To find out more about us visit our website at www.legalservices.gov.uk or find the details for your local Legal Services Commission office in the phone book.

legal services
COMMISSION

This leaflet was written in association with Liberty.

The leaflets are also available online at: www.clsdirect.org.uk

- 1 Dealing with Debt
- 2 Employment
- 3 Divorce and Separation
- 4 Renting and Letting
- 5 Buying and Selling Property
- 6 Losing your Home
- 7 The Human Rights Act
- 8 Claiming Asylum
- 9 Welfare Benefits
- 10 Wills and Probate
- 11 Dealing with the Police**
- 12 No-win, No-fee Actions
- 13 Problems with Goods and Services
- 14 Medical Accidents
- 15 Equal Opportunities
- 16 Racial Discrimination
- 17 Personal Injury
- 18 Rights for Disabled People
- 19 Community Care
- 20 Education
- 21 Immigration and Nationality
- 22 Mental Health
- 23 Alternatives to Court
- 24 Family Mediation
- 25 Veterans
- 26 Domestic Violence, Abuse and Harassment
- 27 Living Together and your Rights if you Separate
- 28 Dealing with Someone Else's Affairs
- 29 Care Proceedings
- 30 Neighbourhood and Community Disputes
- 31 Changing your Name

The leaflets are also available in Welsh, Braille and Audio

To order any of these leaflets contact the LSC leaflet line on **0845 3000 343** or email LSCleaflets@ecgroup.uk.com or Fax 020 8867 3225



This leaflet is published by the Legal Services Commission (LSC). It was written in association with Liberty.

LIBERTY

PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS



LSC011E