

# Information Promise

## The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Information Promise consultation document





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<b>Document Purpose</b>	Consultation
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<b>Author</b>	The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
<b>Publication Date</b>	8 November 2011
<b>Deadline</b>	31 January 2012
<b>Target audience</b>	Anyone interested in or affected by the work of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, especially interested those who use or have used our service, advice and advocacy bodies, and bodies within our jurisdiction.
<b>Description</b>	A document to raise awareness among our customers, stakeholders and staff of this developing area of policy and to ask for their views.
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If you would like this consultation document in a different format, please contact us.

We will respond to any reasonable requests for translations.

# The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

## Our role

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman considers complaints that government departments, a range of other public bodies in the UK, and the NHS in England, have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.

## Our vision

To provide an independent, high quality complaint handling service that rights individual wrongs, drives improvements in public services and informs public policy.

## Our values

Our values shape our behaviour, both as an organisation and as individuals, and incorporate the *Ombudsman's Principles*.

## Excellence

We pursue excellence in all that we do in order to provide the best possible service:

- We seek feedback to achieve learning and continuous improvement.
- We operate thorough and rigorous processes to reach sound, evidence-based, judgments.
- We are committed to enabling and developing our people so that they can provide an excellent service.

## Leadership

We lead by example so that our work will have a positive impact:

- We set high standards for ourselves and others.
- We are an exemplar and provide expert advice in complaint handling.
- We share learning to achieve improvement.

## Integrity

We are open, honest and straightforward in all our dealings and use time, money and resources effectively:

- We are consistent and transparent in our actions and decisions.
- We take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable for all that we do.
- We treat people fairly.

## Diversity

We value people and their diversity and strive to be inclusive:

- We respect others, regardless of personal differences.
- We listen to people to understand their needs and tailor our service accordingly.
- We promote equal access to our service for all members of the community.

For further information about the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and what we do, you can visit our website at [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk), call our helpline on 0300 061 4033 or send an email to [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk).

## The purpose of this consultation

The nature of our work means that customers and professional stakeholders entrust us with a vast array of information, including that which is personal, sensitive and confidential. We are committed to safeguarding the information we hold and to treating it seriously. At the same time we seek to share the learning from complaints with individuals and organisations who are likely to benefit from having access to that information and with the general public. The challenge for us is to balance the need to protect the personal and other information given in confidence with the benefit of sharing information more widely.

To meet this challenge, we have developed the *Information Promise*. The Promise is intended to be a clear statement that we value the information entrusted to us, will put the appropriate resources in place to look after it and will report on how we are doing.

It is supported by a framework which is intended to set out the approach that we will take to deliver the commitments made in the *Information Promise* and how we will measure our success.

We intend that the *Information Promise* and the *Information Promise Framework* should be used in two ways:

- By our customers and professional stakeholders, to find out about the standards that we set ourselves. The *Information Promise* and the Framework will be the reference point for all the materials that we develop for our customers and stakeholders to explain in more detail what they can expect from us when we hold their information, what information we will share with them, what information we will place in the public domain and their rights of access.
- By our people, to set out how we will work and to provide a point of reference against which we

can measure our performance. The *Information Promise* and the *Information Promise Framework* will help us to develop and shape our policies, processes and training to ensure our people meet the standards we set ourselves.

The purpose of this consultation is to raise awareness among our customers, professional stakeholders and staff of this developing area of policy and to ask for their views. We are hoping to hear from anyone interested in or affected by the work of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. We are especially interested in the views of those who use or have used our service, advice and advocacy bodies, and bodies within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

The closing date of this consultation is **31 January 2012**.

We will publish the final versions of the *Information Promise* and *Information Promise Framework*, taking into account consultation responses, shortly afterwards. A summary of consultation responses will also be made available at the same time.

## How to take part in this consultation

We welcome your responses to this consultation paper. We have proposed specific questions about the *Information Promise* and the *Information Promise Framework* but feel free to leave any that are not of interest to you, or add anything you think we may have missed.

Your responses can be submitted in one of the following ways:

Complete our [online form](#)

By email to: [informationpromise@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:informationpromise@ombudsman.org.uk)

By writing to:

**Information Promise Project**  
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

## Privacy statement

Following the end of the consultation we shall publish a paper summarising the responses. Information you provide in your response to this consultation may be published or disclosed in accordance with *Freedom of Information Act 2000*.

If you want the information you provide (including any personal data) to be treated as confidential, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, in itself, be regarded as binding.

# Section 1: Consultation questions

## 1) The Information Promise

The *Information Promise* is intended to be a clear statement that we value the information entrusted to us, will put the appropriate resources in place to look after that information and will report on how we are doing.

Does the Promise do this?

If not, where do you consider that it falls short?

What aspects are unclear or need further explanation?

Do you have any other suggestions for ways that the Information Promise could be improved?

## 2) The Information Promise Framework

The Framework is intended to clearly set out the approach that we will take to achieve the *Information Promise* and how we will measure its success.

Does the Framework do this?

If not, where do you consider that it falls short?

What aspects are unclear or need further explanation?

Do you have any other suggestions for ways that the Framework could be improved?

## 3) Are there any other comments you wish to make?

## Section 2: About you

### Are you:

A representative of a public sector organisation?

Please specify:

A representative of a private sector organisation?

Please specify:

A representative of a community, voluntary or charitable organisation, or of a trade body?

Please specify:

Other?

Please specify



