

Actions against the police

An effective and fair police force is one of the cornerstones of a civilised society. For the most part police officers are conscientious and do a difficult job to the best of their abilities. Things can go wrong however. When they do, there are various well established routes to redress that may be open. Choosing the right one will depend on what the problem is and also what sort of resolution you are seeking.

Complaints

All police forces operate their own complaints procedures. If you are unhappy with treatment you have received at the hands of the police, it may be that a complaint is the best means of resolving the problem. Once made, a complaint can be handled in a number of different ways, ranging from an informal “local resolution” of the problem, to a more formal “local investigation” and, in more serious cases, procedures involving the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

In the most serious cases the investigation must be carried out by the IPCC.

It is important that complaints are made straight away and, where you are offered a choice as to the procedure to be followed, it is often crucial that the right choice is made.

Complaints can lead to lessons being learned by the police, apologies being given and disciplinary action being taken against the officer or officers concerned.

Civil Actions

Some wrongs committed by the police can, additionally give rise to a right to bring Court proceedings, in which the Court has power to award compensation. Over the years the law has recognised a variety of rights of action for the protection of the individual against the abuse of police powers. These include claims concerning assaults by police officers, for false imprisonment, unlawful arrest, malicious prosecution, and misfeasance in a public office. The law in relation to each of these types of case is complex and the cases are often difficult. Important time limits also apply.

If you feel aggrieved with the way in which the police have treated you, we can advise you about what options you have and the most appropriate way of seeking redress. It is important to seek advice as soon as you become aware of the problem, so as to avoid being too late to pursue a complaint or claim.

You may be eligible for legal aid or alternatively, we may consider the matter on a conditional fee basis. Contact us to discuss your matter further.



Article author:

Richard Giles

Partner

*Dispute Resolution and
Litigation Partner*

Email:

richard.giles@hatten-wyatt.com

If you wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Giles on:

01474 351199 or alternatively
richard.giles@hatten-wyatt.com

Telephone: (01474) 351 199 www.hatten-wyatt.com

18/21 Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0PF

51/54 Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1BD