**Prisoner Ombudsman Standards**

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**Independent, impartial investigations**

The Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office 

**The Ombudsman’s Office aims:**

**The Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office aims to:**

* Complete timely, professional and independent investigations that contribute to a learning environment in which we challenge others and ourselves
* Carry out independent, professional, learning focussed investigations and use recommendations and data from investigations to influence change

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| **Values and principles to achieve independent, timely, professional, learning focussed investigations.** | | |
| **Values:**  Our values inform how we go about our work and provide an accountability standard to be integrated into policy and practice | | **Principles:**  Our principles, based in our values, guide us and guide our work |
| Independence and impartiality | | We will act with integrity, treat everyone fairly and respectfully, listen to different points of view. |
| Teamwork and making a difference | | We will work collaboratively to remove barriers, ensure accountability with partners and stakeholders and focus on improvement. |
| Learning and adaptability | | We will work from a strong evidence base, maintain an inquiring approach and strive for excellence in our performance. |
| People-focussed, integrity and curiosity | | We will ensure we are professional, compassionate, patient and optimistic in our dealings with people. |
| **What service-users can expect from the Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office.** | | |
| Thoroughness and accuracy | | We will seek out and review evidence, gather information and analyse information from different sources |
| Fairness and objectivity | | We will give everyone a fair hearing, examine contexts around events and adopt systems to address our own bias |
| Efficiency and flexibility | | We will deliver timely investigations with flexibility to respond to unfolding events |
| Clarity of purpose | | We will clearly set out the aims of individual investigations |
| Accessibility and communication | | We will use plain English and ensure complainants and families who have lost a loved one in custody can easily understand our investigations and processes and that they are kept informed during an investigation. |
| Proportionality and transparency | | Our investigative processes will be available on our website and in writing by request. Information and reporting will be completed at least annually. We will not pursue investigations where they are not necessary. |
| Professionalism | | We value our professionalism and aim to adhere to these standards in all our work. |
| **In addition to these professional standards, the Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office takes account of general Ombudsman standards:** | | |
| 1. | **The principles of good complaints handling[[1]](#footnote-1)**   * Clarity of purpose * Accessibility * Flexibility * Openness and transparency * Proportionality * Efficiency * Quality outcomes | |
| **2.** | **The principles of good administration[[2]](#footnote-2)**   * Maintain accurate, comprehensive and accessible records * Place adequate controls on the exercise of coercive powers * Actively manage unresolved and difficult cases * Heed the limitations of information technology systems * Guard against erroneous assumptions * Control administrative drift * Remove obstacles to prudent information exchange with other agencies and bodies * Promote effective communication in your own agency * Manage complexity in decision making * Check for warning signs of bigger problems | |
| **3.** | **Service Standards Framework[[3]](#footnote-3)**   * Accessibility * Communication * Professionalism * Fairness; and * Transparency | |
| **4.** | **Principles of good governance[[4]](#footnote-4)**   * Independence * Openness and transparency * Accountability * Integrity * Clarity of purpose | |

The Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office is committed to learning and improvement and will, therefore, operationalise and quality assure these standards and hold the Office accountable to them.

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1. [Principles of good complaint handling | Ombudsman Association](https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/best-practice-and-publications/principles-good-complaint-handling) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Ten-principles-for-good-administration.pdf (ombudsman.gov.au)](https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0029/35597/Ten-principles-for-good-administration.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [OA Service Standard Framework | Ombudsman Association](https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/best-practice-and-publications/oa-service-standard-framework) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Guide to principles of good governance | Ombudsman Association](https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/best-practice-and-publications/guide-principles-good-governance) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)