

# Making a complaint about UK Government services

The Parliamentary Ombudsman can carry out independent investigations into complaints about government departments and other public organisations. We would normally expect that the organisation you are complaining about has had the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

This form is to help us decide if we can look at your complaint. We need specific information from you so that we can deal with your complaint as quickly as possible. If we feel that we do not understand your complaint, then we may return the form to you to be completed before we take any action on your complaint.

To help us consider your complaint, we need to see all the evidence that you have about it - in particular letters to and from the organisation you are complaining about. We are happy to copy originals and return them to you.

You will need an MP to sign Section 9 of this form.

If you are unable to fill in the form or you need any advice, you can contact our helpline on 0345 015 4033.

The helpline is open from 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

## SECTION 1: About you

If you are complaining on behalf of someone else then they must complete Section 7 of this form if they are able to.

1. **About you:** UK Organisations in Association with the International EMF Alliance  
Group Complaint Reference EN-234493

c/o Safe Schools Information Technology Alliance (SSITA)

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Telephone number:**

**Email:** [contactssita11@virginmedia.com](mailto:contactssita11@virginmedia.com)

**How and when would you prefer to be contacted?**

By email cc via [contactssita11@virginmedia.com](mailto:contactssita11@virginmedia.com)

**Do you have any special requirements for us to communicate with you? We will make adjustments for you if we can.**

Please copy me into all relevant correspondence with SSITA.

**Are you being supported by an advocacy organisation or other representative?  
Please provide their details if you would like us to copy them into our  
correspondence.**

Safe Schools Information Technology Alliance (SSITA) [www.ssita.org.uk](http://www.ssita.org.uk)

95 Sharmans Cross Road Solihull West Midlands B91 1PH

We'll keep in touch with you in whichever way works best for you. However, we do need to make you aware that with email there is always a small risk of messages being intercepted. If this is your preferred way for us to contact you please let us know by ticking one of the boxes below. As a precaution, and for added peace of mind, we will also password protect any sensitive documents we send you.

To confirm you are content for us to email you, please tick this box (We tick this box) - See above

If you do not want us to correspond with you by email, please tick this box

**2. Is the complaint on behalf of someone else? YES/NO**

If you have answered **YES** to this question, please also complete questions 3 and 4.

If you have answered **NO** to this question, please go to question 5.

**3. Who are you complaining on behalf of:**

What is your relationship to them?

If the person has died, please tell us the date of death here:

**4. Please explain why the person who has suffered as a result of the problem is not making the complaint. We would normally expect a person to make their own complaint if they are able to. However, you can represent someone to make a complaint if you have their consent.**

Efforts to resolve the issues have failed and the complaints procedures have been exhausted by UK Organisations in Association with the International EMF Alliance on my behalf. I wish my complaint to be included as part of the lead complaint Reference EN-158525.

## SECTION 2: Information about the organisation that you are complaining about

You can contact us before filling in this form if you are not sure whether your complaint is about an organisation we can consider. Our helpline number is 0345 015 4033.

### 5. Which organisation(s) are you complaining about?

The former Health Protection Agency (HPA/CRCE division only) now Public Health England.

## SECTION 3: Your complaint

We need to know what happened and why you are unhappy with the response to your complaint. Please attach additional sheets of paper if you need more room to set out your complaint. Please do not just say 'see attached' and provide copies of previous correspondence. If the organisation has not addressed all of the issues raised in your complaint, then we may decide that there is further work for the organisation to do before we look at your concerns.

### 6. Please briefly explain what your complaint is about:

The complaint is about the failure of the Health Protection Agency to provide precautionary advice regarding possible health effects of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields produced by technologies other than mobile phones. This was initially noticed in their submission to the Commons Select Committee Inquiry into Smart Meter Roll-out where there was no mention of the IARC classification of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as a Group 2B possible human carcinogen.

In addition, there is very limited reference to this on their website, with only a sentence at the end of the information about mobile phone mentioning the 2B classification.

In the information about other technologies, such as Wi-Fi and smart meters, there is no mention of the 2B classification at all. Instead, it is concluded that there is no reason to not use this equipment on the grounds that electromagnetic field exposure from these technologies is much less than from mobile phones.

The Health Protection Agency has also failed to mention that studies have reported adverse biological and health effects of Wi-Fi and similar wireless signals.

As Wi-Fi is a technology which is now being forced on children and teachers in schools, and smart meters will result in people being exposed continuously within their own homes, this lack of precautionary advice is particularly serious.

**7. Why are you still unhappy following the response(s) from the organisation(s)?**

The responses refer to the 2012 AGNIR review following the IARC classification of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as a Group 2B possible carcinogen. In their view published reviews by AGNIR and other internationally recognised bodies do not warrant more precaution than PHE already advises and therefore there has been no change to prevailing advice.

It is, in our view, not acceptable not to even mention the 2B classification in their advice about technologies other than mobile phones. Considering the enormous proliferation in technologies such as Wi-Fi and the speed with which smart metering is due to be rolled out, as well as the fact that exposure from these technologies is continuous as opposed to the intermittent exposure from mobile phones, the 2B classification should at least be referred to in their advice about each technology. This would enable organisations and individuals to make an informed choice.

A page has now been added to their website with the title 'Radio waves: Reducing Exposure'. There it is stated that

“Adults should be able to make their own choices about reducing their exposure should they so wish, but be able to do this from an informed position.”

However, according to their information, this is not applicable to devices held further away from the body, or those other than mobile phones, with the result that choice about reducing exposure to these devices is being denied. Children in schools are made to use wireless computers and tablets, some with maximum specific absorption rates very similar to mobile phones and often positioned very close to, or held against, the body. Children and parents are not able to make their own choices about exposures to radiofrequency radiation in the school environment.

**8. Has the organisation responded to all the issues raised in your complaint?**

No.

**If the answer to this question is NO, then please set out below the issues that have not been addressed.**

Since the complaint involved disagreement with their public health advice, we were informed that it would need to be dealt with through the HPA's Consultation Policy. We therefore agreed to this and the Complaints Manager tried to organise a consultation. Since this did not happen, we then asked for an Independent Review of our complaint in a letter dated 18 May 2013. We finally received a letter dated 12 June which did not respond to our requests for an Independent Review or Consultation.

The last sentence in the letter states that the PHE “will seek to be responsive to the views of public concern groups using both formal and informal consultation methods as appropriate”. We have therefore asked again if this means that Consultation is possible in emails dated 28 June and 2 July 2013 to the Complaints Manager but have had no response to this.

**9. How have you, or the person you represent, been affected by what happened?**

**SECTION 4: Outcome**

**Examples of remedies we regularly achieve are apologies, improvements to services, and financial payments.**

**10. What outcome(s) do you want us to achieve for you?**

First and foremost, we want the CRCE division of Public Health England to include information about the IARC classification of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as Group 2B possibly carcinogenic to humans in all information about wireless devices passed on to

schools, organisations and government departments as well as in their published information about each and every technology, i.e. Wi-Fi, smart meters, base stations etc. The IARC Monograph now clearly states that the 2B classification is applicable to other wireless technologies in addition to mobile phones -

“it should be emphasized that the evaluations in this volume address the general question of whether RF radiation causes cancer in humans or in experimental animals: it does not specifically or exclusively consider mobile phones, but rather the type of radiation emitted by mobile phones and various other sources.” (p 33, IARC Monographs, Volume 102, Non-ionizing Radiation, Part 2: Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields, 2013)

Public Health England can no longer support the view that in the case of devices other than mobile phones, precaution is not necessary. It needs to be acknowledged that public concern and calls for precaution are justified in view of the increased cumulative exposure due to the rapid proliferation of wireless technologies and the fact that other devices, such as tablets and laptops, can expose the users to similar levels of radiation close to the body as mobile phones, but for much longer periods of time. Not many parents let their young children speak on a mobile phone for hours, yet tablet computers are often positioned on the bodies of very young children to wirelessly view films or play interactive games for several hours at a time. Public Health England therefore need to inform the public that radiofrequency exposures from some wireless computers positioned close to the body may be as high as for mobile phones.

We would like Public Health England to inform schools and the general public that evidence exists in the medical and scientific literature describing adverse biological effects of Wi-Fi and similar signals and that as such there may be damaging effects on users of Wi-Fi-enabled devices or those close to radiofrequency transmitters. At this stage PHE cannot rule out that the damaging effects described in the scientific literature might occur in members of the public. Making this information available allows people to make informed choices about their own and their dependents' exposures.

We would like Public Health England to ensure that future assessments of scientific studies do not leave out large numbers of papers and include all of the available studies on Wi-Fi effects. A large number of studies were left out of the AGNIR 2012 review. We would like Public Health England to carefully check that the conclusions in future scientific assessments reflect the data presented in the report. For example, in the AGNIR 2012 document, around 80% of studies on male fertility described decreases in fertility or damage to sperm, and yet the conclusion was that there remains no convincing evidence that radiofrequency fields below current guidelines have any effect on male fertility. We would prefer a scientific description of the evidence and not a personal and subjective comment such as 'no convincing'.

We would also like the personal loss (on many fronts) to individuals who suffer after a Wi-Fi system has been installed to be fully and sympathetically recognised by a Government capable of appreciating the ramifications of its policies, possible failures in due diligence and failure to warn.

**11. If you are seeking a financial remedy, what would be a reasonable sum of money to remedy your complaint?**

## SECTION 5: When things happened

The law says that a complaint should be made to an MP within a year of you becoming aware there is a problem. We can extend this time limit but only where there are special circumstances.

### 12. When did the events occur?

March 2013

### 13. When were you aware there was a problem and when did you complain?

We became aware of the problem in March 2013 and submitted our complaint to the Health Protection Agency on 18 March 2013

### 14. If you did not complain straight away, please explain why:

### 15. When did you first write to your MP about your complaint?

The MP who has dealt with the lead complaint was contacted on 26 July 2013.

### 16. If there was more than a year between you becoming aware of the problem and you contacting your MP, please explain why you did not complain to your MP earlier. It would be helpful if you could provide relevant dates of when key events happened. For example, the date of your initial complaint and dates of the organisation's responses.

### 17. If there is a long time between any of the above dates, please explain what was happening.

## SECTION 6: Legal action

The law says that we must consider whether it is reasonable for you to pursue legal action to achieve the outcomes you are seeking.

We may not be able to look at your complaint: if you are already pursuing legal action; or are planning to take legal action; or if we consider that there is a course of legal action open to you that is reasonable for you to pursue.

### 18. Are you taking, or planning to take, legal action on your complaint? If YES please give details.

No.



## SECTION 7: Authorisation

I wish the Ombudsman to investigate my complaint and I consent to the obtaining of all relevant papers for the purposes of investigating a complaint under the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, they must sign here if they are able to. If they are not able to, please explain why.**

I give my consent for a complaint to be made on my behalf and for the Ombudsman to obtain all relevant papers for the purposes of investigating a complaint under the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967. I understand that this may mean that my representative will be able to access personal information obtained for the investigation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 8: To the MP

*This section must be completed by the person making the complaint*

To (Name of MP) \_\_\_\_\_ MP

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Please consider the complaint described on this form and in any information attached.

Please complete section 9 and send this complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

## SECTION 9: From the MP to the Ombudsman

*This section must be completed by the MP*

To: The Parliamentary Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Has sent me a complaint. Please consider this complaint and let me know the outcome.

Signature of MP: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London SW1P 4QP

Enquiries: 0345 015 4033

Fax: 0300 061 4000

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