

With the following complaints from prisoners, we've asked them to lodge a grievance, write to the Superintendent or write to DCS:

"I'm unhappy with my medical treatment"

"I want help in getting a transfer"

"There are long delays in washing and returning my laundry"

"The unit is too hot at night because staff won't turn off heating"

"There are delays in getting dental treatment"

"The church services were cancelled"

"I want to get out of protection and into mainstream"

"I am being harassed by a prison officer"

"There have been delays in receiving my mail"

"Morning lockdown is too long"

If you're not sure, phone us

If you're not sure whether we can help you fix a problem, phone us on 9220 7555. You have access to this number through the prisoner telephone system.

Calls to the Ombudsman are not monitored or recorded.

Ombudsman Western Australia

PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace PERTH WA 6831
Level 2, 469 Wellington Street Perth WA 6000

Tel (08) 9220 7555 Fax (08) 9220 7500

Freecall 1800 117 000 (outside metropolitan area only)

Email: mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Web: www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au



Ombudsman Western Australia

Serving Parliament - Serving Western Australians

**Complaining to the Ombudsman -
Information for Prisoners**

Complaining to the Ombudsman

Ombudsman Western Australia deals with complaints about State Government departments.

One of the Ombudsman's roles is to investigate complaints from prisoners about things that might have gone wrong in the running of prisons or the Department of Corrective Services (DCS).

However, the Ombudsman can't investigate everything you might have a complaint about - before you contact us you should ask the prison administration or DCS to fix the problem. This should be done informally to begin with, and then through ACCESS (the DCS complaints administration centre) and the Prisoner Grievance System if it's still not resolved.

We won't usually look at your complaint until you have tried to fix it at the Unit level or the prison level or with DCS.

Many complaints can be fixed at the prison in much less time and with much less hassle for you than if we were to investigate them.

What to do first

For complaints about health, conditions, visits, property, programs or education, employment, mail or telephones, breaches of procedure, harassment or discrimination:

- Try to resolve the issue with your Unit Manager first.;
- If you can't resolve it with the Unit Manager, speak with administration staff;
- If you still can't resolve it, lodge a grievance at the prison. Your Unit Manager can give you a form;
- If your grievance is not fixed at the unit level, it will automatically escalate to an Assistant Superintendent; then
- If it still isn't resolved, it will automatically be taken up by the Coordinator, Prisoner Grievances.
- If you have any trouble lodging a grievance, call ACCESS. You can call ACCESS on the prisoner telephone phone system. It is a freecall.

For complaints about something not covered by the Prisoner Grievance System (such as case conference decisions, security rating, requests for transfer, discipline and prison charges or criminal charges), ask for an interview with your Unit Manager, who can tell you whether to write to the Superintendent or to Head Office or refer you the right person. You can also contact ACCESS for advice about where to send your complaint.

For complaints about an assault, report it to any staff member or ask to see prison security staff who can then involve the police on your behalf and/or the Internal Investigations Unit. You can also make a report about this to ACCESS.

When to contact the Ombudsman

If you have trouble doing any of these things or if your complaint is not fixed and you still think you've been treated unfairly, contact the Ombudsman by telephone or in writing using the confidential envelopes.

What we can and can't help with

We have investigated and assisted prisoners with a number of complaints, including:

- having unreasonable charges laid;
- an inability to lodge a grievance about harassment by an officer;
- an unreasonable and inaccurate alert on a prisoner that affected placement;
- an officer who refused to accept a grievance about an employment matter;
- disciplinary charges laid without considering all relevant matters;
- being unfairly charged for failing to provide a urine sample;
- being denied inter-prison visits; and
- being unreasonably placed in maximum security.

But there are some things that the Ombudsman simply cannot do. We can't direct the prison or DCS to do a particular thing - we can only make recommendations. And we can't run the day-to-day operations of prisons.

