

What is the SCO and what are her powers?

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial and can provide information at any time during the SC process.

She has the ability to:

- refer a SC if the complainant is unwilling or unable to approach their CoC directly
- review a decision made by the CoC not to accept a SC for investigation or appeal ie Gateway Decisions
- investigate allegations of undue delay in handling the SC
- investigate allegations of maladministration in handling a SC after final determination*
- Investigate the substance of a SC that has been finally determined

* Final determination is when a final decision has been made within the SC process.



Contacts/References

- **JSP 831** - Redress of Individual Grievances: Service Complaints
- **JSP 763** - The MOD Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure
- **ACSO 3358** - Service Complaints
- **Army SC Secretariat**
APSG-ArmySCSec-Enquiries@mod.uk
APSG-ArmySCSec-Group@mod.uk
- **Service Complaints Ombudsman**
Tel: 020 7877 3450
Email: contact@servicecomplaintsombudsman.gsi.gov.uk
www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk
- **Army Mediation Service**
Mil: 96770 7691
Civ: 0306 7707 691
Email: Army-Mediation-0Mailbox@mod.uk
- **Speak Out (Bullying & Harassment)**
Mil: 96770 4656
Civ: 0306 770 4656

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Army Service Complaints Secretariat

A Guide to Army Service Complaints



This leaflet provides a brief guide to the Service Complaints (SC) process and should be read in conjunction with JSPs 831 and 763.

If I have an issue, who do I talk to first?

Speak to your Line Manager or someone in your Chain of Command (CoC) (the Equality & Diversity Advisor or Regimental Career Management Officer are ideal) and see if the issue can be dealt with informally. Informal resolution is often the most effective way to solve a problem.

If you want to know how to make a formal complaint, look at the [Army Service Complaints \(SC\) Secretariat](#) (Army SC Sec) intranet page for further information.

What are the SC Levels?

There are 2 levels in which an admissible SC can be dealt with formally. These are: Decision Body (DB) level and Appeal Body (AB) level. Your SC will usually be dealt with by your Commanding Officer (CO), unless they are implicated in the complaint or unable to authorise the redress you seek.

It is entirely up to the person making the SC (called the complainant) as to whether it is formal or informal. Informal Resolution can happen at any stage in the complaints process but remember you have the right under law to submit a formal SC.

What is an SC?

The SC system deals with workplace grievances, governed by policy and time. All serving personnel, Regular and Reserve, may make an SC if they feel they have been wronged during their Service. Retired personnel can also complain about issues that happened during their recent Service and when they were subject to Service law. Certain issues are excluded from the system because there are other more appropriate methods of dealing with them (these include criminal or pension matters, medical negligence and personal injury).

The [Army SC Sec](#) administers SC. All complaints must be submitted through the CoC or via the Office of the Service Complaints Ombudsman (OSCO).

Can I make an SC at any time?

It is important you make your SC as soon as possible after the problem arises. Complaints should usually be submitted in writing and dated within 3 months of the date of the wrong or the last of a series of incidents. If there are good reasons why you could not complain sooner, it may still be possible to investigate your SC in certain circumstances.

What is a Special to Type complaint?

Complaints about matters that have their own associated grievance procedures are called Special to Type (STT) complaints. The STT process, including an appeal, must be exhausted before a complaint can become a Formal SC.

The following areas are STT:

- **PAP10** complaints
- **Medical** complaints
- **Service Police** complaints
- **Accommodation** complaints
- **Pay & Allowances** complaints
- **Army Welfare Service (AWS)** complaints

How do I make a Formal Complaint?

To make a clear complaint you should complete an [Annex F to JSP 831 Part 2](#). You can find this on the [Army SC Sec](#) Intranet page.

What if I don't want to complain to my CO?

You can submit your written complaint direct to the OSCO who will refer it back to the Army SC Sec for processing. Although an SC is confidential, it is not kept 'secret' from the CoC or those complained about.

Will someone help me through the process?

Once you have submitted a complaint you, and anyone who you say has wronged you (known as a respondent) in the SC, must be offered an Assisting Officer (AO) to assist them with the complaints process. An AO can be nominated or be someone suitable of your own choosing.

What happens when I make an SC?

Your complaint will be acknowledged by a Specified Officer (SO), usually the CO, who will then decide if the SC is admissible. If it is, a Decision Body (DB) will be appointed who will initiate an investigation and consider your SC.

You will not be victimised or disadvantaged in any way simply for making an SC. Any attempt to do so will be dealt with as a separate matter by the Army SC Sec and, if necessary, by the SCO.

Who do I go to if I don't hear anything?

The DB is directed to provide you with monthly updates. If you do not hear anything, speak to your DB or your AO.

Can I withdraw my SC?

Yes at any time. To withdraw your SC, complete a Closure Certificate and pass to your COC.

See your CoC if this is what you want to do.

What if I don't agree with the DB's Decision?

You have the right to appeal against the DB's Decision. After an appeal, if you are still not satisfied, you have the right to ask the SCO to review your SC.