

- The local ombudsman acts as an independent 'referee' in disputes between individuals and their local councils. The ombudsman is appointed by government to investigate complaints of maladministration by local authorities. Details of how to pursue a complaint are available at <http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint/>. Alternatively, copies of a booklet explaining how to contact the ombudsman are available from reception at the Town Hall, Maidenhead, and York House, Windsor, or by calling: 01628 683800.

Additionally, as I am sure you are aware, the Home Secretary has established the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse under the chairmanship of Justice Lowell Goddard. This Inquiry will consider the extent to which state and non-state institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation and will identify action needed to address any failings identified.

Such institutions will, for example, include government departments, Parliament and ministers; police and prosecuting authorities; schools including private and state-funded boarding and day schools; specialist education (such as music tuition); local authorities (including care homes and children's services); health services; prisons and secure estates; churches and other religious denominations and organisations; as well as the Armed Services.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to the Home Office on these important issues. I hope this response goes some way to reassuring Mr Affleck about the Government's commitment to tackling these horrific crimes.

Regards
Mike

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP