

Privacy Notice

## This privacy notice tells you how the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (the Office) uses your personal information.

This document provides in summary form a description of the types of personal information held by the Police Ombudsman’s Office, where we got such information, why we have it and what we do with it.

It also sets out in summary form the rights of those people who are the subject of any information we hold.

## The types of personal information we hold and who provided it to us:

The personal information we hold includes material received from and is about:

* People who seek to make or have made a complaint about the conduct of a police officer and others exercising policing powers in Northern Ireland
* People who call our complaints line
* People who visit our Office
* People who visit our website
* People who make a complaint about the service we provide
* People who may pose a risk
* People who come to our attention during the course of handling complaints
* People who are or were our employees or have applied to join our Office or provide us with a service
* People who come to our attention during the course of handling complaints.

## What we do with that personal information

All the personal information held by the Police Ombudsman’s Office is held for the purposes of fulfilling its statutory functions of providing an independent, impartial system for the handling of complaints and other matters about the conduct of police officers and others exercising police powers in Northern Ireland. We also process personal information for the purposes of HR, finance and corporate services functions.

For each of the categories of people mentioned above, we may have to use your personal information in a particular way:

### People who seek to make or have made a complaint about the conduct of a police officer and others exercising powers in Northern Ireland

If you have made a complaint to us, we will need to collect some personal information about you if we are to progress your concerns: this will include your name, your contacts details and the relevant things you have told us about yourself. This may include e mails you have sent to us and any social media contact you have made with us.

There may be occasions when we have to share some of this information: we may need to discuss some of the things you have told us with the police in general or certain police officers in particular; we may need to share some of your information with other agencies or experts as part of our investigation and if we believe a police officer may have committed a crime, we may need to share some of the information you have given us with the prosecution service.

When we have finished dealing with your complaint, we will tell you the outcome and share that information with the police and the officer you have complained about.

### People who call our complaints line

We record and hold for a limited period all calls to our complaints line and to some other phone lines into our building, but not the number of the phone you have used to make the call.

### People who visit our Office

When you come to our Office, you will be asked to sign our visitor’s book. You may also be captured on one of our CCTV cameras outside and within the building. We collect this information for security purposes and also for health and safety reasons.

### People who visit our website

When someone visits [www.policeombudsman.org](http://www.policeombudsman.org/) we use a third party service to collect standard internet log information and details of visitor behavior patterns. This information is processed in a way which does not identify anyone. We do not, and do not allow anyone to attempt to find out the identities of those visiting our website. We have a separate privacy notice about information connected to our website.

### People who make complaints about the service we provide

If you have made a complaint to us about the services we have provided, we will need to retain that information while we deal with your concerns.

### People who may pose a risk

If we believe that a person presents a risk to themselves or others, we may have to report our fears to the relevant body and provide it with information about that person. In such instances we tell the person in question what we are doing.

### People who are or were our employees, have applied to join our Office or have provided us with a service

If you have applied for a job in the Police Ombudsman Office we will have asked for a range of information about you. That personal information will only be used for the purposes of progressing your application or for any other related requirements. We will not share it with any third parties.

If you have been or become an employee of the Office we may share some of your information with other agencies for purposes such as providing pensions, occupational health or security vetting. We have contracts in place with such agencies to ensure that they hold the material in a secure manner and do not share it with others.

If you have been contracted to supply us with a service we may hold some personal information about the people who help draw up that contract and the people who actually deliver the service.

## How We Protect Your Personal Information

In handling your personal information we:

* take all steps we can to safeguard it
* make sure only those staff who are required to see certain information as part of their job have access to it
* make sure those staff are trained and managed to ensure its safety
* regard any failure by a member of staff to adhere to the principles of data protection as a possible disciplinary or criminal matter
* will report any significant loss of data to the Information Commissioner’s Office and
* will take all the steps we can to ensure that information is not held for longer than is necessary.

We require our staff to:

* protect the personal information we hold
* not use this information in any way outside their professional role
* comply with the Data Protection and Office’s Security policies which include measures to ensure information is kept in a secure environment and that personal information held electronically is protected by secure passwords and is not compromised
* comply with the Office’s Retention and Disposal schedule.

## Keeping Your Information Private

We share personal information only when it is fair, lawful and appropriate to do so. This includes instances when:

* It is necessary for us to comply with our legal obligations as set out in Part 7 of the Police (NI) Act 1998 when investigating complaints about the conduct of police officers
* It is necessary for the performance of our statutory duties as prescribed by the Police (NI) Act 1998 and associated legislation to secure the efficiency, effectiveness and independence of the police complaints system
* It is necessary to protect your ‘vital interests’ or in exceptional circumstances that of another person, and
* If it is necessary to comply with statutory obligations pertaining to employment or other legislation.

## How long do we keep your information?

The Office retains information collected in line with the Disposal and Retention Schedule which is available in the ‘Access to Information’ section of our website.  Some personal information may be archived in a secure storage facility prior to being destroyed. It will be retained in a secure environment and access to it will be restricted according to the ‘need to know’ principle.

## Your right to access the information we hold about you

Under the Data Protection Act (2018) and EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR), you have rights as an individual which you can exercise in relation to the information we hold about you.

You can ask to access your personal information the Office holds. We must provide the information to you within one month of receipt of request unless an exemption applies in the Information Acts or the Office’s legislation.

Address: Information Directorate  
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland  
New Cathedral Buildings  
St. Anne's Square  
11 Church Street  
Belfast  
BT1 1PG

Email: [info@policeombudsman.org](mailto:info@policeombudsman.org)

## Changes to this privacy notice

We keep our privacy notice under regular review.  This privacy notice was last updated on 25 September 2020.