



FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The Jersey Probation and Aftercare Service (JPACS) is committed to providing the highest level of service to its clients. JPACS includes the Jersey Family Court Advisory Service (JFCAS) and strives to meet the needs and expectations of its service users. However, there may be times when clients feel the service provided falls short of expectations. In such cases, we value your feedback and aim to resolve any issues as swiftly as possible.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy outlines the procedures for providing feedback or making a complaint to the Jersey Probation & After-Care Service, including JFCAS. It ensures that all complaints are handled in a timely, transparent and fair manner, while also welcoming positive feedback to foster continuous improvement.

DEFINING A COMPLAINT

Complaints dealt with under this policy may relate to the following:

- the standard of service we provide
- how we administer services and the processes we use
- the advice we have given
- the behaviour of our staff
- any action or lack of action by staff affecting a complainant, and
- our policies

What we cannot investigate

- Challenges to our assessments or recommendations to the Court. We undertake assessments as directed by the Court and, ultimately, our reports are written for the Court. We know that clients may not always agree with our assessments or the recommendations we make. A complaint about our assessment or recommendation can be challenged within the Court process, and we would encourage obtaining legal advice or speaking to Court staff about how to raise concerns for a case.



- Challenges to decisions made within the Court proceedings, including judicial decisions and Court orders. If someone thinks a Court's decision was incorrect, they may wish to seek legal advice on the options available.
- Complaints about other professionals such as judges, social workers employed by the local authority, or experts appointed by the Court. If a complaint is made about another professional, we will provide information about the appropriate route for this.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Initial Complaint Procedure

Whenever possible, complaints should first be raised directly with the officer involved in the matter. This allows for swift and informal resolution. We encourage clients and stakeholders to raise any concerns as soon as they arise, with the person or team they are working with. We expect most matters can be addressed through these everyday conversations without the need for a person to make a complaint. This can include things like:

- A request for advice or an action.
- A need for an explanation to resolve confusion about what is happening or to clarify a position or decision.
- A concern about an error that may have been made.

If this is not possible then the Service will initially manage the matter as a **Stage 1** complaint.

- A complaint should be sent to a manager of the Service, including the Chief Probation Officer (CPO).
- If the complaint concerns a manager, it should be submitted in writing to the Chief Probation Officer.
- Should the complaint involve the CPO, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Probation Board.

Time Limit for Making Complaints

The complainant must raise their complaint within 12 months of when they first knew of the problem, unless there are special circumstances for considering complaints beyond this time (for example, where a person was not able to complain due to serious illness or recent bereavement). In the cases of historical complaints, we need to assess if it is possible to complete a fair investigation and be robust and transparent in this.

STAGE 1: INITIAL HANDLING

The complaint will be assessed by the CPO or his delegate to determine who is in the most suitable position to respond.

Stage 1 complaints should be responded to quickly (within five working days) as they are straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation.



Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage (including the staff member complained about, for example with an explanation or apology). The main principle is to respond to complaints at the earliest opportunity.

If the complaint is about the actions of another staff member, the complaint should be shared with them, where possible, before responding (although this should not prevent us responding to the complaint quickly for example where it is clear that an apology is warranted).

If a complaint will take more than five working days to investigate, it should be handled at Stage 2 immediately. The only exception to this is where the complaint is simple and could normally be handled within five working days, but it is not possible to begin immediately (for example, due to the absence of a key staff member). In such cases, the complaint may still be handled at Stage 1 if it is clear that it can be handled within the extended timeframe of up to ten working days.

If we convey the decision face-to-face or on the telephone, we are not required to write to the complainant as well (although we may choose to). When closing the complaint, we must:

- tell the complainant the outcome of the complaint (whether it is resolved, upheld, partially upheld or not upheld)
- explain the reasons for our decision or the agreed action taken to resolve the complaint, or the agreed action and
- explain to the complainant that they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 if they remain dissatisfied, and how to do so.

A record of the complaint must be logged in the Complaints folder.

STAGE 2: ESCALATION

Not all complaints are suitable for Stage 1, and not all complaints will be satisfactorily addressed at that stage.

Stage 2 is appropriate where:

- the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome or refuses to engage at Stage 1, insisting they wish their complaint to be investigated further. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the complainant must escalate the complaint within 12 months of when they first knew of the problem or within two months of the Stage 1 response, whichever is later.
- the complaint is not simple and straightforward (for example where the complainant has raised a number of issues, or where information from several sources is needed before we can establish what happened and/or what should have happened); or
- the complaint relates to serious, high-risk or high-profile issues.
- the complaint will take time to investigate.

The CPO will appoint an investigating manager who should make contact within 2 working days with the complainant to advise them of the current stage and acknowledge the escalation in a format that is accessible to the person, considering their preferred method of contact. If the grounds of the complaint



are unclear, then a discussion should be arranged with the complainant to ensure a shared understanding of the relevant issues.

Meeting with the Complainant During the Investigation

To effectively investigate the complaint, it may be necessary to arrange a meeting/discussion with the complainant. Where a meeting takes place, we will always be mindful of the requirement to investigate complaints (including holding any meetings) within 10 working days wherever possible. Where there are difficulties arranging a meeting, this may provide grounds for extending the timeframe.

As a matter of good practice, a written record of the investigation meeting (if held) should be completed and provided to the complainant. Alternatively, and by agreement with the complainant making the complaint, we may provide a record of the meeting in another format. We will notify the complainant making the complaint of the timescale within which we expect to provide the record of the meeting. This summary may form part of the overall response to the complaint.

Timelines

The following deadlines are appropriate to cases at the Stage 2 (counting day one as the day of receipt, or the next working day if the complaint was received on a weekend or public holiday):

- a full response to the complaint should be provided as soon as possible but not later than 10 working days from the time the complaint was escalated to Stage 2.

Not all investigations will be able to meet this deadline. For example, some complaints are so complex that they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 10 working day timeline. The complainant will be informed about the reasons for any delay and a new estimated timeline.

Closing the Complaint at Stage 2

The response to the complaint must be clearly communicated to the complainant. We should take account of their preferred method of contact where possible. Usually at Stage 2, a written response is appropriate, and this must be signed off by a manager. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a meeting (face to face or over the phone) to resolve the matter and communicate the outcome of the complaint, although complainant agreement would be needed if it was not followed up with a written summary.

We will tell the complainant the outcome of the complaint (whether it is resolved, upheld, partially upheld or not upheld). The quality of the complaint response is very important and in terms of good practice should:

- be clear and easy to understand, written in a way that is person-centred and non-confrontational
- avoid technical terms, but where these must be used, an explanation of the term should be provided



- address all the issues raised and demonstrate that each element has been fully and fairly investigated
- include an apology where things have gone wrong (this is different to an expression of empathy)
- highlight any area of disagreement and explain why no further action can be taken
- indicate that a named member of staff is available to clarify any aspect of the letter; and
- indicate that if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the local process, they may seek escalation to the Chief Probation Officer (Stage 3).

The outcome will be recorded in the managers' secure online folder.

STAGE 3: CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER REVIEW

If the complaint remains unresolved following the investigation it should be escalated to Stage 3, the Chief Probation Officer.

The following deadlines are appropriate to cases at the Stage 3 (counting day one as the day of receipt, or the next working day if the complaint was received on a weekend or public holiday):

- a full response to the complaint should be provided as soon as possible but not later than 10 working days from the time the complaint was escalated to Stage 3.

The Chief Probation Officer may choose to delegate a case to another manager. If required to avoid a conflict of interest, the Chief Probation Officer may refer the case to another Chief Officer or an independent third party.

Once all 3 stages have been completed, the complainant has the right to write to the Chair of the Probation Board who will consider the merits of considering a further investigation and respond to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint as to the decision how to proceed.

REASONABLE AND UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR

The department will always attempt to treat all complainants with respect and act professionally to resolve complaints as thoroughly as possible and without undue delay. It also expects complainants to act reasonably and may not investigate a complaint if there is evidence of unreasonable behaviour.

Examples of unreasonable behaviour include:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of the feedback, despite offers of assistance.
- Denying or changing statements made at an earlier stage.
- Covertly recording meetings and conversations.
- Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous staff, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.
- Persistently approaching the department through different routes about the same issue.



- Causing distress to staff.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeking to have them replaced.

The Probation Service recognises the good practice inherent in the Government's complaint handling procedures (link below). As a non-Ministerial department, the Service has slightly different procedures but shares the same ethos to resolve all complaints satisfactorily and will refer to the procedures as appropriate.

[ID GoJ Complaints Handling Procedure.pdf](#)

HOW TO PROVIDE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

The Jersey Probation and After-Care Service encourages positive feedback from clients, referrers, and partner organisations. Positive feedback helps recognise good service and motivate staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- The service will acknowledge any positive feedback via a letter or telephone call.
- Staff members mentioned in positive feedback, or the service in general, will be informed and recognised for their contributions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For complaints, feedback, or further assistance, you can contact the relevant individuals below:

Role	Contact Information
Team Managers- Probation	Sarah Barrowcliffe s.barrowcliffe@gov.je James Lynch j.lynch3@courts.je
Team Manager - JFCAS	Eleanor Green e.green@courts.je
Community Service Manager	Andy Le Marrec a.lemarrec@courts.je
Chief Probation Officer (CPO)	Mike Cutland m.cutland@courts.je

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in addressing feedback and complaints. Updates will be made as necessary to improve the service's responsiveness and accountability.