The term ‘public authority’ refers to State Government departments, prisons, hospitals, schools and technical colleges, local governments, public universities and relevant boards and tribunals.

- **Receive complaint**

  - **Assess complaint to determine extent of Ombudsman involvement**
    - No jurisdiction (cannot investigate) or discretion exercised not to investigate
      - Advise complainant. Refer to an alternative body if appropriate
    - Complainant has not yet lodged complaint with public authority
      - Generally ask complainant to do this first and contact us again if not satisfied
    - If investigating, advise public authority and gather initial information
      - Explore options for resolution with complainant and public authority
        - If unresolved, undertake further investigation if required
          - Form a preliminary view and seek comments from any public authority adversely affected
            - Review any comments received and determine appropriate suggestions or recommendations
              - Advise complainant and public authority of outcomes. Close complaint

**Hints and tips**

- Referring the complainant back to you in the first instance is generally the most effective way to resolve a complaint quickly. Effective internal complaint mechanisms are an important part of this process.
- When we first contact you, please identify the most appropriate person to assist us with our enquiries and with sufficient authority to resolve the matter.
- If we ask you for information, please talk to us about the best way for you to provide it without creating unnecessary burden for you.
- Timely resolution of complaints assists in providing good outcomes for complainants and public authorities. You can help by responding promptly to the Ombudsman’s requests for information.
- Contact us at any time during the process to ask for clarification or advice.

* For a full explanation of the assessment process, see the Ombudsman’s information sheet *How we assess complaints*. 