

Complaining to the ombudsman

What does the ombudsman do?

The ombudsman is an independent referee from outside the Environment Agency. You can contact them if you are unhappy with the way we handle your complaint or what we have to say. They usually expect you to give us the chance to deal with your complaint before you contact them.

England

In England, the **Local Government Ombudsman** looks at complaints about flood defence and land drainage.

phone 0845 602 1983

email enquiry form www.lgo.org.uk/reinfo.htm

online www.lgo.org.uk

The **Parliamentary Ombudsman** looks at complaints about all other aspects of our work. If you live in England you can only complain to them through your local Member of Parliament.

phone 0845 015 4033

email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

online www.ombudsman.org.uk

Wales

In Wales, the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales** looks at all complaints about the Environment Agency. You can complain directly to them about any aspect of our work.

phone 01656 641 150

email ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

online www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Your rights

If you want to appeal

It is your right to appeal against any of our decisions. We'll usually tell you about your right to appeal when we reply to your complaint. If you're not sure about your rights, you should contact us.

If you have any questions about the conditions in a permit such as a licence, consent, registration, exemption or authorisation, please contact the department that dealt with your application. If you don't know their contact details, please call the customer services line.

Your right to know

You have a right to ask for information under the Data Protection Act and new Freedom of Information Act. You can ask for any of the information we hold and we'll give it to you unless we have a very good reason not to.

We try to make as much information available as possible in a publication or on our website. If there is any information you can't find, please contact us.

If you're not happy with the way we deal with your request for information, you can complain to us following the steps in this leaflet. If you're still unhappy, you can contact the Information Commissioner who deals with complaints about the way requests for information are handled.

England phone 01625 545 745

email mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

online www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Wales phone 02920 894 929

email wales@ico.gsi.gov.uk

online www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk



we want to
hear from you

Our commitment to you

Customer complaints and commendations
March 2005

We are the Environment Agency.
It's our job to look after the environment
and make it a better place for you and for
future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with businesses, government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

We deal with individual members of the public, community groups, industry, farmers, businesses of all sizes and government. Our aim is to live up to the highest possible standards in our dealings with all our customers.

Our commitment to you

To help us know what we're doing right and wrong, we need to hear from you. If you're happy with our service please tell us. It helps us to identify good practice and encourages our staff. And if you're not happy, tell us so we can put things right.

We'll always try to provide a professional service. We have listened to the views of our customers and looked at what other organisations do well to develop our principles for providing services. We review all our feedback regularly so that we can learn from you and make things better.

To read more about our standards of service, you can get our Customer Charter from your local Environment Agency office and on our website www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Tell us what you think

How to commend us

When you contact us to tell us we're doing something right we will pass your commendation to the appropriate manager who will make sure the staff involved are thanked.

How to complain to us

If you contact us with a complaint, we will make sure we deal with it properly and fairly by following a set of guidelines:

- If we can, we'll deal with your complaint straight away. If not, we'll acknowledge your complaint by phone or in writing to make sure we understand your concerns fully. We'll give you the name of a member of staff who you can contact directly.
- We'll investigate your complaint thoroughly. You'll get a letter within ten working days answering your complaint. If we need to look into your complaint further, we'll tell you why and when you can expect an answer.
- If you're not happy with our reply let us know why. We'll look into it. If it's appropriate, we'll raise your concerns at a more senior level.
- We'll keep you informed and reply as soon as we have finished looking into your complaint.

We don't treat environmental incidents like floods and pollution as complaints. If you want to report an incident, please contact our 24 hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

How to contact us

We have a number of ways you can tell us what you think of our work and the work being done on our behalf.

When you contact us we will deal with your feedback or tell you how to contact your local Environment Agency office (Mon-Fri 9-5).

Please tell us if you have any communication needs so we can talk with you more easily. We have a Language Line if English isn't your first language.

Call us on 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6)

minicom 08702 422 549

email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

visit our website

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Or write to:

**Environment Agency Customer Service Centre,
Bowbridge Close, Bradmarsh Business Park,
Templeborough, Rotherham S60 1BY**



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