



# 1. Take Action Against the Police

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There are two methods we recommend you use to hold the police to account for their actions:

- [Civil claim](#) (suing for compensation through the courts)
- [Complaint](#)

These methods aren't mutually exclusive, in fact we would suggest that you consider both options. Although the complaint system and a civil claim are separate processes, they both have the same aim: holding the police to account.

### Civil Claim

You might want to [make a civil claim](#) against the police if you have been:

- assaulted or mistreated by the police
- wrongly arrested
- prosecuted for something you didn't do

The civil claim process will take many months to complete and unless the police settle, it will involve a court case. It could result in an apology, an admission of wrongdoing, or an award of compensation. It will not result in disciplinary action being taken against an officer or officers involved. There is a time limit for making civil claims of between six months and six years, so you'll need to act as soon as possible.

» [Guide to making a civil claim](#)

### Complaint

You might want to [make a complaint](#) against the police for any of the reasons listed above to make a civil claim, where there might be insufficient evidence available to make a claim in the courts succeed. You can also make complaints against police officers acting in a rude and unprofessional manner.

The complaints process is much simpler and quicker to make than a civil claim, although the process can be very frustrating. It could result in an apology and disciplinary action against the officer or officers involved.

Statistics on complaints made against the police, particularly over a long period of time, can be very useful as part of a wider campaign against police violence.

» [Guide to making a complaint](#)

### Judicial Review

One further method of holding the police to account is through a [Judicial Review](#), but we only recommend using this in very specific circumstances.

» [Read about the Judicial Review \(JR\)](#)