

INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

POLICY OWNER	Director of Resources
HPE REFERENCE NUMBER	384569
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SECTION 1 | DOCUMENT PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the **Policing Board**) manages the police pension scheme in Northern Ireland. The *Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995* requires the Policing Board, as manager of the police pension scheme, to have in place formal dispute resolution arrangements.

These arrangements allow interested parties (listed at Section 2 of this document) to have their complaints formally investigated and to receive a written response from the Policing Board. This process is called the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (**IDRP**).

Complaints under the Policing Board's IDRP policy can relate to;

- an injury on duty award;
- an ill health or deferred pension;
- a survivor award;
- an adult dependant award;
- forfeiture of any of the above; and/or
- a child allowance

The purpose of this document is to explain the Policing Board's IDRP process as well as formalising existing arrangements in line with the statutory requirements under the *Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*.

SECTION 2 | WHO CAN MAKE AN IDRP COMPLAINT?

Complaints under the Policing Board's IDRP policy can be submitted by the following;

- Serving PSNI police officers;
- Former RUC/PSNI police officers;
- Widows, widowers, civil partners or adult partners of a deceased RUC/PSNI officer;
- A child or dependent of a former RUC/PSNI officer.

IDRP is available to current, active members of the Police Pension Scheme and/or the Injury on Duty Award Scheme. IDRP is also available to prospective members of these schemes. Applications can also be made on behalf of minors and made/continued in the event of an officer's death.

APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES

If you wish for an appointed representative to manage a complaint on your behalf the Policing Board require Appointed Representative Form (Annex A) to be completed and returned. This form must be completed before the Policing Board can release any information we hold about you to another person. Examples of appointed representatives include a staff association member or a solicitor.

SECTION 3	HOW DO I MAKE AN IDRP COMPLAINT?
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The Policing Board's IDRP policy contains two stages.

STAGE 1

An application should be made in writing for your complaint to be processed under IDRP Stage 1. Your complaint should contain as much detail as possible including any supporting information on the disagreement on which you are seeking a determination. You should also include your full name, address, date of birth and force number and clearly mark your application as a request under Stage 1 IDRP. Your finalised application should be marked for the attention of the Director of Resources who will consider all Stage 1 IDRP complaints.

In addition to the information above, an appointed representative acting on behalf of a complainant must also submit the Appointed Representative Form located at Annex A of this document.

Stage 1 decisions made by the Director of Resources will be taken within 40 working days of the date your Stage 1 application is received by the Policing Board. This decision will be communicated within 15 working days thereafter.

In instances whereby the Director of Resources cannot comply with this timeframe, an interim reply will be issued to explain the delay and to confirm when a full reply can be expected.

STAGE 2

If you are not satisfied with the decision made by the Director of Resources at Stage 1, you have the right of appeal to the Policing Board's Chief Executive. This is Stage 2 of the IDRP process. Your Stage 2 appeal must be submitted within six months from the date on which you received the Stage 1 decision from the Director of Resources.

Your Stage 2 appeal should be made in writing and it must clearly set out why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 decision made by the Director of Resources. You should also include your full name, address, date of birth and force number and clearly mark your application as a request under Stage 2 IDRP. Your finalised application should be marked for the attention of the Chief Executive.

Stage 2 decisions made by the Chief Executive will be taken within 40 working days of the date your Stage 2 appeal is received by the Policing Board. This decision will be communicated within 15 working days thereafter.

In instances whereby the Chief Executive cannot comply with this timeframe, an interim reply will be issued to explain the delay and to confirm when a full reply can be expected.

The Chief Executive's reply will confirm to what extent the Director of Resources' Stage 1 decision has or has not been replaced. The Chief Executive will also set out the reason for any such decision.

Please note: If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint you may also wish to contact the Pensions Ombudsman. The Pensions Ombudsman retains legal powers to settle complaints and disputes. Contact details for the Pensions Ombudsman are located at the bottom of this document.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Where a conflict of interest arises and the Chief Executive is unable to consider a complaint under this policy an independent assessor, for example the Policing Board's Pension Advisor, will be appointed.

SECTION 4 HOW IS MY COMPLAINT PROCESSED?

At Stage 1, a report detailing the facts and chronology of your case will be prepared by Policing Board officials. This report will also consider the points raised within your complaint. This report will then be passed to the Director of Resources who will consider this together with all information held by the Policing Board in respect of your complaint. The Director of Resources will use this information to reach a decision on all points raised within your complaint.

At Stage 2, the Chief Executive will consider all information considered at Stage 1 together with your supplementary Stage 2 appeal papers and any other relevant information. The Chief Executive will use this information to reach a decision on all points raised within your appeal application. The Chief Executive will issue a response including direction on any actions to be taken.

SECTION 5 WHAT ARE THE IDRPs TIME LIMITS?

Stage 1	Your Stage 1 complaint must be submitted to the Policing Board within six months of the date on which the subject matter of your complaint occurred.
Stage 2	Your Stage 2 complaint must be submitted to the Policing Board within six months of the date on which you received the Director of Resources' Stage 1 decision.

SECTION 6 WHAT DISPUTES ARE EXCLUDED FROM IDRPs?

Please be advised that appeals under the following provisions are exempt from IDRPs;

- Regulation H2 of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Pensions Regulations 1988;
- Regulation 30 of the PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006;
- Regulation 68 of the Police Pension (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2009; and
- Schedule 1, Paragraph 2 of the Police Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Also exempt are any matters in which proceedings have been commenced in any court or tribunal, or where the Pensions Ombudsman has already commenced an investigation.

If, after an application for the resolution of a pension dispute has been made, the dispute becomes an exempted dispute, the resolution of the dispute under the IDRPs procedure ceases.

SECTION 7 | WHO DO I ADDRESS MY IDRPs COMPLAINT TO?

To ensure that Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints are processed as expeditiously as possible please ensure that correspondence is addressed to;

Stage 1	Stage 2
Director of Resources (IDRP 1) 2 nd Floor Northern Ireland Policing Board Waterside Tower 31 Clarendon Road Clarendon Dock Belfast BT1 3BG	Chief Executive (IDRP 2) 3 rd Floor Northern Ireland Policing Board Waterside Tower 31 Clarendon Road Clarendon Dock Belfast BT1 3BG

SECTION 8 | WILL MY COMPLAINT BE ACKNOWLEDGED?

Policing Board officials will issue a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 2 working days of it being received.

You will receive separate acknowledgments at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the IDRPs process.

Within these acknowledgment letters the timeframe for a decision and response will be confirmed and you will also be provided with the contact details for the Pensions Advisory Service and the Pensions Ombudsman.

SECTION 8 | USEFUL CONTACTS

If you require assistance with preparing your complaint or you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you may wish to contact The Pensions Advisory Service (**TPAS**) who provide free and impartial advice in respect of workplace and personal pensions. TPAS can be contacted as follows;

Address	The Pensions Advisory Service 11 Belgrave Road London SW1V 1RB
Telephone	Pensions Helpline: 0800 011 3797 Overseas Helpline: +44207 932 5780
Website	www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint you may also wish to contact the Pensions Ombudsman. The Pensions Ombudsman retains legal powers to settle complaints and disputes. The Pensions Ombudsman can be contacted as follows;

Address	The Pensions Ombudsman 10 South Colonnade Canary Wharf London E14 4PU
Telephone	0800 917 4487
Website	https://www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk/

ANNEX A

APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE FORM

- I authorise _____ to act as my Appointed Representative (**AR**) in my application.
- I hereby acknowledge that any future correspondence regarding my application will be forwarded to my AR.
- I further acknowledge that any correspondence forwarded to my AR will be deemed to have been sent to me.
- I authorise my AR to act as the sole point of contact with the Board and acknowledge that the Board will communicate with me directly through my AR.

AR Full Name	
AR Organisation (if any)	
AR Address	
AR Relationship with the complaint	
AR Telephone Number	
AR E-mail address¹	

Complainant Signature	Date

Appointed Representative Signature	Date

¹ Please be advised that due to data protection measures the Board will not substantively communicate with you and/or your appointed representative by way of email. Email correspondence will be limited to preliminary updates, with no sensitive and/or personal information being shared via this medium.