

Have you been treated unfairly by Corrections staff?

The Ombudsman may be able to help you.

## Contacting the Ombudsman



**Free phone:**

0800 802 602 if you're calling from outside a prison, or  
0800 662 837 (0800 OMBUDS) if you're calling from inside a prison.

**Website:**

[www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz)

**Email:**

[info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz)

**Post:**

PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

**Fax:**

(04) 471 2254

**Office enquiries:**

8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

**Wellington**

Level 7, 70 The Terrace, Wellington 6011

**Auckland**

Level 10, 55-65 Shortland Street, Auckland 1010

**Christchurch**

Level 2, 138 Victoria St, Christchurch 8013

**Other Ombudsman leaflets include:**

The Ombudsman: who we are, Fair treatment for people with disabilities, Making complaints about government agencies, Making or complaining about requests for official information, Monitoring places of detention, 'Whistle-blowing': a guide to the Protected Disclosures Act.

**Ombudsman**

Fairness for all

# Making complaints about prisons and Community Corrections



Office of the Ombudsman  
Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

# What can the Ombudsman do for you?

**The Ombudsman investigates complaints about the acts and decisions of government agencies, including the Department of Corrections.**

You can complain to the Ombudsman:

- if you think you've been treated unfairly, or that a decision made by Corrections is unreasonable or wrong (once you've followed the process below).
- if you've asked for official information from Corrections and you're unhappy with the response.

The Ombudsman is independent and will give your complaint careful and fair consideration.

The Ombudsman does not provide legal advice, award compensation or act as your spokesperson.

# What happens when you make your complaint?

**The Ombudsman will first decide whether or not to investigate. If not, we'll say why and may direct you to other options or agencies.**

We may contact Corrections to see if the matter can be dealt with informally, or we may discuss your complaint with you.

If we carry out a formal investigation, we'll seek information from Corrections.

When a formal investigation happens, the Ombudsman may form an opinion on whether Corrections acted unfairly. Where appropriate, the Ombudsman may recommend a solution.

## What can't the Ombudsman investigate?

The Ombudsman can't investigate complaints about decisions made by Courts, the Parole Board or visiting justices, or about private individuals, companies or lawyers.

Nor can we investigate complaints about the Police (unless your complaint is about a request for official information). Complaints about police conduct are dealt with by the Independent Police Conduct Authority.

If you've asked for personal information about yourself, this is covered by the Privacy Act. Enquiries about the Privacy Act should be made to the Privacy Commissioner.

# The complaints process

## What should you do first?

Corrections has internal complaints processes for dealing with complaints about prisons or Community Corrections.

So before you make a complaint to the Ombudsman, try to sort out the issue through Corrections' internal complaints processes. If you have a complaint, you should first go through:

- Corrections' complaints form process (you can ask a Corrections officer, or Community Corrections, for the relevant form);
- the Complaints Response Desk (0800 326 778) if you're not satisfied; and
- the Corrections Inspectors (0800 225 697) if you're still not satisfied.

Unless you've tried to do this, the Ombudsman is unlikely to investigate your complaint.

## How to make your complaint

If you've gone through Corrections' internal complaints processes and are still not happy, you can then make a complaint to the Ombudsman by:

- phoning the office on 0800 802 602 (if you're calling from outside a prison) or 0800 662 837 (if you're calling from inside a prison) to discuss your complaint with our staff; or
- sending a letter to PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 (use a sealed envelope if you're complaining from inside a prison – letters to the Ombudsman are not opened by prison staff).

## Tips on making your complaint

Don't delay—if you've gone through Corrections' internal complaints processes and are still not happy, contact us. It's harder for us to investigate a complaint that happened more than 12 months ago.

Describe the decision or act that you want to complain about and say why you think it was unfair. Be clear and concise.

Provide as much information as necessary, including the outcome of Corrections' internal complaints processes.