

The jurisdiction of the Ombudsman only extends to members of the Armed Forces and not the wider Armed Forces community. This factsheet provides information on the role of the Ombudsman and how family members can support their relative to make a Service complaint and throughout the complaints process.

Can family members contact the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces (SCOAF)?

Yes. The SCOAF welcomes contact from family members of Service personnel, whether it is to ask for information or provide feedback on the system.

Although we will provide general information to family members, we can't talk to you about your relative's complaint without their express consent.

Can I make an application to your office on behalf of a Service person?

No. A Service complaint can only be made by a Service person. The same applies to applications to our office. You can support a Service person to make an application, but it needs to be in their name.

My family member is involved in a complaint and needs support. What should I tell them to do?

If you are the family member of a Service person who has made a Service complaint or is a respondent to a Service complaint and requires further support they could speak to:

- their Assisting Officer (AO)
- a Welfare Officer
- the Padre
- the bullying and harassment line for their Service, or the SSAFA helpline (0800 731 4880)

If they need further information about the role of the Ombudsman they can look on our website or call our office in confidence. Our experienced Enquiries and Referrals Officers will be able to explain if there is anything the Ombudsman can do and signpost to relevant support services and organisations.

I have concerns about my family member's wellbeing. Can the Ombudsman intervene?

If the Ombudsman has concerns for the immediate safety of an individual, they will pass these on to the relevant Service and ask them to take action. However, the Ombudsman doesn't have the power to intervene in the management of Service personnel.

I am finding the complaints process very stressful and need support of my own. Who can help me?

If it is you that needs further support, try contacting the relevant Families Federation to see how they can assist you or where you can be signposted to.

Naval Families Federation – www.nff.org.uk

Army Families Federation – www.aff.org.uk

RAF Families Federation – www.raf-ff.org.uk

I want to make a complaint of my own. Where do I go?

If you want to make a complaint of your own about an issue to do with the Armed Forces, you will need to follow the Ministry of Defence complaints process. You can send your complaint to:

The Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Level 5, Zone A
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

You can find more information about this process on the GOV.UK website.

**For more information on the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces visit
our website www.scoaf.org.uk**

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