

22 August 2023

Reference: FOI 493 Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your letter, which we received on 3 August 2023. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked us:

For information on the total number of complaints the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman received, upheld and resolved in the periods of June 2020 to June 2021, June 2021 to June 2022 and June 2022 to June 2023.

Our response:

For this request, we have included these cases in each section:

- Complaints received: the number of complaints we have received.
- Complaints upheld: a complaint is upheld if, after investigation, we find in favour of the complainant – i.e. we find the service in remit has acted contrary to their local and/or national policy, or otherwise inappropriately or unreasonably. Upheld cases comprise of cases which are upheld and partially upheld. A complaint is not upheld if we find that the service in remit has acted in keeping with policy, if there is no specific relevant policy, or if they have not acted unreasonably or inappropriately.
- Complaints resolved: the number of complaints we have investigated and completed.

Here is the breakdown of the number of complaints by year:

	1 June 2020 to 31 May 2021	1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022	1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023
Complaints received	4,383	4,482	4,371
Complaints upheld	487	543	569
Complaints resolved/completed	1,678	1,925	2,151

You have the right to appeal against our response if you think it is incorrect. Details can be found in the 'How to Appeal' section attached at the end of this letter.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carries out **independent investigations** into complaints and deaths in custody. The detailed role and responsibilities of the PPO are set out in our office's Terms of Reference. The PPO has three main duties:

- to **investigate complaints** made by prisoners, young people in detention (prisons and secure training centres), offenders under probation supervision and individuals detained under immigration powers (detained individuals)
- to **investigate deaths** of prisoners, young people in detention, approved premises' residents and detained individuals due to any cause, including any apparent suicides and natural causes
- to **investigate deaths** of **recently released prisoners** that occur within 14 days of release from prison (except homicide)

The purpose of these investigations is **to understand what happened, to correct injustices** and **to identify learning** for the organisations whose actions we oversee so that the PPO makes a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and offender supervision.

We may use or share your data only to the necessary extent when conducting our independent investigations in the exercise of our official authority. We will share your data with third parties (e.g. the prison) in order to make sure the information is accurate; to prevent or detect failings; and to identify lessons learnt. We may sometimes need to share your data with third parties if required by law. We only keep your personal data for as long as it is needed, as set out in our data retention policy. If you need any further information about how your data is used, please contact us.

How to Appeal

Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone who was not responsible for the original case, and they will make a decision as to whether we answered your request correctly.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office **within two months of the date of this letter**, at the following address:

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Third Floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
E-mail: Mail@ppo.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is an independent regulator who has the power to direct us to respond to your request differently, if he considers that we have handled it incorrectly.

You can contact the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Internet address: <https://ico.org.uk/>