

### CHECKLIST FOR AGENCY STAFF DEALING WITH OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

- Have you complied with any special requirements regarding your agency's contact arrangements?
- Are you the person best-placed to deal with the enquiries? For example, serious allegations might need to be brought to the attention of more senior staff in your agency.
- Do you understand what information the Ombudsman office is asking for? If not, you should clarify the request as soon as possible.
- Is there relevant background information that might be useful for the Ombudsman investigation officer to know about?
- Do you know of information which seems relevant to the complaint but which the Ombudsman investigation officer has not requested? If so, it is best to advise them of its existence.
- Will you have a problem meeting the requested timeframe? If so, you should discuss it with the Ombudsman investigation officer as soon as possible, including whether an interim or partial response would be possible and helpful.
- Given the nature of the enquiry, would a briefing by the relevant business area be more appropriate than preparing a written response?
- Can you respond earlier than the requested date? If you can, do so.
- Is there a fundamental difference of view about the facts? If so, double-check where possible. Do not assume your records or people's recollections are complete and accurate.
- Have you considered issues raised from the point of view of fairness and reasonableness, as well as legality?
- Have you already identified what the problem was? If so, let the Ombudsman investigation officer know.
- Can you identify a remedy for the complaint? If so, let the Ombudsman investigation officer know.
- Is there still some action underway regarding the complainant? If necessary, discuss this with the Ombudsman investigation officer, or at an appropriate level in the Ombudsman's office.
- Have you checked if others have been, or could be, affected by the same problem? If they have, take appropriate action regarding those affected, and the cause of the problem. This could involve proposing changes to procedures, forms, instructions or information products.
- Have you given an undertaking to the Ombudsman office in relation to the complaint? If so, follow up on that undertaking.