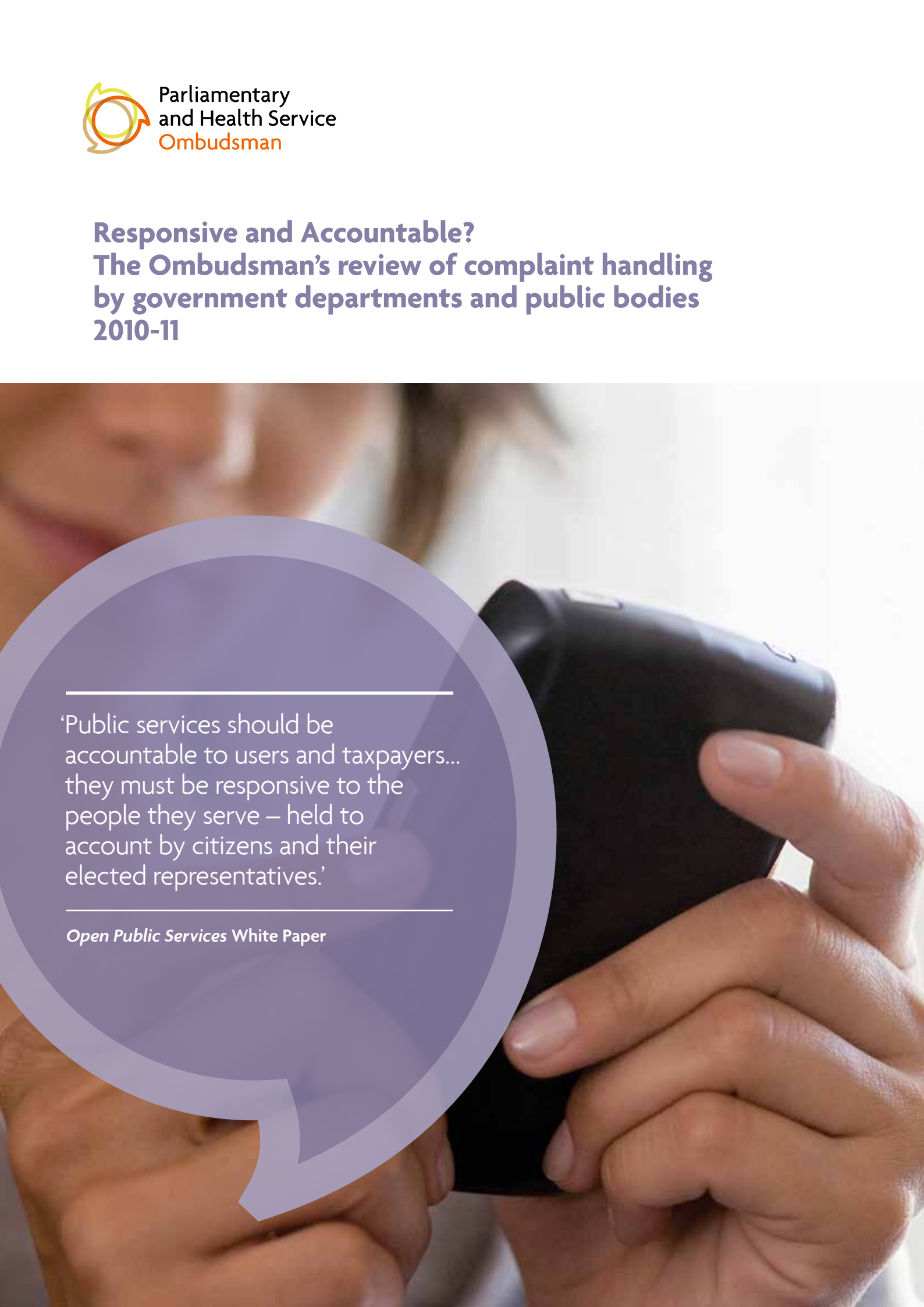


## **Responsive and Accountable? The Ombudsman's review of complaint handling by government departments and public bodies 2010-11**



‘Public services should be accountable to users and taxpayers... they must be responsive to the people they serve – held to account by citizens and their elected representatives.’

*Open Public Services White Paper*



# **Responsive and Accountable? The Ombudsman's review of complaint handling by government departments and public bodies 2010-11**

Ninth report  
of the Parliamentary Commissioner for  
Administration  
Session 2010-12  
Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 10(4)  
of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967

Ordered by  
The House of Commons  
to be printed on 24 October 2011

HC 1551  
London: The Stationery Office  
£15.50

### **Our role**

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman considers complaints that government departments, a range of other public bodies in the UK, and the NHS in England, have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.

### **Our vision**

To provide an independent, high quality complaint handling service that rights individual wrongs, drives improvements in public services and informs public policy.

### **Our values**

Our values shape our behaviour, both as an organisation and as individuals, and incorporate the *Ombudsman's Principles*.

### **Excellence**

We pursue excellence in all that we do in order to provide the best possible service:

- we seek feedback to achieve learning and continuous improvement
- we operate thorough and rigorous processes to reach sound, evidence-based judgments
- we are committed to enabling and developing our people so that they can provide an excellent service.

### **Leadership**

We lead by example so that our work will have a positive impact:

- we set high standards for ourselves and others
- we are an exemplar and provide expert advice in complaint handling
- we share learning to achieve improvement.

### **Integrity**

We are open, honest and straightforward in all our dealings, and use time, money and resources effectively:

- we are consistent and transparent in our actions and decisions
- we take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable for all that we do
- we treat people fairly.

### **Diversity**

We value people and their diversity and strive to be inclusive:

- we respect others, regardless of personal differences
- we listen to people to understand their needs and tailor our service accordingly
- we promote equal access to our service for all members of the community.

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ISBN: 9780102975116

Printed in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
ID P002459669 10/11 Printed on paper containing 75 per cent recycled fibre content minimum.

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## Foreword



**This is my first report on the complaint handling performance of government departments and other public bodies within my jurisdiction. Unlike other reports published by my Office, which usually highlight serious or systemic failings of administration or complaint handling in individual departments, this report presents my perspective on complaint handling across government.**

This report includes information from complaints about public bodies made to my Office in 2010-11, as well as individual case histories of failures by public bodies experienced by members of the public and resolved by us during the year. It also includes the results of a survey we conducted into the different processes used by government departments and public bodies to respond to complaints.

Disappointingly, this report reveals complaint handling across government to be inconsistent, haphazard and unaccountable, operating without any overarching design, overall standards or common performance framework. Such a situation is unhelpful for people who want to change

their experience of interacting with a public service by making a complaint. It also means opportunities to improve public services through complaint handling are being missed.

*'Public bodies should ensure their complaints procedure is simple and clear, involving as few steps as possible.'*

*Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

It is clear from the information in this report, and the evidence from our casework generally, that if a member of the public wants to complain about the service they receive, they must embark on a system for complaining that is unique to that department.

I am not advocating a 'one-size fits all' system for handling complaints about government departments and other public bodies. Such an approach would preclude flexible processes, designed to be relevant and accessible to the needs of their different customers. But there is no shared view across government of the standard of complaint handling that a member of the public can reasonably expect.

Our survey of government complaint handling revealed a plethora of different systems for handling complaints. The government departments and public bodies who responded to our survey required complainants to navigate anything between

one and four stages of a complaint procedure before 'local resolution' was completed and the complainant could bring their complaint to the Ombudsman. Unfortunately for both the complainant and the public purse, the value added by these multiple stages can be difficult to detect. The stories in this report bring such examples into the spotlight. They show the toll that overly-bureaucratic complaints procedures can take on individuals.

*'Public bodies should have systems to record, analyse and report on the learning from complaints – and ensure that all feedback and lessons learnt from complaints contribute to service improvement.'*

*Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

The cost of maladministration is borne by the public, collectively and individually. As this report shows, last year we secured over £360,000 in direct financial remedies for complainants as a result of poor administration or complaint handling. This figure does not reveal the cost in time and resource taken up by lengthy and protracted complaints systems or the sometimes devastating human cost of the failure to put things right for individuals. Nor does it include the cost of lost opportunities to improve public services by learning from feedback that is free to collect and readily available.

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‘Good complaint handling requires strong and effective leadership. Those at the top of the public body should take the lead in ensuring good complaint handling, with regard to both the practice and the culture.’

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### *Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

The figure also excludes the £1.5 billion which in October 2010 the Government announced would be available to compensate Equitable Life policyholders, following its agreement earlier in the year to implement the recommendation in my July 2008 report on regulatory failure.

*‘Learning from complaints is a powerful way of helping to improve public service, enhancing the reputation of a public body and increasing trust among the people who use its service.’*

#### *Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

The absence of any clear methodology or machinery to share best practice, or ensure lessons from complaints are learnt across government departments, increases the likelihood of the same mistakes being repeated again and again.

In terms of measuring and improving performance, departmental complaint handling is not subject to any systematic

external audit or similar scrutiny. As Ombudsman I consider complaints that reach my Office, but I do not have the legal power to undertake systemic scrutiny on my own initiative. So I do not have the mandate or the mechanisms to provide assurance on complaint handling efficiency and effectiveness across government. Neither does anyone else.

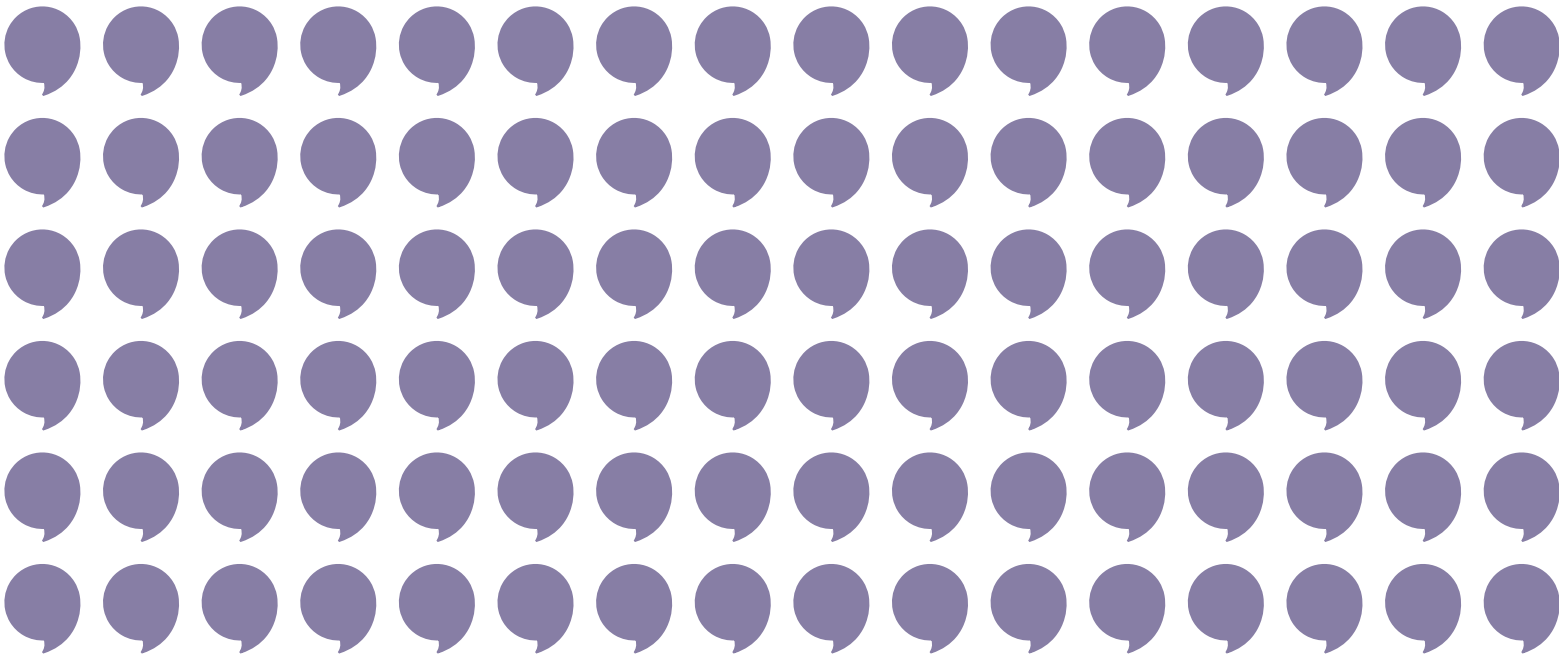
Complaints are a lens through which to judge the quality of public services. They provide insight and learning, often not available elsewhere, about the efficiency of public services and the fairness and proportionality with which they are administered. Above all, complaints provide an insight into the public’s interactions with the state. At the moment, this perspective is blurred by inconsistent and sometimes convoluted processes, and an absence of cross-government information and accountability that makes complaints invisible at national level.

To counter this, there needs to be a shared understanding between the public, government and the Ombudsman about what constitutes good complaint handling. The *Ombudsman’s Principles of Good Complaint Handling* are a good starting point for government in the task of ensuring that all departments share an understanding of the importance of fairness, transparency, and accountability. But this will not evolve further without strong leadership from the top, committed to developing a culture across the civil service that values complaints. I hope that this report provides an impetus towards making this happen.



Ann Abraham  
**Parliamentary Ombudsman**  
October 2011

## How we work



**Our role is to consider complaints that government departments, a range of other public bodies in the UK, and the NHS in England have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.**

This report details the complaint handling performance of government departments and other public bodies in the UK in 2010-11. Complaints about these bodies must be referred to us by a Member of Parliament (MP). Last year, we resolved 7,569 complaints about such bodies.

We judge government departments and public bodies against the standards for good administration and complaint handling set out in full in the *Ombudsman's Principles*. The *Principles of Good Complaint Handling* were published in November 2008. All the Principles are available on our website at [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

**Helping people complain**  
**We expect public bodies to have clear and simple procedures. They should publish clear and complete information about how to complain and how and when to take complaints further.**

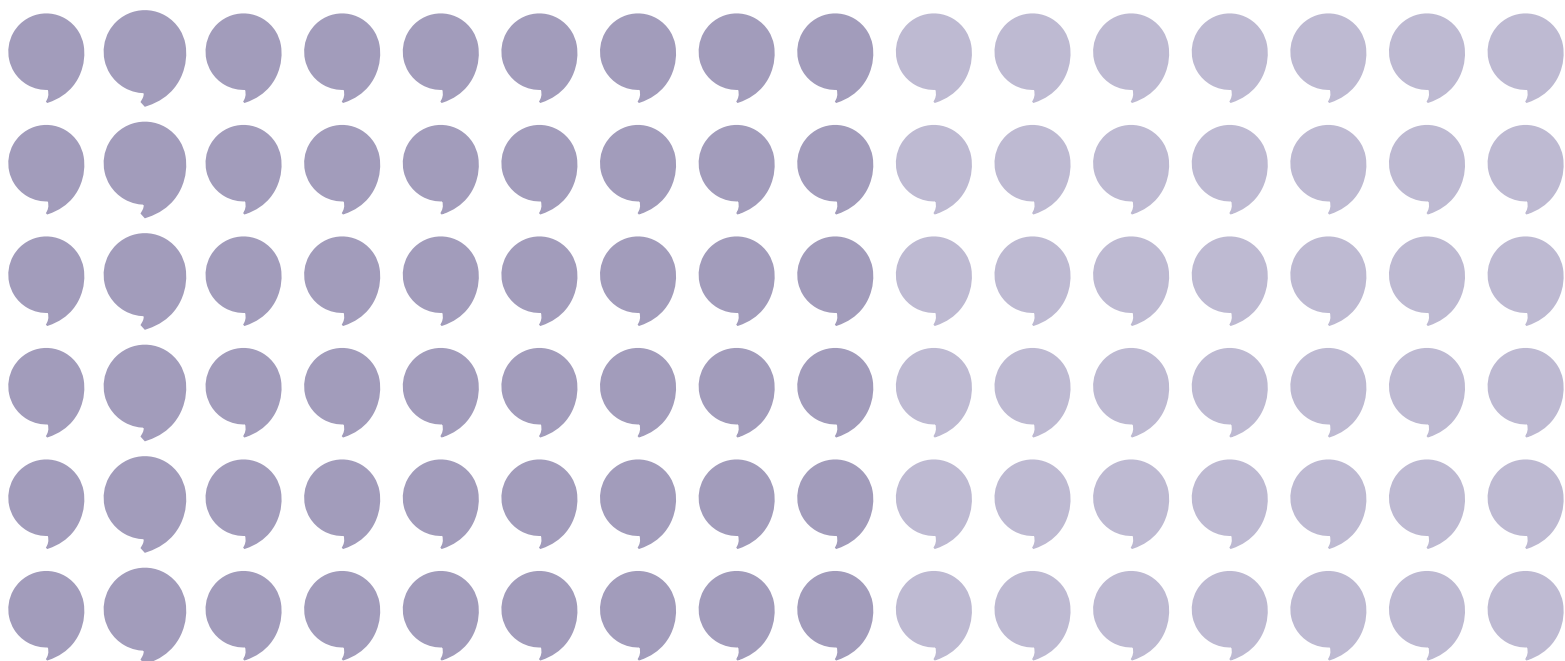
On 5,590 occasions last year, we referred the complainant back to the public body concerned, because they had not completed the body's own complaints procedure. Of those, 4,861 complaints also came to us without an MP referral. On 425 occasions the complainant chose not to progress their complaint further or did not obtain an MP referral.

224 complaints were about issues outside our remit.

**Putting things right**  
**Public bodies should put mistakes right quickly and effectively. They should acknowledge mistakes and apologise where appropriate.**

On 1,078 occasions last year, we were able to reassure the complainant that the public body concerned had already put things right, or that there was no case to answer.

Where things have gone wrong, we ask public bodies to apologise and put things right quickly and effectively, without the need for a formal investigation. Last year, 106 Parliamentary complaints were resolved this way, and a further 21 complaints were resolved when we provided the complainant with an explanation about what had happened.



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### Learning from complaints

**Lessons learnt from complaints should be used to improve public services. Where possible, the complainant should be returned to the position they would have been in if the circumstances leading to the complaint had not occurred.**

We accepted 125 complaints for formal investigation and reported on 120 complaints investigated. If a complaint is upheld or partly upheld, we recommend actions for the body in question to take to put things right and to learn from the complaint. We upheld or partly upheld 78 per cent of parliamentary complaints and all our recommendations for action were accepted.

More information about the numbers of complaints about government departments and public bodies received and resolved in 2010-11 can be found on pages 32-41.

- In this report, we use the term 'public body' to refer to any government organisation within our jurisdiction.
- We use the term 'government department' to refer to any public body that also has responsibility for other bodies.

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‘Public bodies should provide clear, accurate and complete information to their customers about the scope of complaints the organisation can consider, what customers can and cannot expect from the complaint handling arrangements, including timescales and likely remedies and how, when and where to take things further.’

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*Principles of Good  
Complaint Handling*

## Sharing information and learning from complaints

**Throughout 2010-11 we worked with individual government departments and public bodies to resolve complaints and help put things right for individuals and to share the learning from our casework to improve public services. We highlighted particular failings identified by our casework through our regular contact with Parliament, the Cabinet Office and permanent secretaries, emphasising the importance of sharing learning from complaints across departmental boundaries.**

### Sharing learning with Parliament

In her evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) in February 2011, the Ombudsman warned that at present there is no cross-government view of what a good complaint handling system should look like. She said:

*'Every week, another bit of government comes and asks us to have a look at some changes they are making to their complaints system and whether we think this fits with the Principles of Good Complaint Handling. All this work is going on in compartments, in different bits of government, with no overarching sense of who and where is the design authority for complaint-handling systems in government.'*<sup>1</sup>

The Ombudsman's comments sit within the context of the Coalition Government's agenda for change. In July 2011, the Government published its *Open Public Services* White Paper, which sets out proposals to expand the delivery of public services to include a range of diverse providers from the private and voluntary sectors. Describing the state as a '*guarantor of standards*', the paper warns potential providers that unless they can match or better the Government's minimum standards, they will have no place in delivering public services.

A recent report by PASC about these reforms, *Change in Government: Agenda for Leadership*, echoed the Ombudsman's concerns about the Government's failure to overcome departmental silos and to address '*cross cutting issues*' across departmental boundaries. The report identifies the need for the civil service to develop its capability to contract and commission services from the voluntary and private sectors and we would expect this capability to include setting clear and transparent standards for complaint handling.

### Sharing learning with government

Had such standards existed across departments, at least one of the investigations we published this year would not have been needed. A *Breach of Confidence* tells the story of our investigation

into a complaint by a woman whose personal details had been incorrectly recorded on a government database. As her details spread across the computer systems of three different public bodies, she was unable to get them corrected, or to get any of the bodies involved to take the lead in putting things right. Instead, they all blamed each other and it took an investigation by the Ombudsman to get them to accept their responsibilities, correct the mistake and agree that cross-cutting issues would be addressed.

As a result of that report, we asked the Cabinet Office to take the lead in ensuring that the three agencies involved in that complaint work together to ensure that complaints which involve more than one agency are handled in a coordinated way in future. Since our investigation, Cabinet Secretary Sir Gus O'Donnell has assured us that guidance on handling cross-cutting complaints has been implemented by the departments concerned and that a protocol has been developed for all government departments to implement when sharing personal data.

### Sharing learning with departments and public bodies

Recently we came to the end of a lengthy and complex investigation into the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) treatment of one family who were interned by the Japanese during the Second World War.

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1. Oral evidence taken before the Public Administration Select Committee, 9 February 2011.

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‘The worst example I have seen, in nearly nine years as Parliamentary Ombudsman, of a government department getting things wrong and then repeatedly failing to put things right or learn from its mistakes.’

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*Defending the Indefensible*, Ann Abraham

Described by the Ombudsman as ‘*required reading for every aspiring senior civil servant*’, *Defending the Indefensible* tells the story of repeated and compounded failure by the MoD to get things right, despite a previous ‘upheld’ investigation by the Ombudsman, criticism from PASC and adverse findings by the courts. The circumstances leading to the recent publication of *Defending the Indefensible* highlight how much work is needed to ensure that learning from complaints is embedded within departmental processes and we welcomed the MoD’s commitment to launch its own review of what went so wrong, for so long.

In her evidence to Parliament in February, the Ombudsman explained that when mistakes had been made the opportunity to put things right quickly and to learn from feedback immediately and in ‘real-time’ was key to improving public services. We have worked directly with departments and public bodies to improve their capacity to learn from feedback and put things right swiftly for individual complainants.

In our meetings with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), we have witnessed a clear commitment to improve the experience of people claiming tax credits. That commitment has been demonstrated through HMRC’s willingness to engage with us as soon as we identify signs of failure or poor service, enabling us to resolve complaints quickly and without the need for an in-depth investigation. We have been able to achieve prompt and effective resolution on a number of cases and ensured that any learning from the cases we have considered is fed back to HMRC.

During 2010-11, we received and accepted for investigation a higher number of complaints about the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) than previously. The complainants told us that Cafcass had not considered their complaints in accordance with their complaints policy, or with reference to their guidance for staff and organisational standards. They also told us that Cafcass had not put matters right, even when they acknowledged things had

gone wrong. We met with the Chief Executive of Cafcass to explore what lay behind those complaints. As a result of our investigations, which showed Cafcass were failing to get the basics of good complaint handling right, they have made complaint handling one of their top five organisational priorities for the months ahead. We continue to work with Cafcass on this issue.

In one particular case our investigation has led to wide ranging improvements for the service provided to vulnerable people. Jobcentre Plus took action on our recommendations following an investigation into the experiences of a vulnerable woman who was struggling to resolve her complaint with them. As a result of our investigation, featured on page 25, Jobcentre Plus have changed their definition of ‘vulnerable’; they plan to identify ‘district champions’ for vulnerable clients; and they are working to improve how and when they identify clients who need people to act on their behalf when dealing with them.

## Our survey of government complaint handling

**From our casework we know that public bodies have very different complaints systems. In order to help compile a picture of the different ways government departments and public bodies handle complaints, we wrote to the permanent secretaries of the 35 ministerial and non-ministerial government departments within our jurisdiction. We asked them to tell us whether their department provided guidance about complaint handling to the public bodies they sponsored, whether they or their public bodies used an arms length complaint handler, and the reasons why they used the system they did. We received responses from 25 departments and obtained information for more than 100 public bodies, from Jobcentre Plus to the Office of Rail Regulation.**

The responses revealed the differing approaches to handling complaints across a range of public bodies. The differences between them include the number of stages in the complaints process, the role and job titles of staff involved in responding to complaints, and the use of independent, or arms length, complaint handlers.

When we looked at the public bodies' complaints processes more closely we found that they required complainants to navigate anything between one and four stages of a complaint procedure before local resolution was completed and the complainant could bring their complaint to us. Most of the public bodies with one stage had no

dedicated complaints function and complaints were responded to by a general enquiry or correspondence team. Generally, each additional stage represented an escalation of the complaint within the public body where staff of increasing seniority looked at the complaint. Across all the government departments and public bodies we surveyed, there were people in over thirty different job roles who were involved in looking at complaints – from enquiry team members and complaints managers to directors, quality assurance managers and heads of business to chief executives, independent panels and chairs.

We discovered that in some cases there was little consistency between the complaints procedures of public bodies for which one government department was responsible. For example, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, which has a three stage complaints procedure, is responsible for both the Insolvency Service, which has a four stage complaints procedure, and the Skills Funding Agency, whose complaints procedure is just one

stage. Only two of the government departments that responded to our survey said they had, or were developing, specific complaints guidance for their public bodies, and only one other used meetings and other actions to help ensure consistency in complaint handling across all the public bodies they were responsible for. In some cases, complaints procedures can be further complicated by conditions being placed on whether a stage of the complaints procedure can be accessed. Several public bodies do this including Cafcass, the Charity Commission and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Often, complainants are not aware that their access to the next stage of a complaints procedure can be conditional.

For 28 public bodies who responded to our survey, the last stage of their complaints procedure is a review by an arms length complaint handler, contracted by the public body to provide an independent view. Thirteen different arms length complaints handlers were being used by the public bodies who responded to our survey. They

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**‘Public bodies should ensure their complaints procedure is simple and clear, involving as few steps as possible. Having too many complaint handling stages may unnecessarily complicate the process and deter complainants from pursuing their concerns.’**

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*Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

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‘[The Adjudicator’s work] allows us to maintain relationships with customers that are not tainted by unsatisfactorily resolved complaints. The Adjudicator also provides us with constructive criticism and feedback and actively seeks to help us learn lessons from complaints so that we can improve our services for all customers in the future.’

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Dame Lesley Strathie, Chief Executive, HM Revenue & Customs

have different criteria and access arrangements, and only two departments appeared to have a consistent approach whereby all the public bodies they were responsible for used the same arms length complaint handler in the same way.

We asked government departments why they, or their public bodies, used arms length complaint handlers. Most told us that an arms length complaint handler is trusted by customers to be impartial, even handed and to offer a detailed review of the complaint. Government departments also told us that arms length complaint handlers were able to act as a critical friend and provide useful feedback and learning. One government department told us that being able to learn from complaints in this way makes good economic sense.

In contrast, most of the government departments that did not engage an arms length

complaint handler told us that to do so would not be an effective use of funds. Some of them pointed out that this was because they received low numbers of complaints. This was often because they did not provide a service directly to the public. Others said that they were satisfied with their ability to review each complaint themselves and that there were few requests for complaints to be escalated.

The systems that public bodies have in place for handling complaints will depend on their own circumstances. However, certain principles should be common across government, including keeping complaints processes clear, simple and easy to access, focused on customers and outcomes and operating to clearly defined standards.

The results of our survey reveal a plethora of complaints systems, mainly developed by the individual departments and bodies to suit

their needs, rather than providing a common approach for the benefit of the public.

For an individual member of the public, who wants to complain about the service they have received from one, or more, public bodies, such a multitude of different systems adds to confusion or frustration, as the diagram on the following pages shows. This confusion and frustration is also demonstrated by the fact that nearly three quarters of people who complain to the Ombudsman do so too soon, before they have completed a public body’s own complaints procedure. The reasons people most commonly give for bringing their complaint to us include *‘going straight to the top’*, *‘wanting a quick result’* and *‘a loss of confidence’* in the public body. Other people are incorrectly signposted to our service as the next stage of the procedure, or are otherwise misinformed about the procedure to follow.

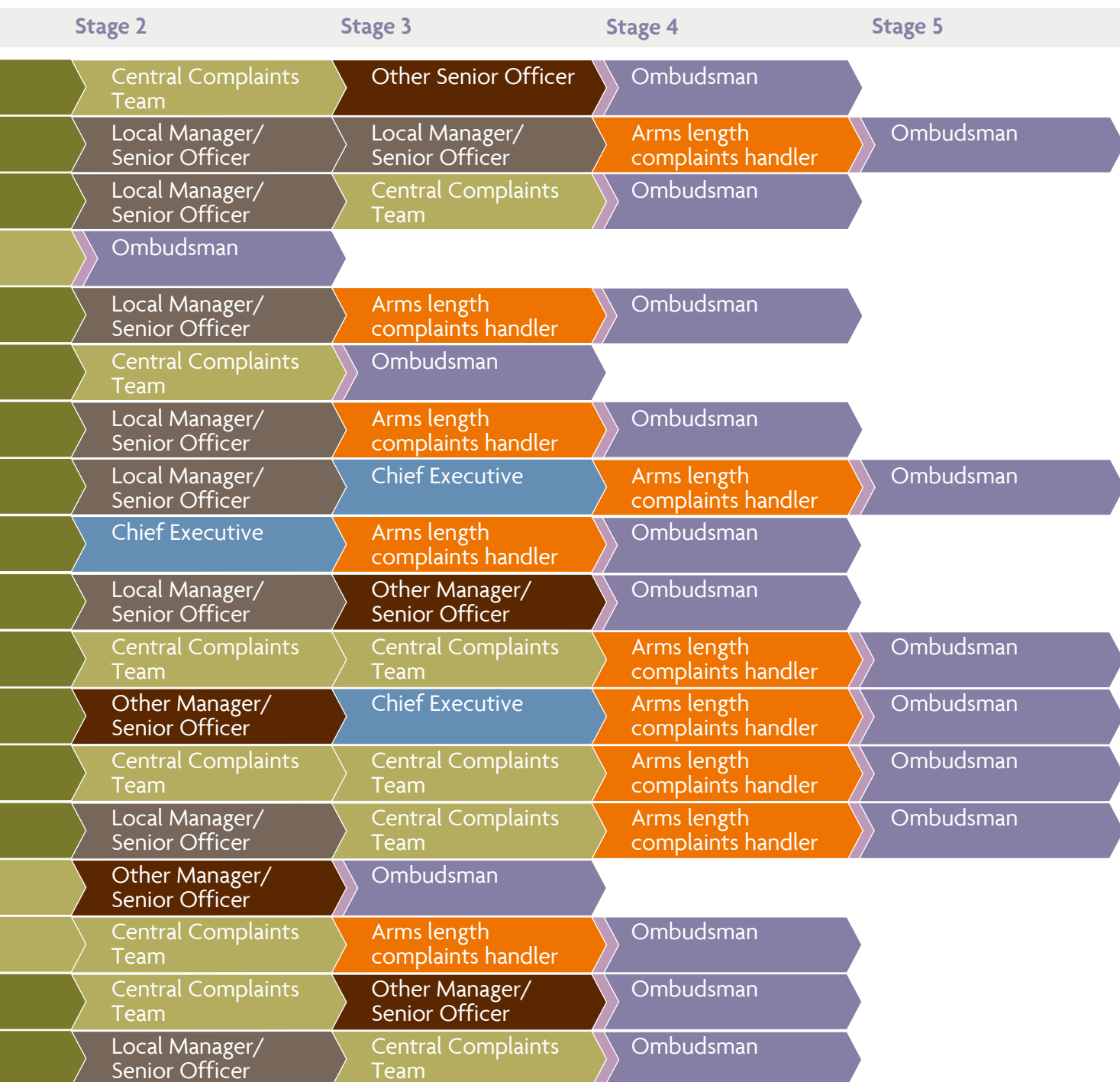
### Complaint handling systems across government

Our survey suggested there were a wide range of complaints systems in use across government. To understand how this might appear to a member of the public wanting to complain, we looked at the information available on a small sample selection of public bodies' websites. The results are shown in the chart below.

Department	Public body (where applicable)	Stage 1
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Insolvency Service	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Communities and Local Government		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Communities and Local Government	Planning Inspectorate	Central Complaints Team
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	Rural Payments Agency	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Transport		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Transport	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Transport	Highways Agency	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Work and Pensions		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Work and Pensions	Child Support Agency	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Department for Work and Pensions	Jobcentre Plus	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
HM Revenue & Customs		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
HM Revenue & Customs	Valuation Office Agency	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Home Office		Central Complaints Team
Home Office	UK Border Agency	Central Complaints Team
Ministry of Justice		Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff
Ministry of Justice	HM Courts and Tribunals Service	Front Line <sup>†</sup> Staff

<sup>†</sup> 'Front line' is given as the first stage for public bodies who specifically state this to be the first stage of their complaint procedure. It is also used where public bodies tell the public that they

should first put their concern to the member of staff they had been dealing with. This is even if the public body does not treat that as the first stage of its formal complaints procedure.



### Complaints handlers across government

Our survey and our research of government websites shows there is a bewildering array of job titles for the staff involved in complaints handling processes across government. For any complainant this is confusing and frustrating, but for those whose complaint relates to more than one public body, it adds even greater complexity.





## The financial cost of poor complaint handling

The tables below show how much public bodies have spent in the last year remedying complaints to the Ombudsman – a total of £367,173.03. What those tables cannot show is the cost of lengthy

and protracted complaints systems within public bodies that have failed to resolve complaints that come to the Ombudsman, and the cost to individuals' lives of unresolved issues.

### Financial remedies secured through interventions<sup>2</sup>

Public Body	Total	Compliance items <sup>3</sup>
<b>Child Support Agency</b>	£7,200.65	6
<b>Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service</b>	£600.00	3
<b>Consumer Council for Water</b>	£200.00	1
<b>Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority</b>	£1,500.00	1
<b>Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency</b>	£35.60	1
<b>Driving Standards Agency</b>	£50.00	1
<b>HM Courts Service</b>	£5,209.22	22
<b>HM Revenue &amp; Customs</b>	£19,957.71	23
<b>Jobcentre Plus</b>	£12,260.70	3
<b>Rural Payments Agency</b>	£800.00	2
<b>The Adjudicator's Office</b>	£50.00	1
<b>UK Border Agency</b>	£2,351.43	13
<b>Total</b>	£50,215.31	77

2. There may be some financial remedies not included in this data where we have asked a public body to reimburse a cost or provide compensation on receipt of further information from the complainant once the case has been closed.

3. A remedy we have asked a government department or public body to provide to resolve a complaint and to which they have agreed.

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‘There is little evidence that the costs of failing to get things right first time are fully understood and quantified by public bodies. Instead the focus tends to be on budgets rather than costs. The fact that some of the costs of poor decision making fall on different government departments, tribunals and ombudsmen mean that there are often no financial incentives to ensure that decisions are right first time...’

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*Right First Time, Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, June 2011*

#### Financial remedies secured through investigations

Public Body	Total	Recommendations
Child Support Agency	£92,213.59	17
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	£2,350.00	6
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	£89,087.00	6
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	£450.00	2
Equality and Human Rights Commission	£250.00	1
General Social Care Council	£7,000.00	2
HM Courts Service	£1,850.00	4
HM Revenue & Customs	£3,690.00	6
Independent Case Examiner	£500.00	1
Jobcentre Plus	£11,578.63	7
Land Registry	£2,500.00	1
Legal Services Commission	£32,255.00	2
National Offender Management Service	£100.00	1
Rural Payments Agency	£1,000.00	1
Skills Funding Agency	£200.00	1
The Office of the Public Guardian	£610.00	4
The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	£356.84	2
UK Border Agency	£70,966.66	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>£316,957.72</b>	<b>90</b>

## Case studies

### Refusal to escalate a complaint


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Mr R, who lives in the Bristol area, had been experiencing difficulties arranging an inspection of his vehicle by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) prior to registering it. After his vehicle was impounded by the police because it was not taxed (it could not be taxed unless it was registered), Mr R complained to DVLA. Mr R pursued his complaint through the three stages of DVLA's internal complaints process, the third stage of which was a complaint to the Chief Executive. Unhappy with the responses he received, he then asked for his complaint to

be referred to the fourth stage, DVLA's Independent Complaints Assessor. The Chief Executive of DVLA refused his request, saying that they had handled his case appropriately. Mr R was not aware that the Chief Executive could do that and complained to the Ombudsman.

We partly upheld the complaint. We found that DVLA had been maladministrative in their handling of Mr R's case. We also found that they should have allowed Mr R's complaint to progress to the Independent Complaints Assessor.

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## Refused to consider the complaint further

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Ms B, who lives in London, complained that Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) had not responded appropriately to her complaint. Ms B's complaint was about her concerns that a report written by Cafcass for court did not reflect that she was a victim of domestic violence. The report was for the purpose of deciding her ex-partner's access arrangements with her son. She said that the member of staff who compiled the report was biased against her, viewing her as exacting and anxious and the cause of the abuse she suffered. She said that there appeared to be a serious lack of understanding by the member of staff about what domestic abuse was. Ms B said she was so 'terrified' by the Cafcass report that she decided to employ a barrister for the hearing so that she could challenge the report, which she did successfully. Ms B complained to Cafcass, who have a three stage procedure. Ms B felt that her complaint had not been listened to and that Cafcass had reframed it to make it something it was not, so that they could tell

her she was wrong. She said that she had been denied a voice. After a meeting and a written response, Ms B asked to have her complaint considered at stage two of Cafcass's procedure. Cafcass refused to consider the complaint at stage two. Ms B told us that she was distressed that Cafcass had not given her a voice. She felt that they shut down her complaint and she didn't understand how they could ignore so much of it.

We upheld Ms B's complaint. We found that Cafcass had not answered Ms B's concerns at stage one of their complaints procedure when they should have and had not considered their actions against their policy and guidance. They then, incorrectly, did not allow Ms B to complain further through their complaints procedure. Cafcass agreed to consider Ms B's complaint again in accordance with their procedures, to apologise, and pay her £250 for the upset they had caused her. Ms B later wrote to us to confirm that Cafcass had reinvestigated her complaint and fully upheld it, a resolution she was happy with.

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## A mistake that cost one woman her home

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Mrs J, who lived in London, made a witness statement during a fraud investigation that Jobcentre Plus and the local authority were pursuing into one of Mrs J's neighbours. Even though Mrs J was assisting Jobcentre Plus, at no benefit to herself, they did not keep her statement or, most importantly, her identity, confidential (as they had promised her they would do). Because her identity was disclosed, Mrs J was then threatened and had stones thrown at her windows; she was followed and her children were bullied at school. Her children changed schools and had to commute for two hours a day.


Mrs J's mental health declined; she had to see a psychologist and she became reluctant to leave her house. Her relationship with one of her children suffered and he also developed psychological

problems. Mrs J had to call the police on a number of occasions. She described her experience as one of *'living in fear, hell and anxiety'*.

Mrs J approached Jobcentre Plus and, although they took her complaint seriously and paid her £750 in compensation, they told her they were not responsible for her neighbour's actions and told her to contact the police.

Mrs J saw no option but to move home. But she could not do so because she was a council tenant and did not satisfy the criteria for a transfer. When she approached us she said her life was on hold until she could move. She was frightened for her own safety and for that of her children. Mrs J said she was *'ashamed and angry about having signed the statement and would never do it again...'*

We upheld the complaint. Jobcentre Plus had already acknowledged their error but we found that there was no reason to think that Mrs J's life would not have continued as normal had Jobcentre Plus not disclosed her witness statement. It was for Jobcentre Plus to return Mrs J to a position where she could continue normal life which, in the circumstances, had to be in a new home. We recommended that Jobcentre Plus work with the council to ensure that Mrs J was moved to another property. We also recommended that Jobcentre Plus pay Mrs J's relocation costs and £6,000 in recognition of the impact their actions had on Mrs J and her children. Mrs J thanked us for our help and told us: *'This part of our life ... will always have a deep mark in my kids' memory.'*



## Getting it wrong, twice

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Mrs Q, from Wales, telephoned the Office of the Public Guardian's helpline in July 2009 because she was not sure when she could register her father's Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). EPAs must be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian before they can be used. Mrs Q was told by the helpline that her father did not need to be incapable of managing his affairs before she could register his EPA. Mrs Q therefore applied for her father's EPA to be registered and paid the £120 fee, but the application was refused because her father was not yet incapable of managing his own affairs. Mrs Q was subsequently told that the fee would not be refunded to her, even though the application was refused. Mrs Q complained to the Office of the Public Guardian. Their complaints procedure directs complaints first to the staff dealing with the matter and then to the central complaints team. The Office of

the Public Guardian admitted that Mrs Q was probably given incorrect information by the helpline. Despite that, they only offered to pay her £40. The Office of the Public Guardian told us that they thought that their offer was proportionate to the error they had made.

We upheld Mrs Q's complaint. We were concerned that the Office of the Public Guardian argued that the financial remedy they offered Mrs Q was proportionate to their error, rather than to the injustice caused by the error. The injustice was that Mrs Q lost £120 when, as a result of incorrect information, she tried to register her father's EPA at the wrong time. We recommended that the Office of the Public Guardian pay Mrs Q £250 to cover the lost fee of £120 and to recognise the frustration and anger their error, and their failure to put it right, caused Mrs Q at a difficult time.

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## Two similar complaints, two different outcomes

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Mr S, from Surrey, received a summons to a court hearing, but HM Courts Service (HMCS) did not tell him what it was about. When Mr S contacted them about it they still did not tell him what the hearing was for. Worried about what might happen, Mr S engaged a solicitor. That turned out to be unnecessary because the case was dismissed as trivial. Mr S sought his solicitor's fees from HMCS and they offered him £605.50.

When we intervened, HMCS thought that they had offered Mr S too much – this was incorrect. We met with HMCS and explained how they should approach the calculation. HMCS then calculated that they owed Mr S £863. They also agreed to pay him £200 for the inconvenience they had caused him.

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Mr S had quite a different experience from another complainant who brought a complaint about HMCS to the Ombudsman – a firm of solicitors from Chester who were the claimants in a hearing that the defendant did not attend. The defendant said that the court had not sent him the summons. The court accepted they had made an error and relisted the case. The solicitors had to attend a further hearing.

HM Courts Service offered to pay an amount that was equivalent to the costs incurred in unnecessarily attending a hearing. We provided reassurance to the solicitors that their complaint had been handled well.

## Inaction and delay prevented one man from working

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Mr P, from London, had a right to live and work in the UK. In January 2009, to prove that to potential employers, Mr P applied to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) for a residence card. It usually takes a maximum of six months for UKBA to consider an application for a residence card. In April 2009, Mr P found a job in London and his employer asked UKBA if Mr P could work while his application for a residence card was being considered. UKBA told Mr P's employers that Mr P could work, but to check again in 12 months' time. Mr P started work.

By August 2009, Mr P's application had still not been approved. Mr P contacted UKBA, by telephone and letter, to enquire about his application. He complained to the customer services department and his MP wrote on his behalf. In response, UKBA apologised for the delay and confirmed that Mr P could work while his application

was being considered. However, they did not make a decision on his application.

Mr and Mrs P told us that by late 2009 Mrs P had started to suffer from depression due to the stress and uncertainty of not knowing if Mr P's application would be approved. By 2010 Mr P said he and his wife felt like they were falling apart. Mr P continued to chase UKBA about his application and he complained again to the customer services department. He received another apology and was again assured that his application would be dealt with. Mrs P wrote another letter of complaint, but again nothing happened.

In May 2010, as instructed by UKBA, Mr P's employers again checked whether Mr P could work. UKBA said Mr P could not work while his application was being decided. When Mr P found out he instructed solicitors. The solicitors'

intervention led to UKBA approving Mr P's application but UKBA did not tell Mr P that they had done that. Without proof of his right to work, Mr P's employers decided they could no longer employ him and he was escorted from their premises by security guards. Mr P told us he found that experience humiliating. It was 17 June 2010 – more than a year after he had applied for it – before Mr P's solicitors received his residence card. Mr P returned to work the next day.

We upheld the complaint. We found that UKBA had done absolutely nothing to progress Mr P's application for more than nine months. We recommended that they should apologise to Mr P, pay his legal costs and make him a payment of £500 in recognition of the inconvenience, embarrassment, frustration and distress they had caused him.





## Improving services for vulnerable adults

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Ms N is a very vulnerable adult, living in Edinburgh. She has learning disabilities, severe emotional problems, and cannot manage many areas of her life. Since 1982, Ms N has been a resident of a community that offers opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Ms N received support from her community to manage her financial affairs. With their help she had been in receipt of benefits, including income support, on which she depended since 1995.

When Ms N moved from one residential site within the community to another, Jobcentre Plus inexplicably stopped her income support.

The community did not find out Ms N's income support had been stopped because Jobcentre Plus had, incorrectly, recorded that she did not need an appointee (someone who acts as a representative in dealings with Jobcentre Plus).

It took a year and a half for Jobcentre Plus to explain how to get Ms N's benefit reinstated, which she did, with support. Then, despite two successful tribunal hearings, a complaint to Jobcentre Plus and another to the Independent Case Examiner, Ms N's income support was not backdated to the date it had been stopped. When her case was brought to the Ombudsman, Ms N

had been deprived of £3,500 as a result of Jobcentre Plus's mistake.

We identified where things had gone wrong and recommended that Jobcentre Plus pay Ms N the money she was owed. We also recommended that they should make a plan to avoid making the same mistakes again. Jobcentre Plus later confirmed that they had complied with our recommendations and they told us about their plan. The plan included actions that went beyond our recommendations and beyond putting things right for Ms N. This should help to ensure that vulnerable people like Ms N receive a better service in future.

## Overview of complaints to the Ombudsman 2010-11

Here we report on the complaints we received about government departments and public bodies and how they were resolved. Further on, we give more details about the complaints we received about individual public bodies and departments.

In 2010-11 we received **7,360** Parliamentary complaints and continued work on **568** complaints we carried over from 2009-10.

We resolved **7,569<sup>4</sup>** complaints and carried over **359** into 2011-12.

**5,590** complaints were made to us before the public body had done all they could to respond; **4,861** of those had also not been made through an MP, as the law requires. We gave the people making those complaints advice about how to complain to the public body and how to complain to us again if they were not satisfied with the response.

On **425** occasions, the complainant chose not to progress their complaint further or we did not hear from them again after we had told them that they had to put their complaint to us through an MP.

We gave advice on **224** complaints that were not in our remit and signposted people to the correct organisation to complain to, where possible.

For **1,078** complaints we reassured the complainant that there was no case for the public body to answer, or we explained how the body had already put things right.

We achieved a swift resolution in **127** complaints by helping to put things right without the need for a formal investigation. We resolved **106** of those complaints by intervening directly with the public body complained about, and in a further **21** complaints we provided the remedy ourselves by

providing a further explanation about what had happened. We accepted **125** complaints for formal investigation and reported on **120<sup>5</sup>** complaints investigated, of which **78 per cent** were upheld or partly upheld.

The most common reason complainants gave us for being unhappy with a public body's complaint handling was that they had provided an inadequate financial remedy.

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4. The number of complaints resolved is greater than the number of complaints received because some complaints were carried over from the last business year.

5. The number of complaints reported on is different from the number accepted for investigation because some investigations were not completed in the year and others from the previous year were reported on.

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**7,360**  
complaints received

**7,569<sup>4</sup>**  
complaints resolved

**127**

complaints  
resolved through  
swift resolution  
including...

**106**

interventions

**125**

complaints  
accepted for formal  
investigation

**120<sup>5</sup>**

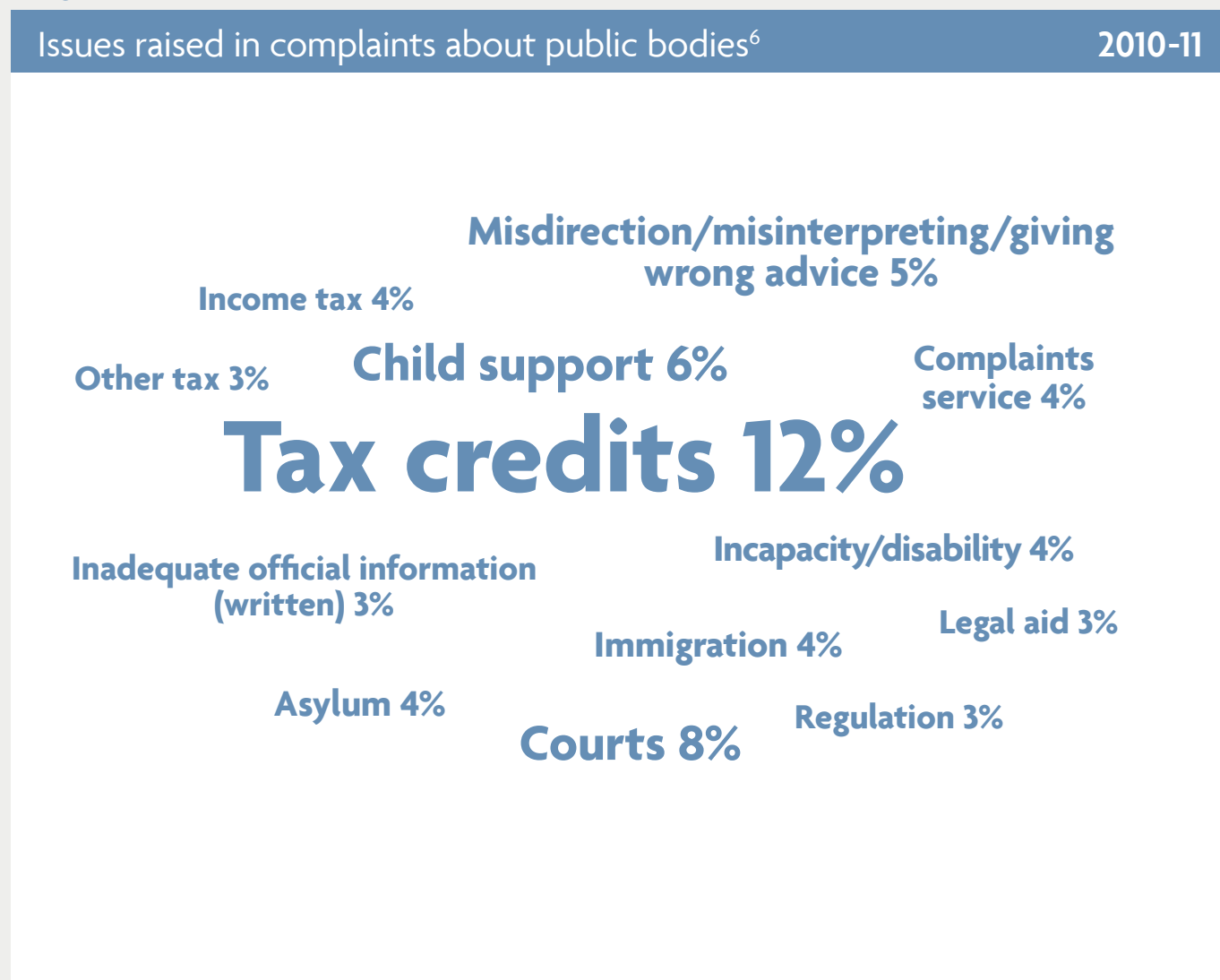
investigated  
complaints  
reported on

**78%**

of investigated  
complaints upheld  
or partly upheld

## Reasons for complaints

Figure 1



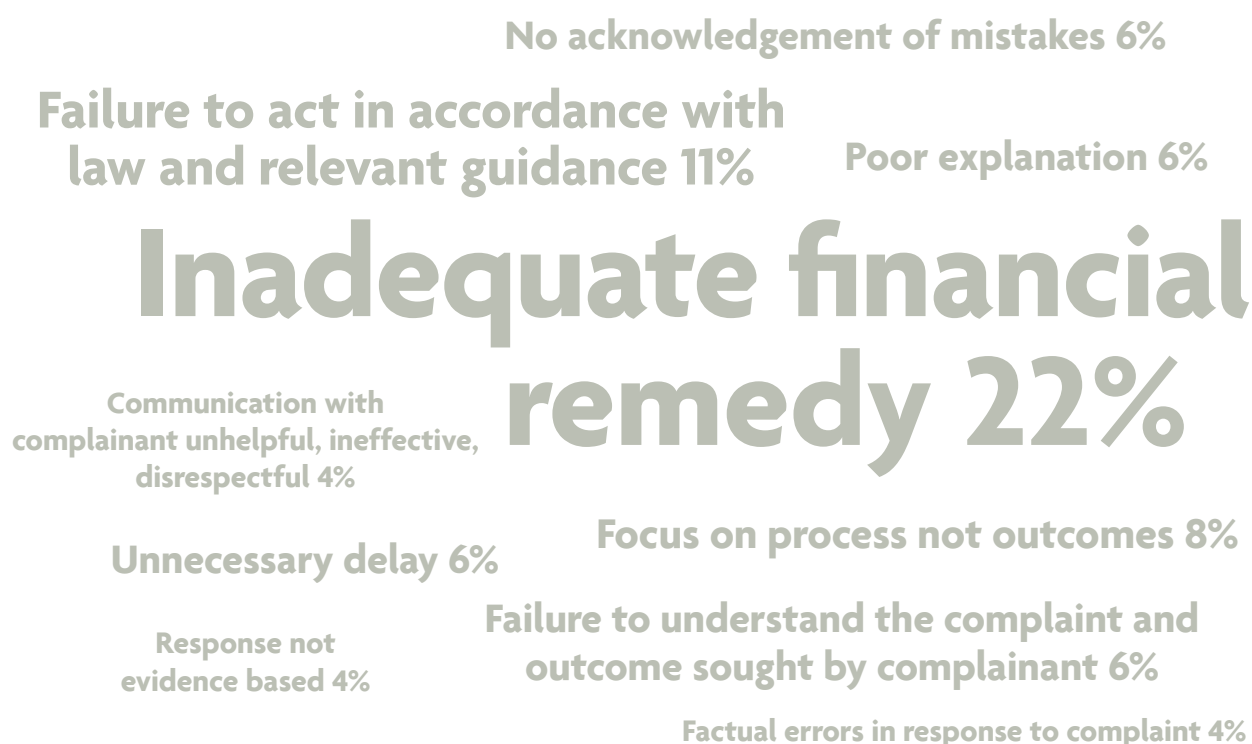
**Figure 1** shows the most common reasons for complaints. Some complaints cover a range of different issues. The most complained about issues were tax credits, the courts and child support.

6. The keywords in figures 1 and 2 reflect the issues raised by complainants. We assign keywords to complaints that are not taken forward at the Ombudsman's discretion or because they are premature. Complaints which are taken forward for investigation are assigned further keywords according to the issues we identify when investigating the complaint.

Figure 2

Issues raised about complaint handling<sup>6</sup>

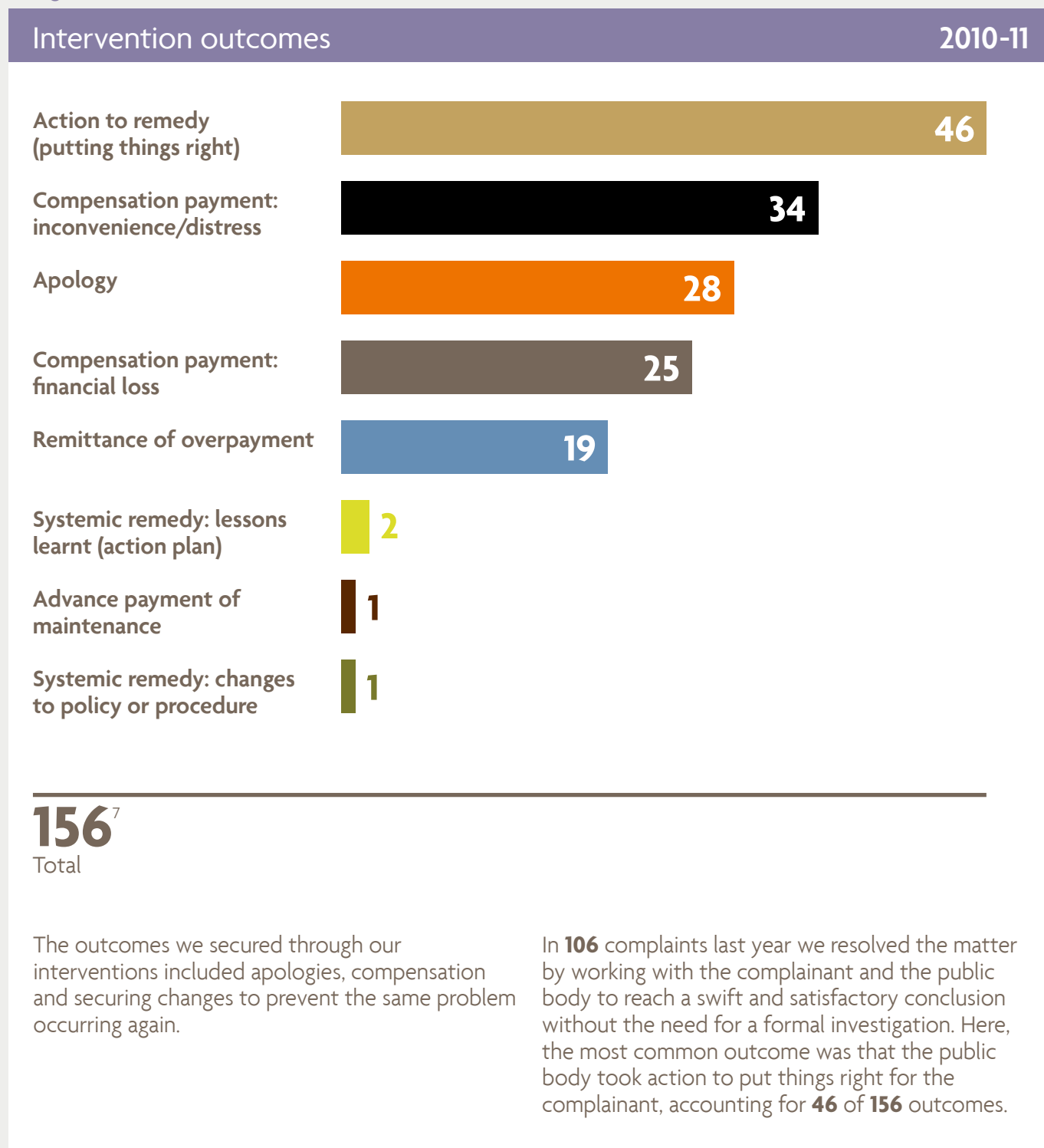
2010-11



**Figure 2** shows the most common reasons why people complained to us about the way the public body had dealt with their complaint. Receiving an inadequate financial remedy was the most common reason why people were unhappy with the way their complaint has been handled.

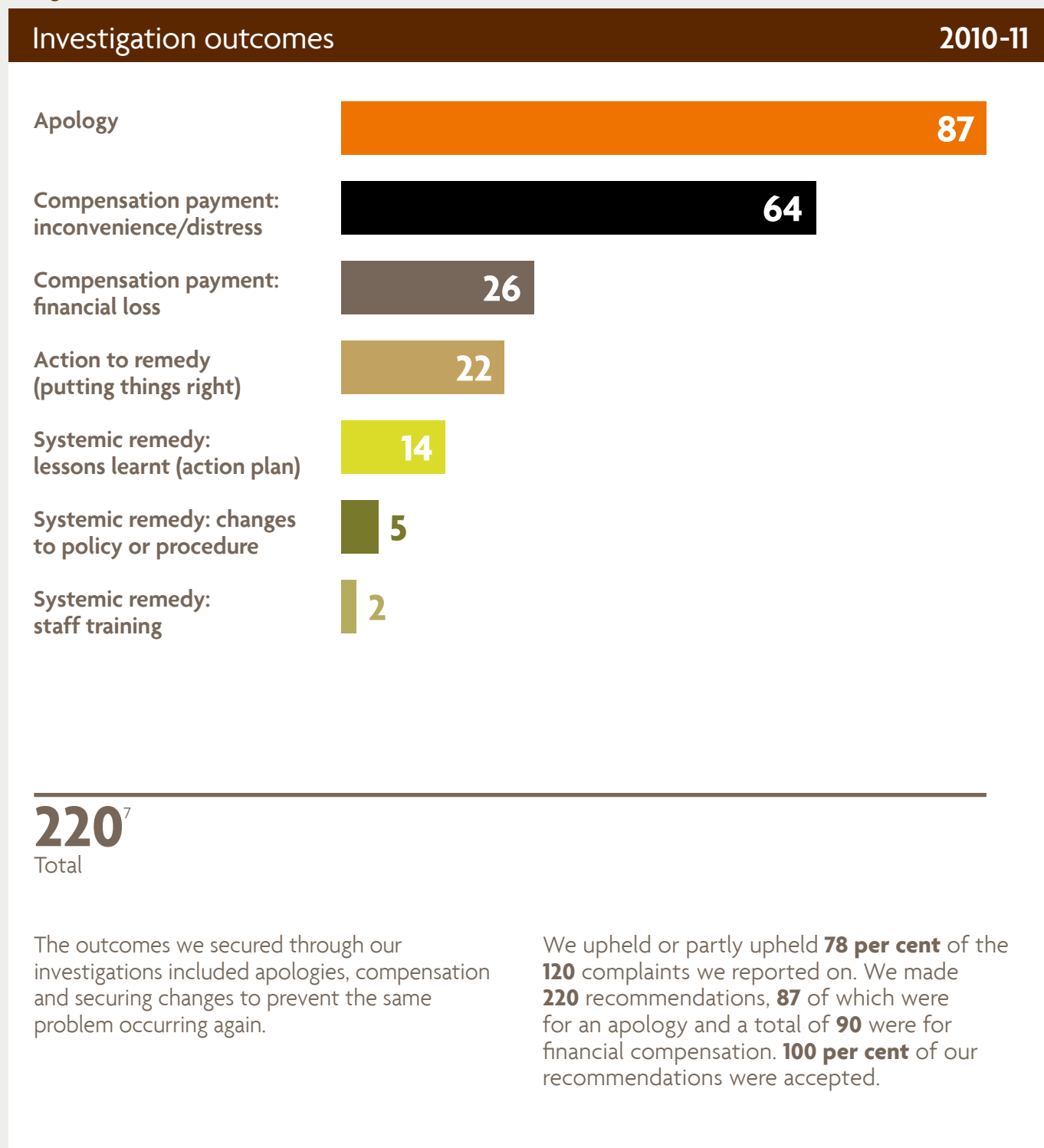
## Complaint outcomes

Figure 3



7. Where a complaint is resolved there may be more than one outcome, for example, an apology and a compensation payment. This is why the total number of outcomes is greater than the number of complaints resolved by intervention or through investigation.

Figure 4



## Government departments and public bodies complaint handling performance 2010-11

**This section provides more detailed information about the complaint handling performance of individual government departments and public bodies.**


Government departments act as sponsors for different public bodies. For example, in 2010-11 Jobcentre Plus was a sponsored body of the Department for Work and Pensions and the UK Border Agency was sponsored by the Home Office. Where we receive a complaint about a public body, we record it under its body name. The top ten public bodies with the most complaints received, complaints resolved by intervention, and complaints accepted for investigation are listed in the following pages.

Also listed are complaints statistics by government department. Each of these figures includes the number of complaints for the bodies that the department sponsors.

Sometimes, the number of complaints about a government department may be greater than the total number of complaints about the bodies it sponsors. This is because we may have received complaints about the government department or a service it provides directly to the public.

A full list of all the departments, and their public bodies, which we received complaints about during the year is available in the appendix.

Complaints can provide an early warning of failures in service delivery. But a small number of complaints received does not necessarily mean a better performance. Some public bodies have more customers and provide more services than others, resulting in more complaints to the Ombudsman. Alternatively, fewer complaints about a public body could mean that there is insufficient information provided to customers about how to complain.



‘When things have gone wrong, public bodies should explain themselves fully and say what they will do to put matters right as quickly as possible.’

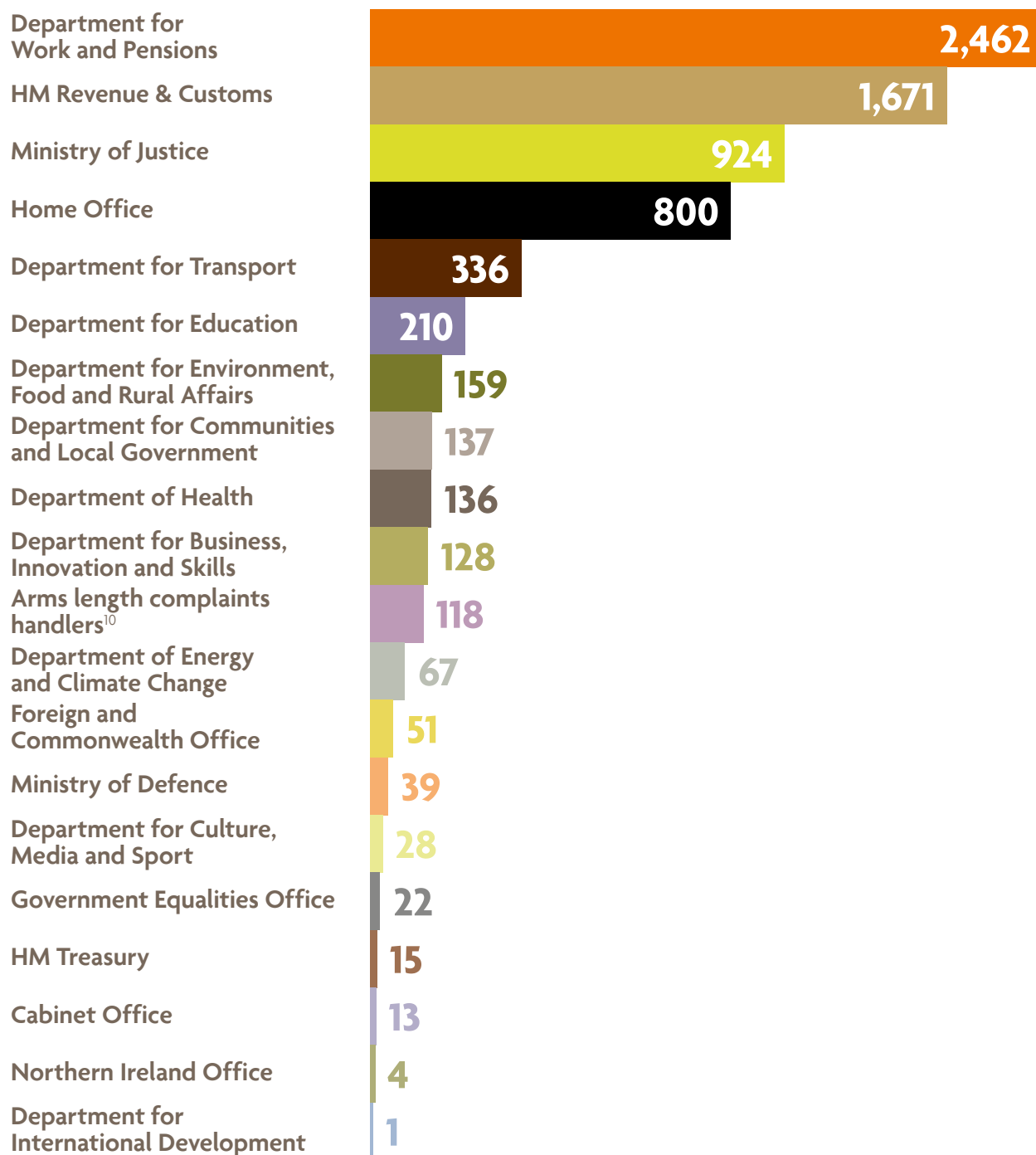
*Principles of Good Complaint Handling*

# Complaints received

Figure 5

Complaints received by government departments<sup>8,9</sup>

2010-11



8. These figures also include complaints about the bodies that the department sponsors.

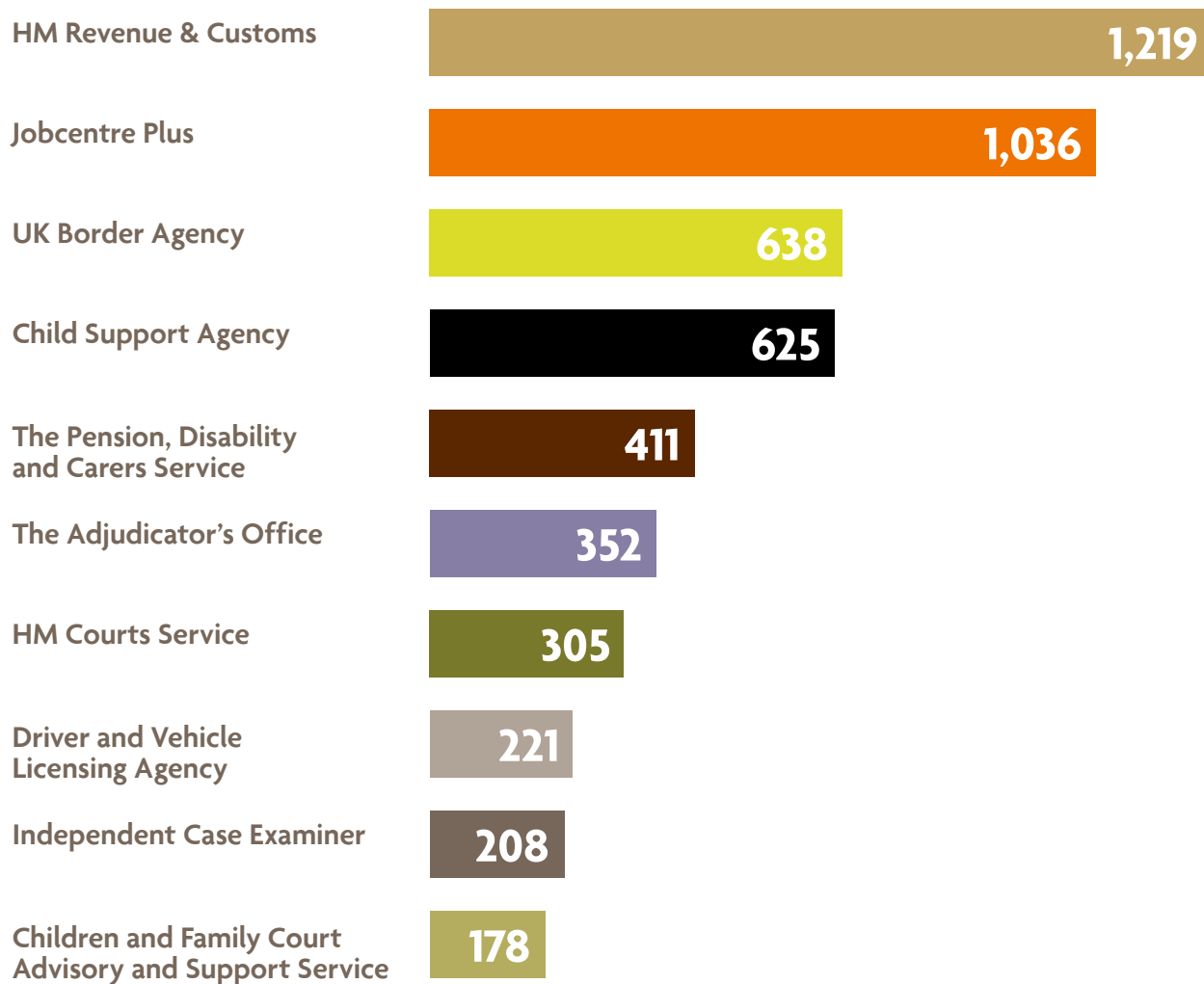
9. A further 39 complaints were unattributed to a government department.

10. An organisation or person contracted by the government department or public body to independently consider complaints.

Figure 6

Top ten public bodies by complaints received

2010-11



# Interventions

Figure 7

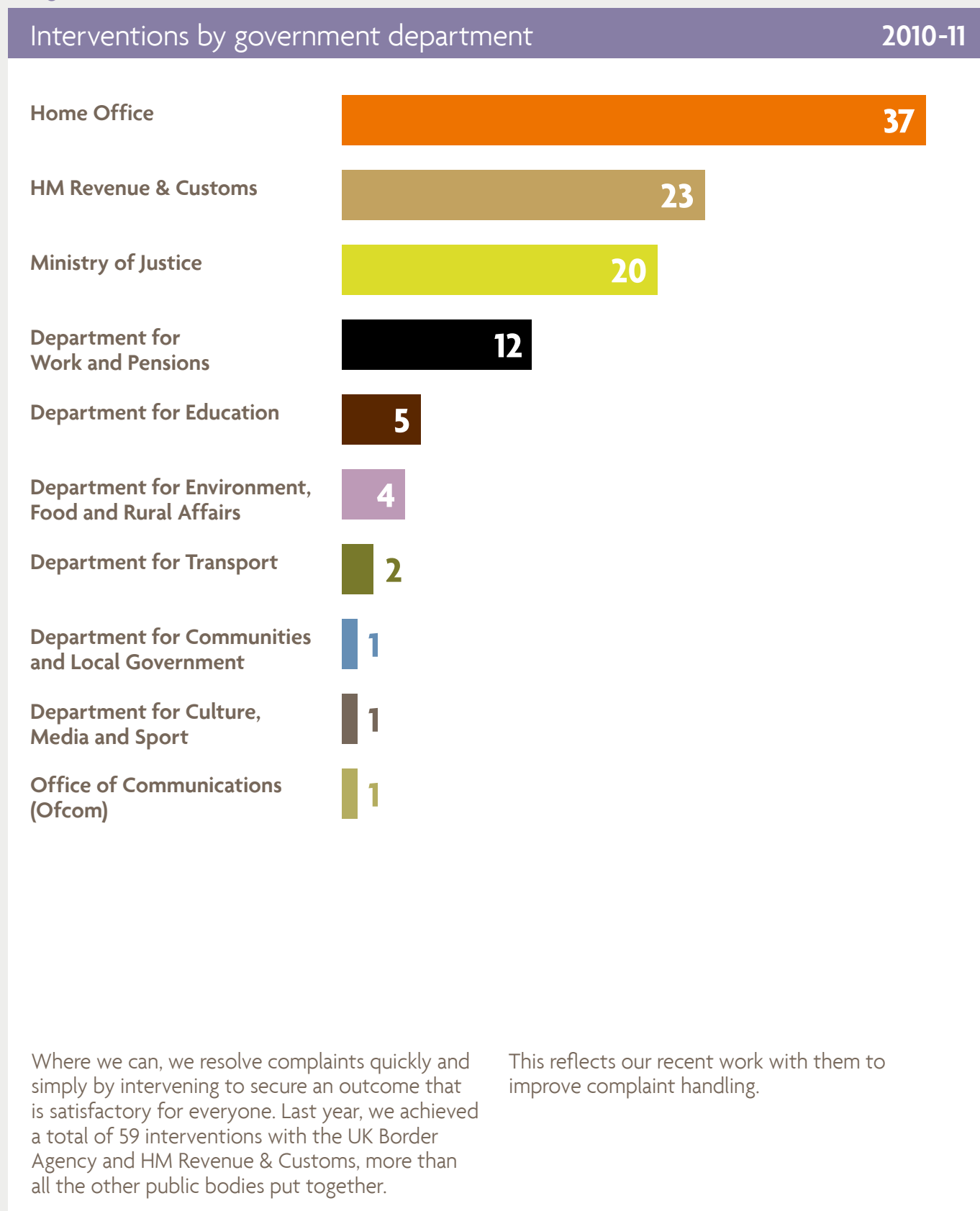
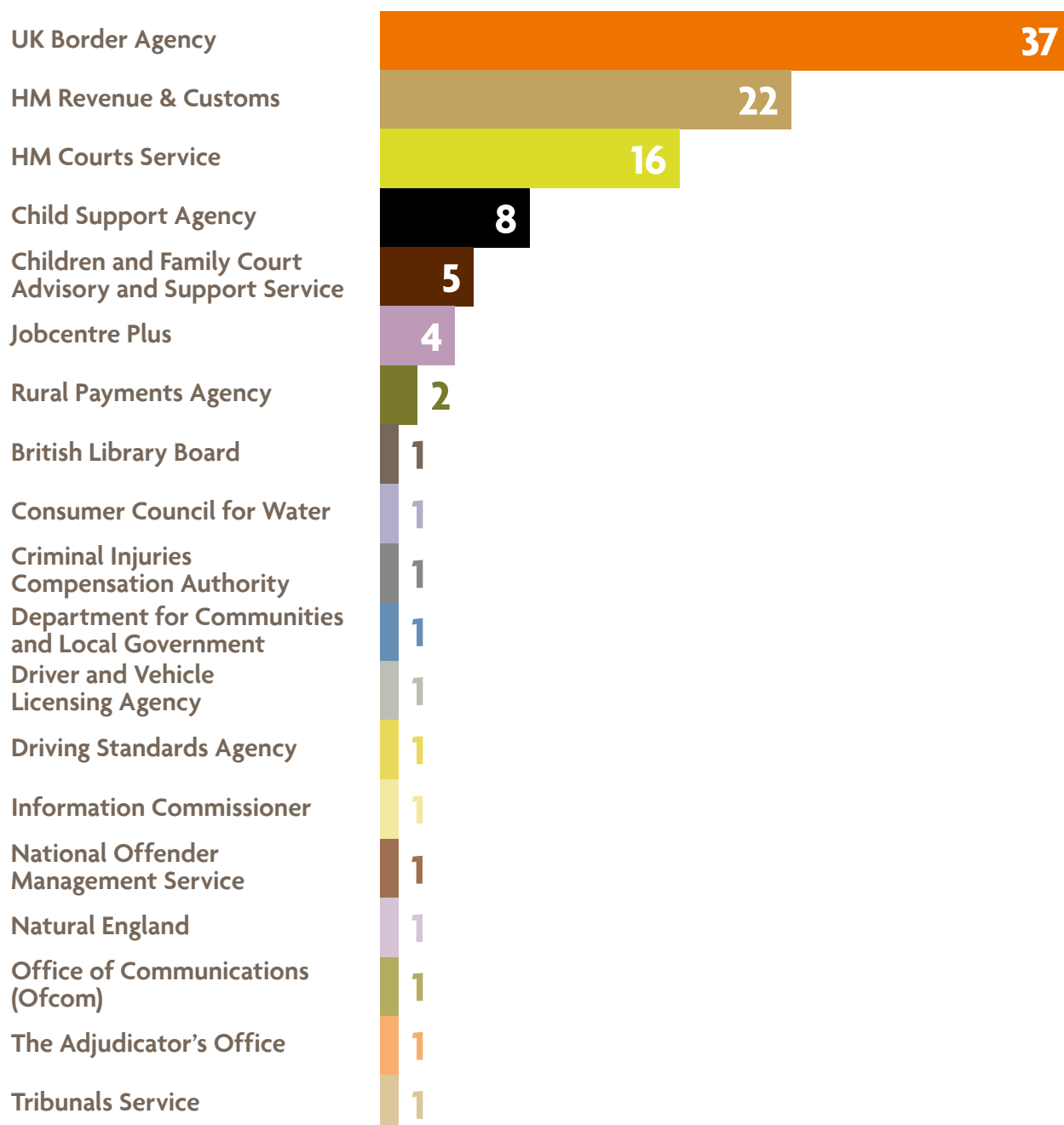


Figure 8

## Top ten public bodies by intervention

2010-11

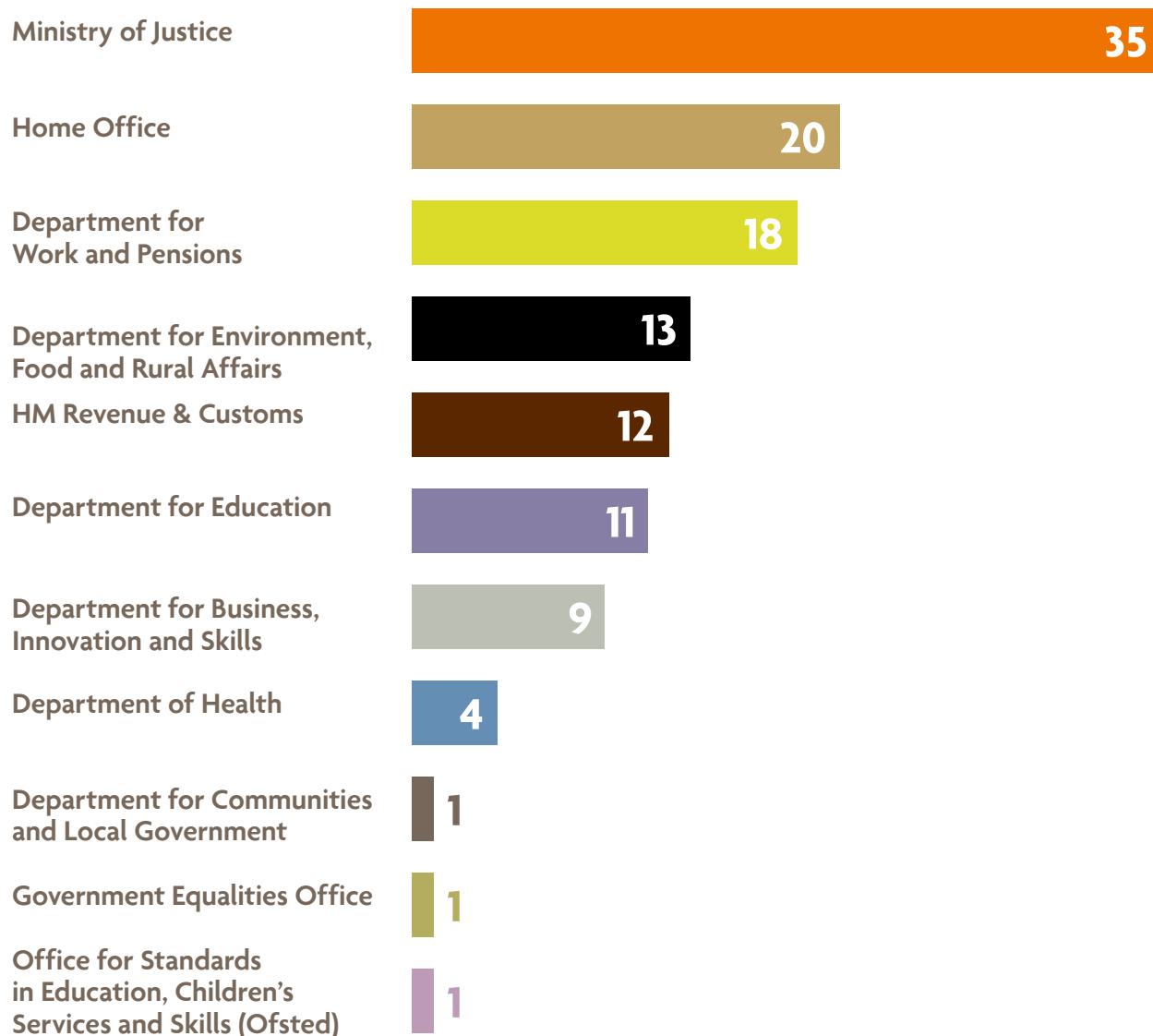


For twelve bodies, there was one intervention.  
This generates a list of nineteen public bodies overall.

## Complaints accepted for investigation

Figure 9

### Complaints accepted for formal investigation by government department 2010-11

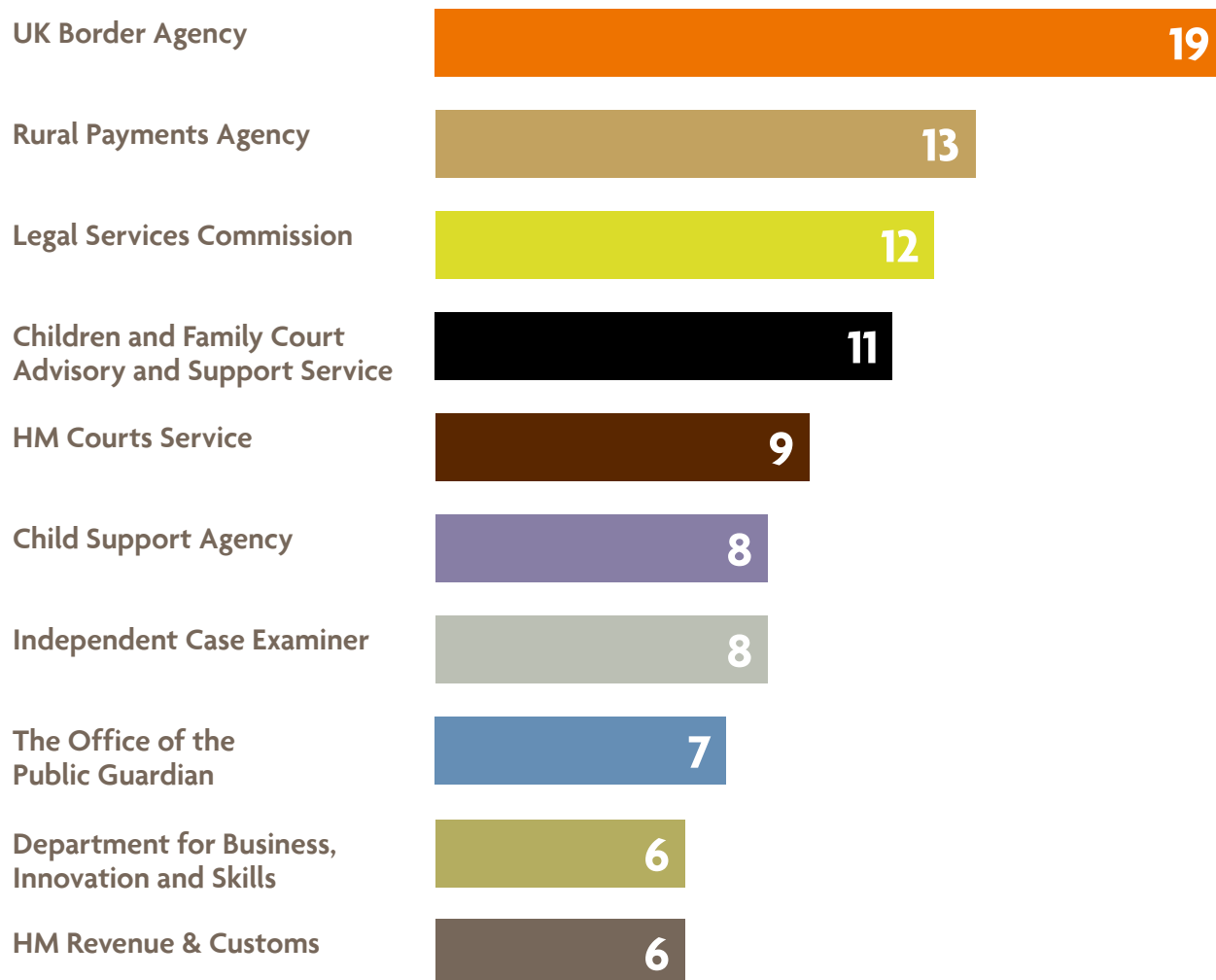


More than a quarter of the complaints we accepted for investigation were about the Ministry of Justice. It is the sponsor body for the Legal Services Commission, HM Courts Service and the Office of the Public Guardian – three of the ten public bodies we accepted the most complaints for investigation

about. Of these, only HM Courts Service was also among the ten public bodies we received the most complaints about, suggesting we accepted proportionally higher numbers of complaints for investigation about the Legal Services Commission and the Office of the Public Guardian.

Figure 10

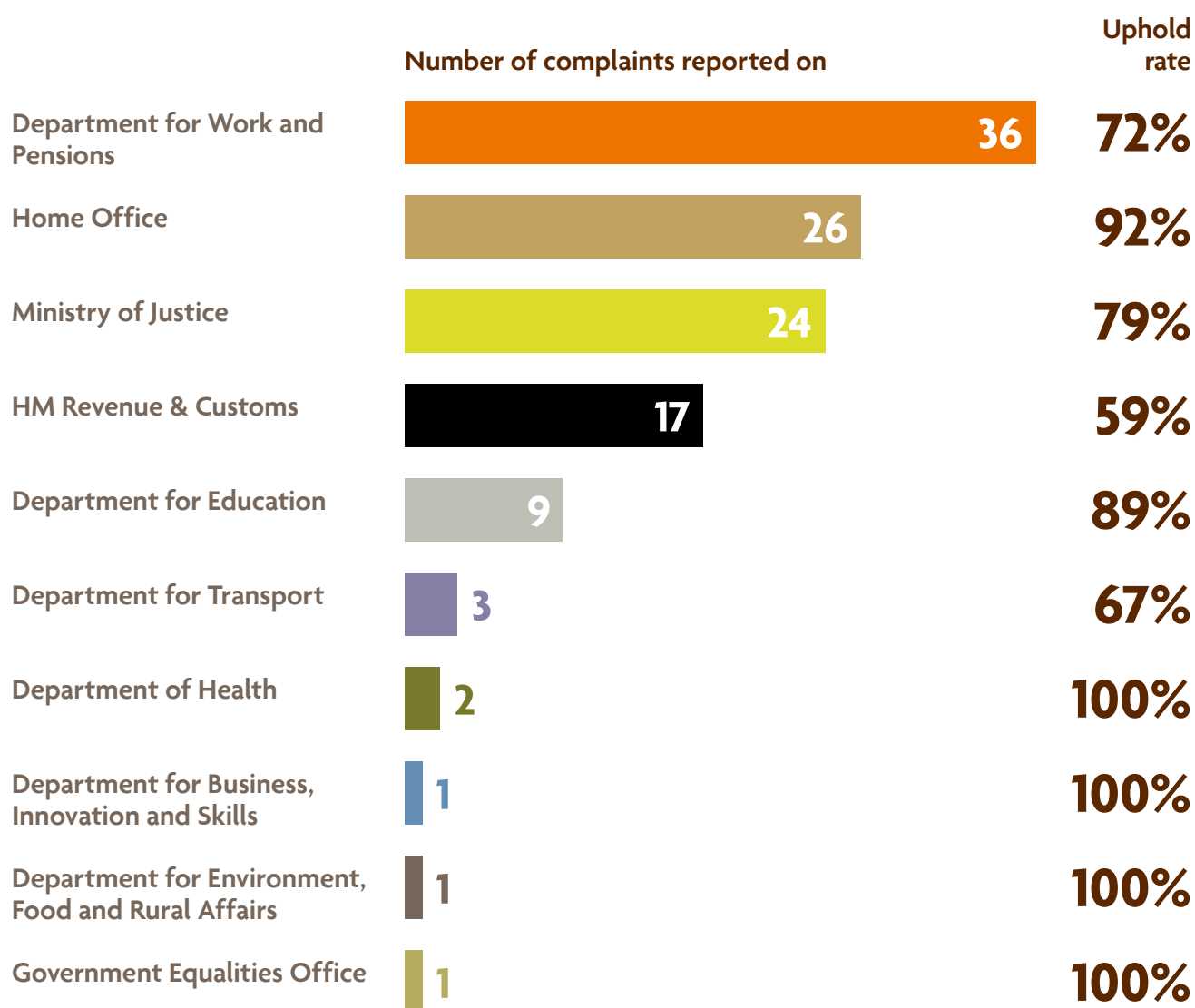
Top ten public bodies by complaints accepted for formal investigation 2010-11



## Complaints reported on

Figure 11

### Complaints investigated and reported on by government department 2010-11



We upheld 100 per cent of complaints about a number of departments and public bodies although often the numbers of complaints involved are very small. The departments with the lowest uphold rate were HM Revenue & Customs, with 59 per cent of

complaints investigated partly or fully upheld, the Department for Transport and the Department for Work and Pensions with 67 per cent and 72 per cent respectively.

Figure 12

Top ten public bodies by complaints investigated and reported on 2010-11

	Number of complaints reported on	Uphold rate
UK Border Agency	26	92%
Child Support Agency	14	93%
Independent Case Examiner	14	43%
HM Revenue & Customs	10	60%
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	8	87%
The Adjudicator's Office	6	50%
HM Courts Service	6	83%
Jobcentre Plus	5	100%
The Office of the Public Guardian	5	100%
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	3	100%
Land Registry	3	100%

The public bodies with the lowest uphold rates were arms length complaints handlers – we upheld or partly upheld 50 per cent of complaints investigated about the Adjudicator's Office and 43 per cent about the Independent Case Examiner.

For two bodies, there were three complaints investigated and reported. This generates a list of eleven bodies overall.

## Looking to the future

**The Open Public Services White Paper says that ‘Good public services are one of the foundation stones of a civilised society’. It also says that the Government’s aim is to make sure that everyone has access to the best public services – and that ‘the best becomes better still’.**

The Public Administration Select Committee has described the Government’s proposals for the reform of public services as the most ambitious since the Second World War. It has also said that, unless the Government can rapidly develop and implement a comprehensive plan for cross-departmental reform in Whitehall, its wider ambitions for public service reform will fail.

So what needs to change? And what part can better complaint handling by government play in this transformation agenda?

First, it can help in improving the user’s experience of complaining about public services. As a result of recent initiatives by the Scottish and Welsh Governments, the users of devolved public services in Scotland and Wales now have the benefit of common complaint handling standards across public services. But, as this report illustrates, the current approach for responding to complaints about non-devolved public services, and public services in England, is disjointed and

unsatisfactory, providing little clarity for the public about what they can expect.

The public bodies within the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction are many and varied. The systems that they have in place for handling complaints will always need to depend on their own circumstances. Yet as the provision of public services becomes further decentralised, clear standards for complaint handling need to be established – standards that users and commissioners can reference in holding public service providers to account.

Secondly, better use must be made of the learning from complaints to drive improvements in public services. Why is it that government repeatedly fails to learn from getting things wrong? From the Ombudsman’s perspective, the answer is partly about governance, and partly about culture.

This report highlights the need to strengthen the corporate performance framework for government so that it has comprehensive, cross-departmental information about the volumes, nature and outcomes of complaints – and the associated costs. Without this type of information readily available, a key indicator of the quality of public services will be hidden from the view of national leaders. Government also needs

regularly to ask itself the question: what are we doing differently as a result of what we’ve learnt from getting things wrong?

It is also clear that government needs to have in place better and more extensive mechanisms for sharing learning from complaints. But if continuous improvement of public services is a serious aim, the cultural barriers to reform will also need to be tackled. Government needs to examine how ingrained in the civil service psyche is a closed, reactive, defensive response to complaints; and how that can be changed into an open, proactive response that encourages real and sustained learning. We would welcome the opportunity to play a part in this. There is no shortage of material in the Ombudsman’s casebook to contribute to the civil service learning agenda.

The picture revealed in this report poses critical questions for Government as it takes forward its programme for reform. In the coming months, we hope to have the opportunity to engage with national leaders about these issues and to explore how a better approach – and a better attitude – to responding to complaints could contribute to public service reform.



‘As the provision of public services becomes further decentralised, clear standards for complaint handling need to be established.’



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# Appendix

**In this appendix we publish information on complaints received about public bodies in 2010-11.**

This includes:

- The number of complaints received;
- The number of complaints resolved through intervention;
- The number of complaints accepted for formal investigation; and
- The number of investigated complaints reported on and the percentage of those complaints which were fully upheld, partly upheld or not upheld.

Public bodies are listed in alphabetical order by their official name. They are listed individually, rather than as a government department including its sponsored bodies.

We record a public body as an 'unknown body' where someone asks us how to complain about a public body but he or she is at such an early stage in the complaints process that they do not know, or are unwilling to give us, the name of the public body.

	Complaints received 2010-11	Complaints resolved through intervention 2010-11
Adjudicator to HM Land Registry	5	0
Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service	2	0
Arts and Humanities Research Council	1	0
Arts Council of England	2	0
British Council	2	0
British Library Board	4	1
Business Link East Midlands	1	0
Business Link North East	3	0
Cabinet Office	13	0
Care Quality Commission	45	0
Charity Commission	12	0
Child Benefit Office	59	0
Child Support Agency	625	8
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service	178	5
Civil Aviation Authority	6	0
Coal Authority	1	0
Commission for Equality and Human Rights	22	0
Companies House	17	0
Competition Commission	1	0
Construction Industry Training Board	3	0
Consumer Council for Water	21	1
Consumer Focus	1	0
Court Funds Office	2	0
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	18	1
Criminal Records Bureau	61	0
Crown Estate Office	1	0
Crown Prosecution Service (under Victims' Code†)	3	0
Debt Management Unit	22	0
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	51	0
Department for Communities and Local Government	31	1
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	4	0
Department for Education	15	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	17	0
Department for International Development	1	0
Department for Transport	17	0
Department for Work and Pensions	76	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change	67	0

†This public body is in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction only for complaints under the Victims' Code.

Complaints accepted for investigation 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on: fully upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: partly upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: not upheld %
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
8	14	71%	21%	7%
11	8	75%	13%	13%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	1	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	3	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
6	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	1	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	1	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—

	Complaints received 2010-11	Complaints resolved through intervention 2010-11
Department of Health	65	0
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	221	1
Driving Standards Agency	34	1
Eaga Plc*	3	0
Electoral Commission	11	0
English Sports Council	1	0
Environment Agency	58	0
Food Standards Agency	8	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	49	0
Forestry Commission	12	0
Gambling Commission	2	0
Gangmasters Licensing Authority	2	0
Gas and Electricity Markets Authority	4	0
General Social Care Council	17	0
Government Office for London	1	0
Health and Safety Executive	24	0
Health Protection Agency	1	0
Highways Agency	34	0
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England	4	0
HM Courts Service	305	16
HM Prison Service	59	0
HM Revenue & Customs	1,219	22
HM Treasury	14	0
Home Office	22	0
Homes and Communities Agency	6	0
Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority	1	0
Identity and Passport Service	33	0
Independent Case Examiner	208	0
Independent Complaints Adjudicator Service for Ofsted	4	0
Independent Complaints Assessor	2	0
Independent Complaints Reviewer	23	0
Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts (Monitor)	4	0
Independent Review Service for the Social Fund	25	0
Information Commissioner	94	1
Insolvency Service	20	0
Jobcentre Plus	1,036	4
Land Registry	39	0

\*Eaga Plc is not a body in jurisdiction but its actions on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are.

Complaints accepted for investigation 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on: fully upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: partly upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: not upheld %
0	0	—	—	—
0	2	0%	100%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
4	2	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	1	0%	0%	100%
0	0	—	—	—
9	6	17%	67%	17%
1	0	—	—	—
6	10	30%	30%	40%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	0	—	—	—
8	14	43%	0%	57%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	2	0%	0%	100%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
2	5	60%	40%	0%
1	3	33%	67%	0%

	Complaints received 2010-11	Complaints resolved through intervention 2010-11
Legal Services Commission	87	0
Local Government Boundary Commission for England	4	0
Marine Management Organisation	1	0
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	4	0
Medical Services ATOS Healthcare**	17	0
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	7	0
Ministry of Defence	22	0
Ministry of Justice	19	0
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council	1	0
National Archives	1	0
National Insurance Contributions Office	11	0
National Lottery Commission	10	0
National Offender Management Service	17	1
National Probation Service (under Victims' Code†)	1	0
Natural England	15	1
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	1	0
Northern Ireland Office	3	0
Office for National Statistics	1	0
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)	17	0
Office for Tenants and Social Landlords	6	0
Office of Communications	12	1
Office of Fair Trading	14	0
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)	5	0
Office of Rail Regulation	3	0
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner	3	0
Office of the Traffic Commissioner	3	0
Official Receiver	4	0
Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court	3	0
Oil and Pipelines Agency	1	0
Ordnance Survey	3	0
Parole Board	3	0
Pension Protection Fund	2	0
Pensions Ombudsman	13	0
Planning Inspectorate	78	0
Police (under Victims' Code†)	5	0
Postal Services Commission	1	0

†This public body is in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction only for complaints under the Victims' Code.

Complaints accepted for investigation 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on: fully upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: partly upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: not upheld %
12	2	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	1	0%	0%	100%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	1	0%	0%	100%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
1	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—

\*\*Medical Services ATOS Healthcare is not a body in jurisdiction but its actions on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions are.

	Complaints received 2010-11	Complaints resolved through intervention 2010-11
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman	43	0
Probation Trusts	6	0
Rail Passengers' Council	2	0
Regional Development Agencies	6	0
Residential Property Tribunal Service	4	0
Rural Payments Agency	42	2
Security Industry Authority	37	0
Serious Organised Crime Agency	1	0
Service Personnel and Veterans Agency	16	0
Skills Funding Agency	6	0
The Adjudicator's Office	352	1
The Office of the Public Guardian	53	0
The Pension, Disability and Carers Service	411	0
The Pensions Regulator	3	0
Treasury Solicitor	8	0
Tribunals Service	145	1
UK Border Agency	638	37
UK Intellectual Property Office	4	0
Valuation Office Agency	30	0
Valuation Tribunal Service	4	0
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	16	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)	10	0
Witness Care Units (under Victims' Code†)	2	0
Young People's Learning Agency for England	8	0
Youth Justice Board	1	0
Unknown	39	0
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>7,360</b>	<b>106</b>

†This public body is in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction only for complaints under the Victims' Code.

Complaints accepted for investigation 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on 2010-11	Investigated complaints reported on: fully upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: partly upheld %	Investigated complaints reported on: not upheld %
1	1	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
13	1	100%	0%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
3	1	0%	100%	0%
5	6	17%	33%	50%
7	5	80%	20%	0%
0	2	50%	0%	50%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
19	26	62%	31%	8%
0	0	—	—	—
1	1	0%	100%	0%
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
0	0	—	—	—
125	120	53%	25%	22%





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Health Service Ombudsman**

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ISBN 978-0-10-182102-5



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