

Can We Help?



Getting your complaint heard

**A guide for Serving and
Ex-Service personnel**

Introduction:

This guide aims to help serving personnel and veterans to notify the appropriate part of the Service Personnel & Veterans Agency (SPVA) when they are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Agency.

The work of the SPVA covers a wide range of issues and it is important that your complaint is appropriately directed at the outset so that we can resolve it for you within the shortest possible timescales.

I am currently serving in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, how do I make a complaint about my pay or associated allowance?

Serving Personnel need to read Part 1 of this leaflet to find out how to complain - pages 3 to 5.

I am a member of the ex-Service community, how do I make a complaint?

If you are a member of the ex-Service community, you will need to read Part 2 of this leaflet to find out how to complain – pages 6 to 8.

Our commitment to you:

'SPVA takes complaints about our service to you very seriously. We will investigate your concerns thoroughly and as quickly as possible, acknowledging these at the outset and keeping you informed throughout.

We will use any lessons learned from these to continue to improve our service to you.'

What should I do? The Complaint Process explained for Serving Personnel

Irregularities in Pay or associated Allowances

If, as a serving member of HM Armed Forces, having appropriately consulted your chain of command, including your Unit admin you remain unhappy with the service or advice you have received from SPVA, then in order that we can resolve matters as quickly as possible for you, you should contact the Enquiry Centre using any of the following methods:

- **iSupport** *(email facility available to all self-service personnel via a JPA online terminal)*
- **Telephone** *(Monday to Friday 0700 to 1900 UK local time)*
 - MOD 94560 3600
 - Civilian 0141 224 3600
 - Free phone 0800 085 3600
 - Overseas +44 141 224 3600
- **Fax**
 - MOD 94561 3586
 - Civilian 0141 224 3586
- **Email**
 - MOD JPACEnquiryCentre
 - Intranet
 - Internet JPAC@spva.mod.uk
- **Letter** JPAC Enquiry Centre
Mail Point 355
Kentigern House
65 Brown Street
Glasgow
G2 8EX

When contacting the Agency, personnel are requested to provide their service number and the service request or iSupport number to which the complaint relates. SPVA will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.

Further help and advice for Serving Personnel

If you have contacted the **JPAC Enquiry Centre** and/or your **Unit HR** and still feel your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, there are a number of steps you can take:

Contact the **JPAC Specialist Cell** – Unit HR administrators and SPC personnel can escalate various issues to the JPAC on your behalf. See JPA Ops Bulletin 0707-004 for further information.

For service personnel **deployed on active operations**, local Unit HR personnel are able to fast-track urgent pay-related issues on your behalf, using a hotline facility to the JPAC SRMG.

Service Focal Point Teams are available for Units experiencing **issues affecting multiple personnel**. Focal points liaise directly with JPA Service Delivery Complaints Team, to facilitate centralised resolution and communication.

Ex-gratia payments and Exemptions – if you think you may be entitled to an element of pay or allowances, or that you should be exempt from charges, but are unable to clarify your individual circumstances under relevant regulations, you may submit a case to the Pay and Allowances Casework Cell (PACC) in accordance with JSPs 754 and 752 respectively.

- If you want to **appeal a PACC decision**, you should clearly set out the details of your case and send this to the AD Mil Svcs, SPVA (G). MP 600, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow, G2 8EX.
- Service persons may submit a **second and final appeal** to CE SPVA, Centurion Building, Grange Road, Gosport, PO13 9AX. CE SPVA's ruling on a case is final as the delegated authority rests with the CE.

Whilst the service chain of command does not have the authority to overturn CE's decision, Service persons are entitled to submit a request for redress of their grievance or complaint, if they feel they were unfairly disadvantaged by any aspect of the process in dealing with their case.

SPVA JPA Service Delivery Complaints Procedure

If you wish to make a JPA Service Delivery Complaint or comment on the way our Enquiry Service has handled your request, contact:

Mail	E-Mail	Fax
SPVA JPA Service Delivery Complaints MP 600 Kentigern House Glasgow G2 8EX	(MOD Internal) SPVA JPA Complaints Group Mailbox (External) jpa-complaints@spva.mod.uk	(MOD) 94561 2605 (CIV) 0141 224 2605

- When contacting the JPA Service Delivery Complaints team, please ensure that you quote your service number, service request or iSupport number to which your issue relates. **The JPA Service Delivery Complaints team should not be used as an alternative to the JPAC Enquiry Centre.**
- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days of receipt and clear it within 20 working days.

What should I do? The Complaint Process explained for ex-Service Personnel.

As a member of the ex-Service community, if you are unhappy with service you have received we want to resolve matters as quickly as possible for you, and you should make your complaint known as soon as possible to SPVA Norcross, using any of the following methods:

- **Freephone** (Monday to Thursday 0815 to 1715 hours and
UK only Fridays 0815 to 1630 hours.)
UK 0800 169 22 77
Overseas + 44 1253 866 043
- **Textphone** 0800 169 34 58
- **Email** veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk
- **Fax (Complaints only)**
UK 01253 338661
Overseas + 44 1253 338661
- **Letter**

<i>For those living in the UK</i>	<i>For those living overseas</i>
SPVA (Veterans)	SPVA (Veterans)
Customer Services Team	Customer Services Team
Freeport NAT 18006	Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys	Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire	Lancashire
FY5 3ZA	England
	FY5 3WP

When contacting the Agency, **other than by email** members of the ex-Service community are asked to provide their National Insurance Number and may be asked other security questions during telephone communication – this is to protect you and your identity. If you have any concerns or queries about this, please contact the Agency's Helpline on one of the numbers listed above.

When contacting the Agency by email please be aware that the Internet is not secure and we recommend that you do not include personal data.

The Agency will acknowledge receipt of emails and reply by email if no personal data is requested but will respond by letter if personal data is included in the reply.

What is the escalation process when making a complaint?

Stage 1

All complaints should initially be raised with your caseworker, who is the subject matter expert for your claim or appeal.

Stage 2

If, after speaking to your caseworker or their manager you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to speak to one of our Customer Service Managers (CSMs), who will investigate matters on your behalf.

If you would prefer to contact a CSM in writing, the address to write to is:

<i>For those living in the UK</i>	<i>For those living overseas</i>
SPVA (Veterans)	SPVA (Veterans)
Customer Services Team	Customer Services Team
Freepost NAT 18006	Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys	Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire	Lancashire
FY5 3ZA	England
	FY5 3WP

There is no form you need to fill in to make a complaint.

Stage 3

If, after following Stages 1 & 2 you are still unhappy, you may wish to escalate your complaint to the Director Veterans Services (DVS), or to the SPVA Chief Executive (CE). The DVS or CE will have access to all the factors of your case and following investigation, will send you a full response.

You can write to the Director Veterans Services or Chief Executive at:

<i>For those living in the UK</i>	<i>For those living overseas</i>
SPVA (Veterans)	SPVA (Veterans)
Freepost NAT 18006	Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys	Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire	Lancashire
FY5 3ZA	England
	FY5 3WP

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days of receipt and aim to clear it within 20 working days.

Further help and advice for the ex-Service community

All decisions made by SPVA in respect of claims to War Disablement Pension and all Final Decisions in respect of Armed Forces Compensation carry a right of appeal to an independent tribunal.

Some independent bodies that may be able to help or advise you about any residual dissatisfaction having followed the complaints stages are:

The Independent Complaints Panel (ICP.) The ICP cannot consider the substance of a complaint where procedures are in place to formally review and investigate the issue, e.g. by making an appeal, but if your complaint has been subject to scrutiny by the Chief Executive (i.e. SPVA complaint process has been exhausted) they can look again at your complaint, to ensure it has been thoroughly and properly investigated. You can contact the ICP by writing to:

The Secretary, Independent Complaints Panel
SPVA Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire
England
FY5 3WP

War Pension Committees (WPCs.) WPCs are independent of SPVA and many of their members are ex-Servicemen and women. They can assist individuals with complaints they may have relating to war pensions, AFCS or the SPVA. To contact a WPC, you should first approach the Clerk for the committee in your local area by calling the Veterans UK Helpline on 0800 169 22 77. You can also write to the WPC via your local Veterans Welfare Officer.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman may agree to investigate matters on your behalf. If, after following the complaints stages described you remain dissatisfied and would like the Ombudsman to investigate your complaint, you should contact a Member of Parliament who can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman on your behalf.

There are a number of ex-Service organisations you can approach if you would like someone independent of SPVA to look at your complaint, either instead of, or as well as using our own complaint process. These include the Royal British Legion (RBL), the Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association (SSAFA) etc. Your permission in writing will be required so that the Agency can release details of your case to any 3rd party acting on your behalf, and you can obtain further details of these organisations by calling the Veterans UK Helpline on the above number.

In all instances when a complaint is made to SPVA, appropriate redress will be considered.