

PRISONS AND PROBATION OMBUDSMAN LAUNCH INDEPENDENT PRISONER COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

23 November 2023 – The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman has announced today a new name for their complaint investigations work – Independent Prisoner Complaint Investigations (IPCI).

IPCI, a sub brand of the PPO, comes after Adrian Usher's desire to make the PPO's complaints work more accessible and straightforward for prisoners.

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, Adrian Usher said: "When I became Ombudsman, I carried out a lot of prison visits and it became clear to me that both prisoners and prison staff had a lack of understanding of who we are and what we do.

It is my goal that IPCI will make it clearer in our name about who we are and what we do, making it easier for prisoners to contact us. It is important that we highlight our independence and that we are there for our service users".

The new name is a first for the PPO, who were created in 1994 after the Strangeways prison riot. The Ombudsman's office plan to roll out the new brand across prisons and the youth estate, raising awareness with thousands of prisoners who every year seek independent oversight of their complaints.

Elisabeth Davies, National Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board said: "Clarity really matters when it comes to making complaints – we know from local IMBs that too often prisoners are left either confused or despondent when it comes to complaining. We really welcome any move to improve the experience of prisoners when it comes to how they navigate their way across the complaints system".

The PPO explained that IPCI will be used for their complaints work with prisoners and those in the youth custody estate only.

The PPO will continue to exist and carry out independent investigations into complaints from those on probation and in immigration detention. They will also continue to carry out fatal incident investigations and share learning with the services in their remit.

Miriam Minty the Director of IPCI today said:

"My team of complaints investigators are dedicated to raising awareness of the new IPCI brand. I believe it will have a positive impact on those who need to use our services and we look forward with positivity to building even closer relationships with those in prison".

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Notes to editors:

1. Adrian Usher was appointed as Prisons and Probation Ombudsman in April 2023.
2. The PPO is appointed by and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Justice. The Ombudsman's office is wholly independent of the services in remit, which include those provided by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Prisoner Escort and Custody Service, the Home Office (Immigration Enforcement), the Youth Custody Service, and those local authorities with secure children's homes. It is also operationally independent of, but sponsored by, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).
3. The roles and responsibilities of the PPO are set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR), the latest version of which can be found at <https://www.ppo.gov.uk/about/vision-and-values/terms-of-reference/>
4. The PPO has three main investigative duties:
 - complaints made by prisoners, young people in detention, offenders under probation supervision and individuals detained under immigration powers (detained individuals)
 - deaths of prisoners, young people in detention, approved premises' residents and detained individuals due to any cause
 - deaths of recently released prisoners that occur within 14 days of release from prison (except homicide)
5. IPCI will independently investigate complaints from prisoners and those in the youth custody estate.