OFFICE OF THE
OMBUDSMAN
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



48TH ANNUAL REPORT

2025

www.ombudsman.gov.tt

Our Vision

A Public Administrator that is accountable, fair and transparent for the benefit of all who access public services in Trinidad and Tobago

Our Mission

The Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will:

- Investigate and seek remedies to complaints of administrative injustice in an impartial and ethical manner (Problem Solving)
- Educate the public on their rights and responsibilities (Public Education)
- Advocate improvements in standards of service delivery in the public sector of Trinidad and Tobago (Advocacy)

Our Values

Independence | Impartiality | Professionalism | Transparency | Accountability | Respect



CONTACT US

HEAD OFFICE (PORT-OF-SPAIN)

Level 12, Tower D
International Waterfront Centre
Wrightson Road, Port of Spain

Tel: (868) 624-3121
E-mail: feedback@ombudsman.gov.tt

SAN FERNANDO REGIONAL OFFICE

1st Floor, FinGroup Place
Cor. Hobson & Kelshall Street
San Fernando

Tel: (868) 652-6786
E-mail: sandoregion@ombudsman.gov.tt

TOBAGO REGIONAL OFFICE

Caribana Building
Bacolet Street
Scarborough, Tobago

Tel: (868) 639-1302
E-mail: tgoregion@ombudsman.gov.tt



Contents

List of Tables and Figures vi

Letter to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives viii

Ombudsman's Message 1

Note on Terminology 2

Introduction 3

Report on the Year 2025 4

- Overview 4
- Major Themes Emerging from Complaints 4
  - a. Manual Record-Keeping in a Modern Public Service 5
  - b. The Culture of the Administrative Delay 6
  - c. The Cascading Effects of Administrative Delay 6
- Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Concern 8
  - a. The Ministry of Education 8
  - b. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service 8
  - c. The Ministry of Homeland Security – Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service 9
  - d. The Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services 10
  - e. The Ministry of Public Utilities - National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS) 11
- Persistent Complaints Regarding Late Payment of Retirement Benefits and Contract Gratuities 12
- The Rule of Law, Administrative Justice and the Repetition of Established Injustice 13

Strengthening the Office of the Ombudsman 14

- OASIS: Transforming Case Management and Investigations 14
- Looking Ahead 16
- Closing Comments – Strengthening the Office 18

The Complaint Lifecycle 19

Special Commendations 20

Contents

The Ombudsman's Casebook 21

- A Retired Officer's Long Wait for Justice 22
- A Retiree's 14-Year Struggle for His TTPS Gratuity 24
- When the Hope for Help Erodes: Flood Relief Drainage Works Delayed as Property Slips Away 26
- Hardship Through Delayed HDC Repairs 28
- Delayed Processing of Retirement Benefit 29
- Nine-Year Failure to Restore Salary and Statutory Benefits Following Unsubstantiated Allegations Against Employee 30
- Delayed Drainage Maintenance and Administrative Inaction 32
- Eighteen-Year Delay in the Payment of Contract Gratuity 33
- Administrative Silence and Public Confidence 34
- A Widower's Decade-Long Wait – Administrative Delay, Missing Records, and Financial Hardship 35
- When Emergency Assistance Becomes a Waiting Game 36
- When Enforcement Delays Become Administrative Injustice 37
- When Administrative Delay Becomes an Injustice 38
- Retrospective Approval and Regulatory Delay: The De Verteuil Street Development Complaint 39
- Delayed Contract Gratuity Following Failure to Secure Cabinet Approval 41

Statistical Report 43

- Summary 44
- Review of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Matters 46
- Overview of FOIA Complaints in 2025 47
- Distribution of 2025 Complaints Across MDAs and Performance of MDAs 50

Contents

- Statistical Overview of Investigations 57
- The Five MDAs with the Highest Number of New Complaints Received in 2025 58
- Monitoring and Compliance for the 2025 Reporting Period 59
- The Brought-Forward Caseload: Operational Trends and Systemic Barriers 64
- Analysis of Brought-Forward Complaints and the Systemic Barriers 66
    1. Institutional Capacity and Resource Constraints 66
    2. Administrative Non-Responsiveness 66
    3. Inadequate Engagement and Follow-Up 66
    4. Deficiencies in Record Management 66
- Addressing the Backlog of Longstanding Complaints 66

Ombudsman's Investigative Toolkit 67

- Summons -Section 97(1) 68
- Notice of Entry -Section 97 (2) 69
- Site Visits 70
- Reporting to MDAs - Section 96 (2) Reports 71
- Special Reports - Section 96 (4) 72

The Investigations Department's Community Outreach Services 73

Schedule of Community Visits 74

Staff Training and Development 75

Public Relations and Events 76

Testimonials 88

Types of Complaints 89

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 93

Appendix I – Distribution of Complaints Received in 2025 that progressed to Investigation 95

Appendix II – Distribution of Complaints Brought-Forward from Previous Years 99

List of Tables & Figures

TABLES

Table 1 – Quarterly Distribution of FOIA Complaints Received, 2023–2025 47

Table 2 – List of MDAs that Failed to Meet Resolution Deadlines Specified Following Recommendations Made Under Section 96(2) of the Constitution 63

Table 3 – Number of Summonses Issued 68

Table 4 – Total Number of Notices of Entry Issued per Office Location for 2025 69

Table 5 – Total Number of Site Visits per Office Location for 2025 70

Table 6 – Total Number of Section 96(2) Reports Issued by Regional Offices for 2025 71

Table 7 – Community Outreach Reports for the Period January to November 2025 73

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Percentage of FOIA Matters Closed and those that Remained Under Investigation from January to December 2025 46

Figure 2 – Types of No Jurisdiction Complaints Received in 2025 48

Figure 3 – Review of FOIA Refusal Matters Investigated in 2025 49

Figure 4 – Total Number of New Complaints Received and Brought Forward from Previous Years Over a Five (5) Year Period (2021-2025) 57

Figure 5 – The Five MDAs with the Highest Number of Complaints Received in 2025 58

Figure 6 – Status and Number of 2025 Complaints at the Monitoring Phase by the End of the Reporting Period 59

List of Tables & Figures

FIGURES

Figure 7 – The Number and Year of Origin for Unresolved Complaints at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period 60

Figure 8 – Total Number and Subject Areas of Unresolved Complaints by Issue at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period 61

Figure 9 – Ministry/Department/Agency with the Highest Concentration of Unresolved Complaints by Issue at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period 62

Figure 10 – Year of Origin and Total Number of Brought Forward Complaints for the 2025 Reporting Period 64

Figure 11 – The Three MDAs with the Highest Number of Brought Forward Complaints in 2025 65

September 10, 2026

Senator the Honourable Wade Mark
President of the Senate
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain

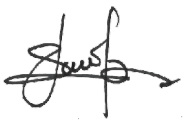
The Honourable Jagdeo Singh, MP
Speaker of the House
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
St. Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Mr. President/Speaker,

I have the honour to present the **Forty-eighth Annual Report** of the Ombudsman for the period **January to December 2025**.

The report is submitted pursuant to Section 96(5) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Yours faithfully,



Jacqui Sampson Meiguel
Ombudsman



JACQUI SAMPSON MEIGUEL

Good public administration is not simply a matter of compliance with established procedures, but of ensuring that public institutions discharge their responsibilities fairly, efficiently and with due regard for the people they serve.

Ombudsman's Message

The Office of the Ombudsman occupies an important place in our system of public administration, providing an independent avenue through which citizens may seek redress where they have suffered injustice arising from a fault in administration. In fulfilling this constitutional mandate, the Office seeks not only to address individual grievances but also to promote fairness, accountability and good administration throughout the Public Service.

Behind every complaint is a person seeking assistance, often after considerable effort to resolve a matter through the relevant public authority. For many, the consequences of administrative failures extend beyond inconvenience, affecting their financial security, well-being and confidence in public institutions. Their experiences remind us that good public administration is not simply a matter of compliance with established procedures, but of ensuring that public institutions discharge their responsibilities fairly, efficiently and with due regard for the people they serve.

The investigations undertaken during 2025 revealed recurring challenges within public administration, many of which are examined in this report and require sustained attention. While these challenges raise legitimate concerns about the quality of public administration, it is equally important to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the many public officers who continue to discharge their responsibilities conscientiously, often in difficult circumstances.

As we reflect on the work of the past year, the importance of effective leadership, institutional accountability and a continued commitment to improving public services remains clear. It is my hope that the findings and observations contained in this report will contribute to meaningful improvements in administrative practices and reinforce the fundamental principle that every citizen is entitled to fair, timely and responsive public administration.

Note on Terminology

Cases and Complaints

Complaints accepted and registered by the Office are assigned case numbers. Accordingly, the terms "case" and "complaint" are sometimes used interchangeably throughout this Report. However, a single case may involve more than one complaint, and this distinction is maintained where relevant to statistical reporting.

Administrative Injustice

The term "administrative injustice" is used in this Report to describe injustice suffered by a person as a result of a fault in administration by a public authority, consistent with the Ombudsman's constitutional mandate.

Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

The abbreviation "MDAs" is used collectively to refer to Ministries, Departments and other public authorities whose administrative actions may be subject to investigation by the Ombudsman.

Introduction

Our Foundation

The Ombudsman was established under Section 91 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 1:01*. Its mandate and powers are prescribed by the Constitution. Additional statutory responsibilities, consistent with the Constitution, have been conferred upon the Ombudsman by Parliament through the *Ombudsman Act, Chap. 2:52*, the *Freedom of Information Act, Chap. 22:02*, with further responsibilities provided for under the *Whistleblower Protection Act, No. 9 of 2024* (yet to be proclaimed).

View Legislation
Scan QR Code

About the Ombudsman

WE ADDRESS COMPLAINTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE INJUSTICE

We investigate complaints from persons who believe they have suffered injustice as a result of a fault in administration by a Ministry, Department or Agency (MDA).

WE ARE INDEPENDENT

As an Officer of Parliament, the Ombudsman functions independently of the machinery of government and reports to Parliament.

OUR SERVICES ARE FREE

The Ombudsman's services are free of charge.

WE ADVOCATE FOR FAIRNESS

We recommend corrective action where administrative decisions, actions, omissions, or delays have resulted in unfairness.

WE REVIEW FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMPLAINTS

Under the Freedom of Information Act, we review complaints concerning decisions by public authorities to refuse access to official documents and may make recommendations concerning access.

WE RESPECT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

We maintain confidentiality in the investigation of complaints.

Report on the Year 2025

Overview

The year 2025 was one of significant activity for the Office of the Ombudsman. Throughout the year, the Office received complaints from citizens, including public officers, concerning a wide range of administrative matters involving Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) across the public sector (See statistical summary on page 44).

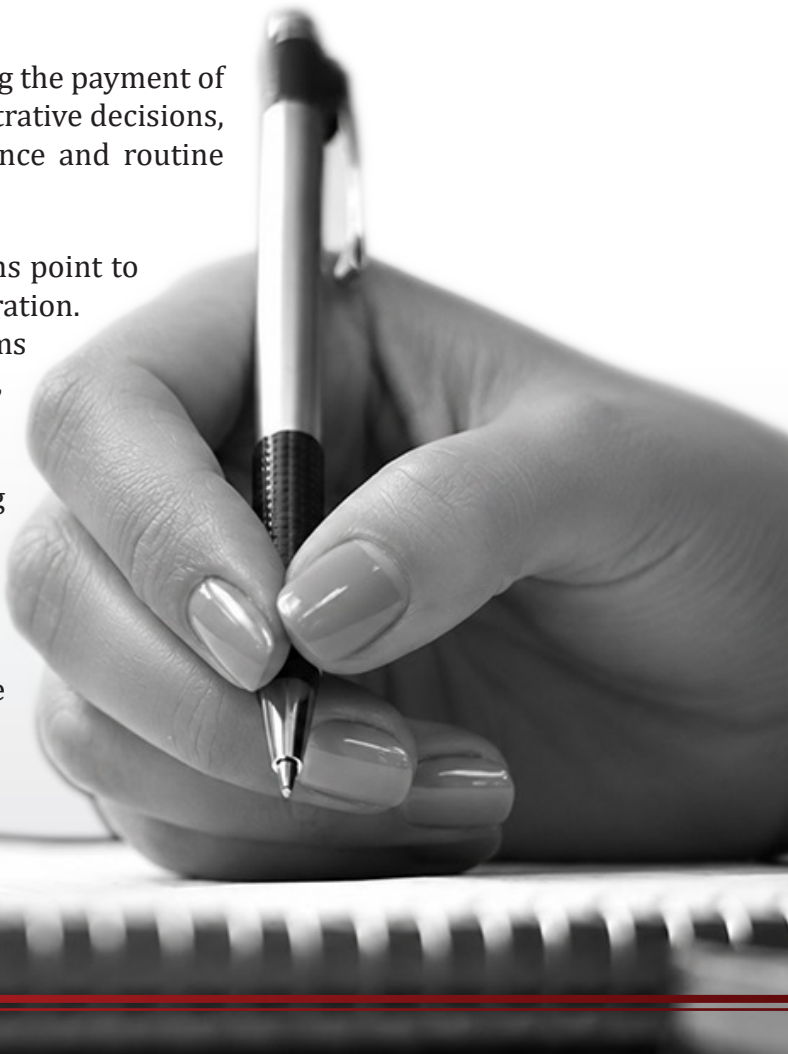
In carrying out its mandate, the Office engaged extensively with MDAs through correspondence, meetings, telephone discussions, site visits, on-site examinations and formal Hearings. These interventions assisted in resolving individual complaints, identifying recurring administrative challenges and promoting corrective action within public bodies.

Major Themes Emerging from Complaints

The complaints received during 2025 revealed recurring patterns of administrative injustice across the Public Service. These failures caused hardship, sometimes significant, to citizens seeking to access services, benefits and entitlements, including persons who were already in vulnerable circumstances. They arose from incorrect or unreasonable decision-making, failure to adhere to established policies and procedures, the inconsistent or improper exercise of discretion, inadequate communication and record-keeping, and prolonged administrative delay.

Prolonged delay was particularly prominent, affecting the payment of pensions, gratuities and other entitlements, administrative decisions, the issue of documents, responses to correspondence and routine processes.

Viewed collectively, the complaints and investigations point to broader systemic weaknesses within public administration. These include deficiencies in administrative systems and supervision, poor inter-agency coordination, inconsistent application of established procedures, and the continued reliance on manual rather than digital systems for maintaining and retrieving records. The recurrence of these problems across public authorities suggests that many of the difficulties encountered by citizens are not isolated occurrences, but reflect weaknesses in the systems and practices through which public services are delivered.



RECURRING THEMES

- **Excessive delays in processing benefits and entitlements**
- **Failure to communicate decisions**
- **Poor record management**
- **Inadequate supervision**
- **Lack of familiarity with policies and regulations**
- **Inconsistent exercise of discretion**
- **Failure to respond to correspondence**
- **Poor coordination between agencies**
- **Staffing shortages and resource constraints**

Manual Record-Keeping in a Modern Public Service

A recurring feature of Ombudsman's investigations conducted during 2025 was the continuing reliance on manual record-keeping systems across many MDAs. In numerous cases, investigations were delayed because files could not be readily located, employment records were incomplete, leave records required extensive reconstruction, or complainants were repeatedly asked to produce documents that had previously been submitted but could no longer be found. These challenges affected not only the timely resolution of complaints but also the quality and reliability of administrative decision-making. As the volume of records continues to increase and experienced public officers retire or move between departments, the risks associated with predominantly manual systems become even more pronounced.

In numerous cases, investigations were delayed because files could not be readily located, employment records were incomplete, leave records required extensive reconstruction, or complainants were repeatedly asked to produce documents that had previously been submitted but could no longer be found.

While the Office recognizes that the implementation of a comprehensive, Government-wide digital records management system is a significant undertaking, there is considerable scope for MDAs to introduce practical interim measures. While broader digital transformation initiatives continue, individual departments can develop and maintain secure electronic databases for personnel records, contract management, pension and leave information, and other frequently accessed administrative records. Such measures would significantly reduce the loss of documents, improve institutional memory, enhance accountability, and allow officers to retrieve information more efficiently. The investment required to modernize record management is likely to be substantially outweighed by the reduction in delays, administrative errors, repeated work, and avoidable disputes.

The Culture of Administrative Delay

Another recurring theme identified throughout the reporting period was the persistence of a culture of administrative delay. The Ombudsman repeatedly encountered matters in which files remained unattended for extended periods, correspondence went unanswered for months or years, and routine administrative actions were deferred without satisfactory explanation. In many instances, meaningful progress occurred only after the intervention of the Ombudsman or the involvement of a Minister or Permanent Secretary. These patterns suggest that, in parts of the Public Service, prolonged delay has become normalized rather than recognized as a fault in administration.

Good public administration requires more than eventual action. Citizens are entitled to decisions that are made within a reasonable time, supported by effective supervision and clear accountability. The Ombudsman considers that stronger performance management arrangements are needed throughout the Public Service, including the establishment of realistic timelines for the completion of assigned work, regular monitoring by supervisors, and meaningful key performance indicators that measure timeliness as well as output. Effective leadership at every level, particularly by Accounting Officers, Permanent Secretaries, and Heads of Department, is essential to fostering a culture in which prompt, fair, and efficient administration is regarded not as an aspiration, but as a fundamental obligation owed to every citizen.

Good public administration requires more than eventual action. Citizens are entitled to decisions that are made within a reasonable time, supported by effective supervision and clear accountability.

The Cascading Effects of Administrative Delay

Administrative delay rarely affects only the matter in which it first arises. Investigations conducted by this Office revealed that failures within one Ministry or Department frequently have consequential effects across the wider Public Service, creating additional hardship for citizens and increasing inefficiency throughout Government.

One recurring example concerns retired public officers whose Pension and Leave Records remain incomplete or whose retirement benefits have not been finalized. This Office has encountered instances in which applications for social assistance could not be determined because the relevant authorities required confirmation of Government pension or National Insurance Scheme (NIS) benefits before assessing eligibility. Consequently, the failure of one Ministry or Department to discharge its administrative responsibilities in a timely manner effectively prevents another public authority from performing its own statutory functions. The result is a chain of administrative delay, with the citizen bearing the cumulative consequences of failures occurring across multiple public institutions.

This interconnectedness underscores the importance of coordinated public administration. Administrative efficiency cannot be viewed solely from the perspective of an individual Ministry or Department. Delays in one agency inevitably affect the work of others, particularly where Government services depend upon the timely exchange of information and the completion of sequential administrative processes. Strengthening inter-agency coordination, improving information-sharing,

and ensuring the timely completion of foundational administrative tasks would significantly reduce unnecessary hardship and improve the overall delivery of public services.

The findings therefore suggest that strengthening communication, improving and digitizing records management systems, investing in training and development, enhancing accountability and ensuring adequate staffing levels will be critical to improving service delivery and reducing the administrative injustices that give rise to complaints.

When citizens encounter these difficulties, they often make repeated visits to public offices, write numerous letters and pursue every available avenue in an effort to have their concerns addressed. Some eventually obtain redress through persistence, while others seek the assistance of Members of Parliament or other public representatives. Many, however, receive no satisfactory resolution and, after exhausting other options, turn to the Ombudsman.

> *...the failure of one Ministry or Department to discharge its administrative responsibilities in a timely manner effectively prevents another public authority from performing its own statutory functions. The result is a chain of administrative delay, with the citizen bearing the cumulative consequences*

By the time a complaint reaches this Office, the person concerned has often spent months, sometimes years, seeking a response. Once a matter falls within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and is taken up for investigation, this Office must pursue it diligently. Public authorities are therefore expected to cooperate promptly and meaningfully so that complaints may be resolved fairly and without further avoidable delay.

Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Concern

The investigations conducted by the Ombudsman during 2025 identified a number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies in which certain administrative issues arose repeatedly. Many of these are large and complex organisations, requiring strong strategic leadership, effective oversight and adequate staffing if improvements in service delivery are to be achieved.

The Ministry of Education



Recurring Areas of Concern

- Delays in the processing of pensions and other retirement benefits
- Delays in the processing and payment of contract gratuities
- Deficiencies in records management
- Failure to adhere to established policies
- Leave administration and overpayment disputes
- Long-standing unresolved administrative matters affecting serving and retired officers

These concerns have a direct and sometimes significant impact on our Teachers. It is not uncommon for a Teacher, after many years of service to the country, to make repeated visits and enquiries to the Ministry in an effort to secure retirement benefits to which he or she is entitled. Such circumstances are manifestly unfair, particularly where the difficulty arises from failures in the maintenance of records, non-adherence to established policies, or delays in taking routine administrative action necessary to process those entitlements. A retiring Teacher should not have to repeatedly pursue the administration for benefits earned through years of public service.

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service



Recurring Areas of Concern

- Leave entitlement disputes
- Overpayment disputes
- Failure to adhere to established policies
- Delays in the processing of pensions and other retirement benefits
- Delays in the processing and payment of contract gratuities
- Deficiencies in records management
- Delays in responding to correspondence and requests for information
- Delays and deficiencies in inter-divisional communication concerning administrative matters
- Long-standing unresolved administrative matters affecting serving and retired officers

The Ombudsman acknowledges the improved responsiveness demonstrated by the TTPS during the reporting period, particularly through the Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Administration

and Operational Support. This improved engagement has assisted in advancing a number of investigations and is appreciated.

Nevertheless, the recurring complaints received by this Office suggest that the administrative arrangements supporting the Service warrant careful review. The TTPS is responsible for the administration of employment and retirement matters affecting a serving establishment of more than 10,000 persons, in addition to a substantial number of retired officers whose pension, leave and other retirement-related matters continue to require attention. The administrative challenges facing the TTPS are compounded by the geographical spread of the Service and its continued reliance on manual record-keeping, with multiple files and sub-files maintained across divisions throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Such a fragmented system makes effective oversight, consistent record management and adherence to established policies and government circulars considerably more difficult, and increases the risk of delay, error and inconsistency. In these circumstances, consideration should be given to whether the existing records management and administrative systems, staffing arrangements and organisational structure are adequate to support the volume and complexity of the Service's responsibilities. Strengthening these arrangements would not only improve service delivery to officers but may also contribute to the overall effectiveness of the TTPS by ensuring that administrative responsibilities are supported by appropriate systems and personnel, thereby enabling Police Officers to devote greater attention to their core policing functions.

The Ministry of Homeland Security – Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service

Recurring Areas of Concern

- Delays in the processing of pensions and other retirement benefits
- Failure to adhere to established policies
- Missing, incomplete or inaccurate personnel records
- Deficiencies in records management
- Reliance on the Ministry's Head Office for audit and verification processes, contributing to delays in resolving employment and retirement matters
- Communication and coordination challenges between the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service and the Ministry's Head Office



The Ombudsman notes that the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service is responsible for supporting approximately 2,700 serving officers, in addition to a significant number of retired officers whose pension, leave and other post-retirement matters continue to require administrative attention. Investigations conducted during the reporting period suggest that the administrative arrangements supporting the Chief Fire Officer present significant operational challenges. Unlike many organisations of comparable size, the Fire Service remains heavily dependent upon the central administrative functions of the Ministry of Homeland Security for the processing of many human resource, accounting and retirement-related matters.

While this administrative model may operate satisfactorily in routine circumstances, Ombudsman's investigations indicate that it frequently results in delays once complex or disputed matters arise. The Ministry of Homeland Security itself carries broad national responsibilities across several protective services and agencies, and this reliance on central administration appears to contribute to delays in resolving employment and retirement matters affecting Fire Service personnel. The number of complaints received by the Ombudsman from retired Fire Service officers concerning pension and leave records, retirement benefits and other longstanding administrative matters suggests that this arrangement merits careful review to determine whether additional administrative capacity or greater decentralisation of functions is required to better support the Service and those who have served within it.

The Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services

Recurring Areas of Concern

- Delays in processing applications for social assistance benefits and grants
- Failure to keep applicants adequately informed of the status and progress of their applications, sometimes requiring elderly and vulnerable persons to make repeated enquiries or visits to Social Welfare offices
- Absence of clearly defined policies and procedures governing some aspects of the administration of benefits and grants
- Inconsistent application of established policies and procedures
- Exercise of administrative discretion without sufficiently clear or consistent criteria, making it difficult to determine whether applicants are being treated fairly and consistently
- High application volumes and workloads affecting the timely delivery of services and financial assistance to vulnerable persons



The Ombudsman acknowledges that, during the reporting period, the Ministry made discernible efforts to improve its responsiveness to complaints. In many instances, the Ministry engaged constructively with this Office and demonstrated a willingness to address matters requiring attention. Those efforts are recognized and appreciated.

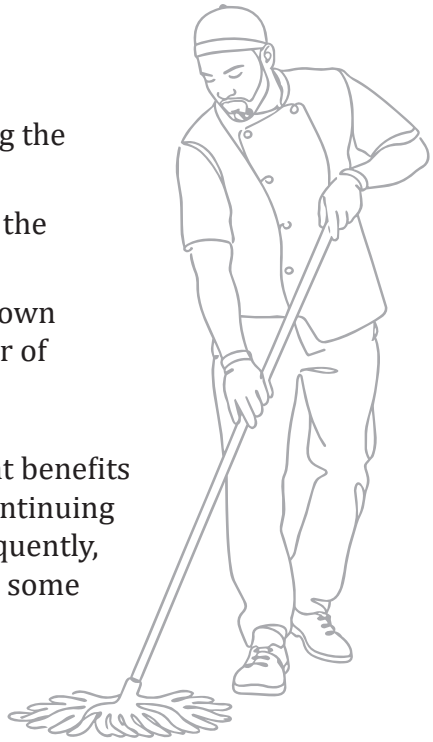
Notwithstanding these improvements, investigations continue to reveal significant pressures within certain district offices. In many cases, this Office was advised by the Ministry that complainants whose applications had been submitted well beyond the Ministry's standard processing period remained on waiting lists comprising, in some instances, hundreds of applicants awaiting consideration ahead of them.

The pattern of complaints suggests that the issues extend beyond individual cases and cannot be attributed solely to the significant workloads borne by some district offices. While recognising the

Ministry's ongoing efforts to strengthen service delivery, the Ombudsman considers that continued attention should also be given to the development of clearer policies to guide administrative action and reduce excessive reliance on individual discretion. The role and functioning of the Local Boards should also be reviewed to determine how their contribution may be strengthened to promote greater consistency in decision-making, improve the overall delivery of social welfare services across the districts, and reduce the hardship experienced by vulnerable applicants awaiting essential social support.

The Ministry of Public Utilities - The National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS)

Recurring Areas of Concern



- Delays in the processing and payment of retirement benefits
- Communication deficiencies affecting former employees during the processing of retirement matters
- Failure to honour retirement benefit obligations arising under the applicable collective agreement
- Failure to make adequate and timely financial provision for known retirement benefit liabilities, resulting in an increasing number of retirees awaiting payment

In the matters investigated, the MTS has not disputed that retirement benefits are owed to the former employees concerned. Rather, the continuing failure to pay has been attributed to insufficient cash flow. Consequently, acknowledged retirement benefit liabilities remain unsettled, in some cases for prolonged periods.

Of particular concern is the apparent failure to accord these liabilities the priority that obligations to retiring employees reasonably require. Despite commitments to work towards resolving the outstanding payments, the problem persists and additional retirees continue to be added to the number of persons awaiting payment. Financial constraints cannot, over an extended period, provide a sufficient answer to acknowledged obligations without meaningful measures being taken to address them. The position is especially concerning because affected retirees may have limited means to pursue legal proceedings to recover sums which the MTS itself accepts are due.

The administrative injustice revealed by these cases is glaring and difficult to dispute. The obligation is acknowledged, the persons entitled to payment are known, and yet the indebtedness remains unresolved. What is particularly troubling is the absence of sufficient urgency in addressing an injustice that continues to affect existing retirees while the number of persons awaiting payment increases. In the Ombudsman's view, this situation requires urgent attention at the highest levels of the MTS and its responsible Ministry (the Ministry of Public Utilities).

Persistent Complaints Regarding Late Payment of Retirement Benefits and Contract Gratuities

Across the Public Service, complaints concerning unpaid pensions, gratuities, leave benefits and other terminal entitlements continued to expose persistent weaknesses in the administration of retirement obligations. The consistency of these complaints, often involving lengthy periods without payment, points to a systemic problem rather than isolated administrative lapses.

The consistency of these complaints, often involving lengthy periods without payment, points to a systemic problem rather than isolated administrative lapses.

This persistent pattern is particularly concerning given that the Minister of Finance and the Comptroller of Accounts have, over many years, issued repeated circulars and instructions requiring MDAs to maintain accurate records, promptly investigate and resolve discrepancies, immediately suspend payments upon the identification of overpayments, and ensure the timely processing of retirement benefits. Moreover, in the case of certain public services, the obligation to maintain proper pension and leave records is expressly prescribed by law.

Notwithstanding these longstanding requirements, investigations conducted by the Ombudsman continue to reveal failures to comply with established financial instructions and policies governing the administration of pension and leave entitlements, and, in some instances, a disregard for applicable legal obligations. The persistence of these failures raises serious concerns about administrative accountability, particularly where retired public officers are subjected to prolonged delays, financial uncertainty and considerable hardship arising from circumstances largely beyond their control.

The timely payment of retirement benefits is not merely an administrative objective. It is a fundamental obligation owed to public officers who have completed their service to the State. Delays extending years after retirement cannot be regarded as routine administrative shortcomings. They undermine confidence in public administration, erode the dignity of retired public officers, and impose avoidable financial and personal hardship at a stage of life when certainty and security should be assured.

The Rule of Law, Administrative Justice and the Repetition of Established Injustice

A matter of growing concern to the Ombudsman is the increasing frequency with which complaints arise from patterns of administrative conduct that have already been considered and addressed by the courts. In several investigations conducted during 2025, the factual circumstances closely mirrored matters in which judicial decisions had already clarified the obligations of public authorities and the standards of fairness required in public administration.

The rule of law requires more than compliance with court orders in individual cases. Judicial decisions provide authoritative guidance on the lawful exercise of public power and establish standards of fairness, reasonableness and procedural propriety that should inform the conduct of all public authorities exercising similar functions. Once the courts have identified administrative practices as unlawful, unfair or unreasonable, public authorities are expected to review and modify their practices accordingly.

Once the courts have identified administrative practices as unlawful, unfair or unreasonable, public authorities are expected to review and modify their practices accordingly. This Office is concerned that, in some instances, administrative authorities appear prepared to maintain unsustainable positions until compelled by litigation to reverse them.

This Office is concerned that, in some instances, administrative authorities appear prepared to maintain unsustainable positions until compelled by litigation to reverse them. This approach imposes unnecessary costs on the State, contributes to delays in resolving complaints and creates the perception that legality is contingent upon judicial intervention rather than an ongoing obligation of public administration. More troublingly, where unlawful administrative practices continue uncorrected because affected persons lack the means or ability to litigate, those practices risk becoming entrenched, notwithstanding their inconsistency with established legal principles.

Constitutional offices such as the Ombudsman exist precisely to prevent citizens from being forced into unnecessary litigation in every instance of administrative wrongdoing. In carrying out its constitutional mandate, this Office assesses administrative conduct against the Constitution, legislation, regulations, financial instructions, circulars, policies, established administrative standards and relevant judicial guidance. Judicial decisions are not viewed merely as determinations between parties but as important statements of principle that assist in defining the standards expected of public authorities operating within a constitutional democracy.

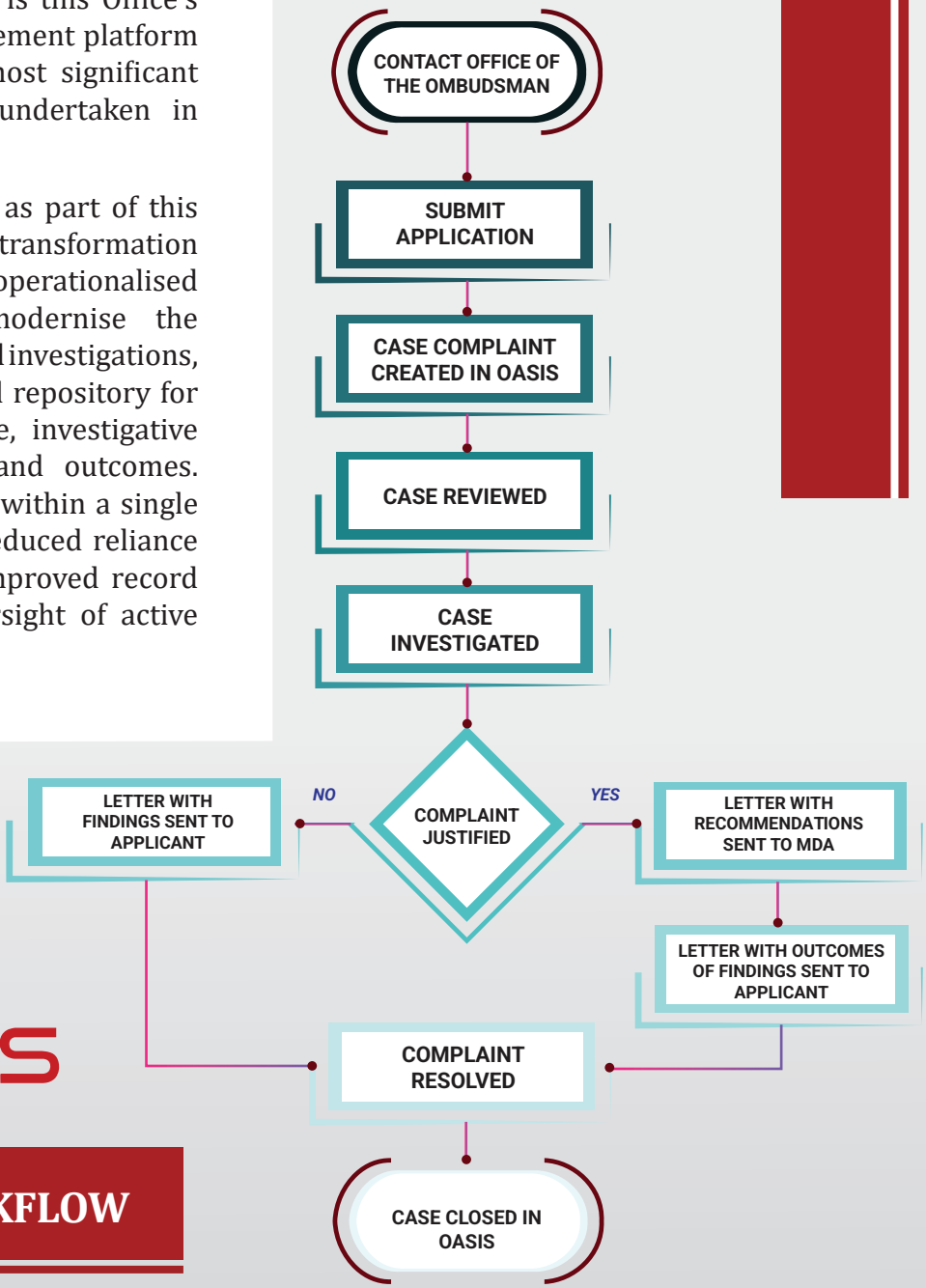
This Office therefore encourages MDAs to review recurring categories of complaints against existing judicial guidance, Ombudsman findings, and applicable policies and regulations. A public administration committed to the rule of law must be willing to learn from judicial decisions, correct identified deficiencies, and prevent the repetition of injustice before further harm occurs. The continued recurrence of substantially similar complaints after judicial clarification of the law raises important questions of accountability, good governance and administrative justice.

Strengthening the Office Of the Ombudsman

OASIS: Transforming Case Management and Investigations

The Ombudsman Advanced Solutions Investigation System (OASIS) is this Office's integrated digital case management platform and represents one of the most significant institutional improvements undertaken in recent years.

OASIS was launched in 2022 as part of this Office's broader digital transformation programme and became fully operationalised in 2024. Developed to modernise the management of complaints and investigations, the system serves as a central repository for case records, correspondence, investigative findings, recommendations and outcomes. By consolidating information within a single secure platform, OASIS has reduced reliance on paper-based processes, improved record retrieval, and enhanced oversight of active investigations.



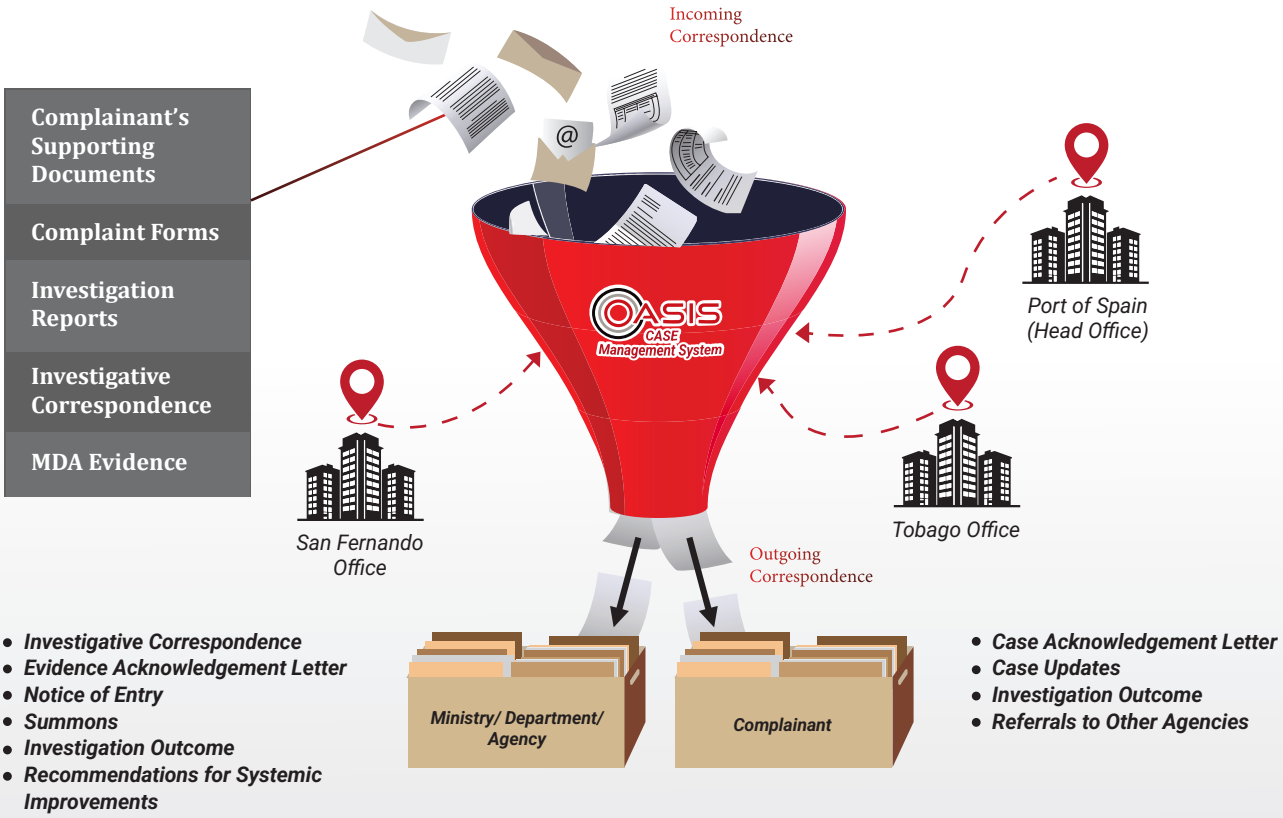
OASIS

COMPLAINT WORKFLOW

The introduction of OASIS has fundamentally changed the way investigations are managed by the Ombudsman. The system enables investigators, supervisors and the Ombudsman to access case information, correspondence histories and investigative records in real time. Every action taken on a case, every document received or generated, every item of correspondence and every investigative step is recorded within OASIS, creating a complete audit trail for each investigation. This enables the Ombudsman and supervisors to review the progress of investigations, examine the complete evidential record, verify the accuracy and completeness of investigative work, provide timely guidance where necessary, and ensure that findings and recommendations are based on a thorough consideration of all relevant information. The system also provides greater visibility of urgent and long-outstanding cases and supports more consistent investigative practices throughout the Office.

A particularly significant benefit has been the transition to a largely paperless investigative environment. The Investigations Division and Legal Division now operate primarily through OASIS, eliminating much of the need for the creation, duplication and physical movement of files between investigators, legal officers, regional offices and the Ombudsman. Information is readily accessible within a secure digital environment, improving efficiency, reducing administrative burdens and facilitating collaboration across the Office.

CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT INTERFACE



OASIS has also strengthened institutional knowledge by preserving a comprehensive record of investigations, findings and outcomes. This allows investigators to identify recurring issues, draw upon previous decisions and promote consistency in the application of administrative justice principles. Importantly, the system has enhanced the Office's ability to analyse complaint data, identify emerging trends and support evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving public administration.

The benefits of OASIS extend beyond case management. By enabling secure access to information from multiple locations, the system supports operational resilience, remote work capabilities and continuity of operations.

Looking Ahead

In 2025, the Office began developing *REES*, an AI-assisted research tool for investigators and legal officers. The tool is named in honour of the late Justice Evans Rees, the first Ombudsman, recognising his place in the history and development of the institution.

The tool is being designed to identify and retrieve relevant legislation, regulations, policies, circulars, financial instructions and other governing instruments from the Office's in-house policy database. In this way, it will assist investigators in assessing the administrative action under investigation against the applicable legal, policy and procedural framework. Its purpose is to enhance research capabilities, improve consistency and support the Office in discharging its reporting responsibilities. The tool remains under development and has been introduced on a limited basis to selected action officers for testing and evaluation. Its use during this phase will inform its further refinement and development throughout 2026, as part of the Office's broader programme of technological innovation aimed at improving efficiency, strengthening oversight and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

Future enhancements to OASIS and related technologies will continue to improve reporting, analytics, workflow management and institutional knowledge, further strengthening the Ombudsman's ability to identify systemic issues and deliver timely interventions in the public interest.

OASIS enables investigators, legal officers and managers to track complaints, monitor deadlines, manage correspondence, identify recurring trends and maintain oversight of investigations throughout the life cycle of a case. The platform has become a cornerstone of the Office's modernisation efforts and supports more efficient, accountable and evidence-based public administration oversight.

OASIS REPORTING AND ANALYTIC DASHBOARD

2025 At A Glance

1,638
Complaints Received

(916/1638)*100 = 56%
Resolution Efficiency Score

916
Cases Resolved

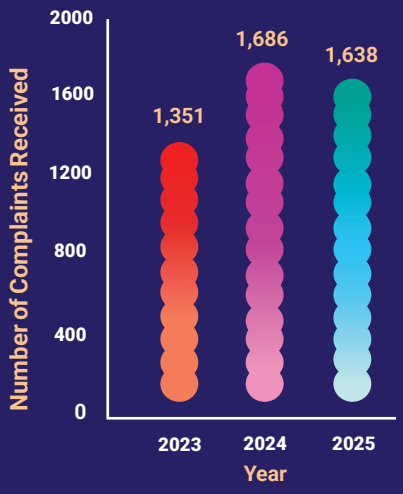
75%
Complaints Due to Poor Communication

722
Cases Under Review by End 2025

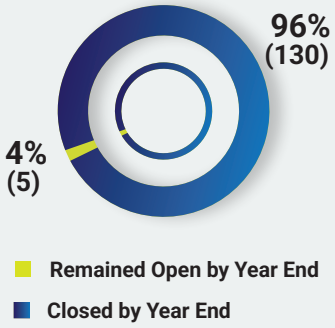
36
Complaints Requiring Higher Level Intervention

473
No Jurisdiction Matters

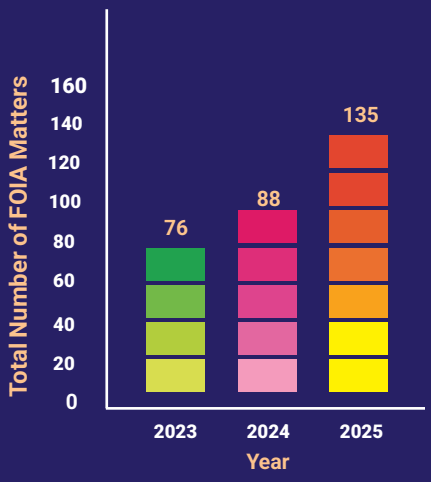
Complaints Received



2025 FOIA Matters

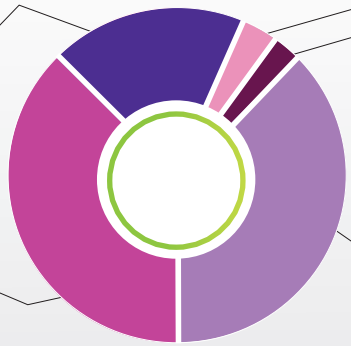


FOIA Matters Received



Complaints Lodged

Categories of Delay



17%
Routine Administrative Matters

4%
Issuing Official Documentation

3%
Infrastructure Maintenance

38%
Processing Payments

38%
Processing Retirement Benefits

1,638 *Complaints Received*

2,092 *Complaints Brought Forward*

3,730 *Total Caseload*

Closing Comments - Strengthening the Office

The year 2025 marked a significant turning point in the evolution of the Office of the Ombudsman. It became increasingly evident that the demands placed upon the institution had outgrown the operational framework, staffing capacity and systems within which the Ombudsman had functioned for many years. At the same time, complaints from members of the public continued to increase, reflecting both greater public awareness of this Office and growing concern regarding the quality, responsiveness and fairness of public administration across the State sector.

A review undertaken in 2025 confirmed the need to modernise investigative processes, reporting arrangements and institutional capacity.

Priority was given to increasing investigative capacity, improving case management, strengthening legal and technological support, enhancing research and institutional reporting, and introducing more structured systems for monitoring recommendations and identifying systemic administrative failures. These initiatives recognized that the Ombudsman's role extends beyond resolving individual complaints. It also includes identifying recurring patterns of maladministration, promoting accountability and contributing to improvements in public administration across the State sector.

Greater emphasis was also placed on public engagement and accessibility through improved communication, digital outreach and public education, recognising that an effective Ombudsman must be not only constitutionally independent but also visible, accessible and trusted by the communities it serves.

The Ombudsman therefore entered 2026 with a clearer strategic direction and renewed sense of purpose. The reforms initiated during 2025 have laid the foundation for a more modern, technology-enabled and research-driven institution, better equipped to reduce investigative delays, strengthen oversight, improve public reporting and fulfil its constitutional responsibility to promote lawful, fair and accountable public administration. Ultimately, these reforms are not simply about strengthening an institution. They are about strengthening public confidence in government, improving the quality of public administration, and ensuring that citizens receive the fair and effective treatment to which they are entitled.

THE COMPLAINT LIFECYCLE



1. Complaint Received

The complaint is received and registered, and a case is created on the OASIS system.

2. Assessment

The complaint is reviewed to determine whether it falls within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, identify the issues raised and decide on the appropriate course of action. Where the matter falls outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, the complainant is advised and, where appropriate, referred to the relevant authority.

3. Investigation

An Investigator is assigned to examine the complaint. Information is gathered through inquiries, examination of records, site inspections or Hearings to establish the relevant facts and determine whether the complaint is substantiated.

4. Findings

The Ombudsman evaluates the evidence and determines whether the complaint discloses administrative injustice. Where the complaint is not substantiated, or further investigation is unwarranted, the matter may be discontinued.

5. Recommendations

The Ombudsman reports the findings to the Head of the MDA and to the Complainant in accordance with section 96 of the Constitution. Where administrative injustice is established, recommendations may be made to the MDA for appropriate corrective action.

6. Monitoring

Where corrective action is recommended, the MDA is given a timeframe for implementation. The Monitoring Unit follows up to ascertain whether the recommended action has been taken.

7. Resolution & Closure

The matter is closed when the complaint has been resolved, the recommended action has been taken, or no further intervention is warranted.

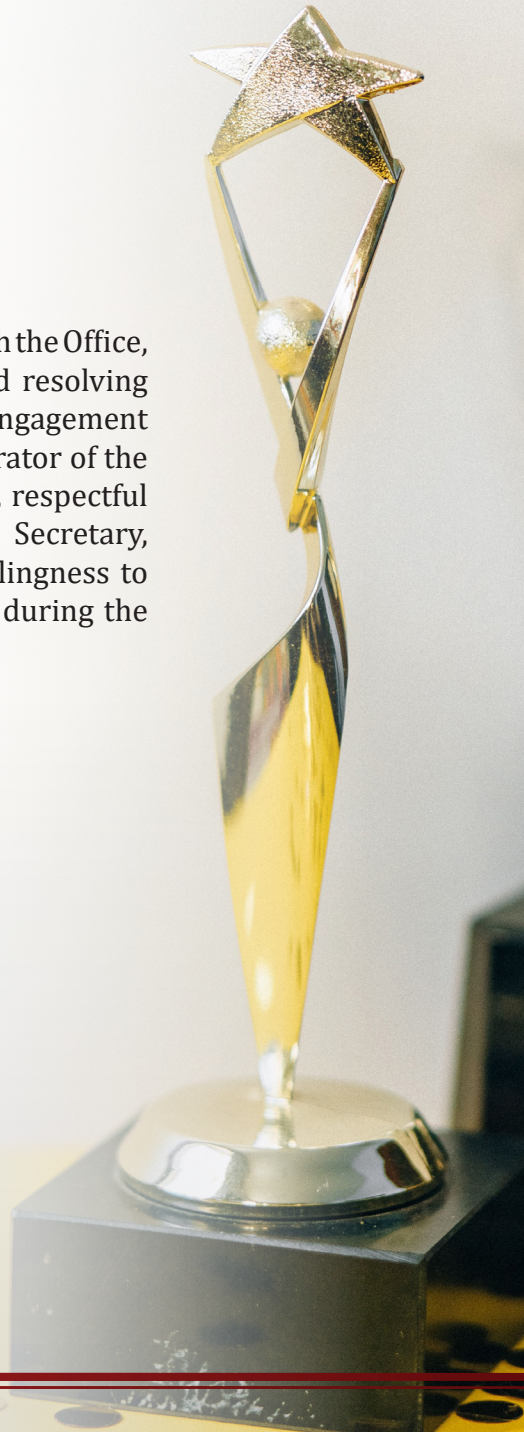
Special Commendations

The Office also considers it important to recognise public authorities that demonstrated improved engagement and cooperation during 2025. To inform this assessment, a survey was conducted among Investigators and Senior Investigators across the Office's three regions, who were asked to identify MDAs that demonstrated marked improvement in their engagement with the Office and their efforts to address and resolve complaints.

Based on the responses received, particular recognition is given to

- The Ministry of Finance
- The Ministry of Homeland Security
- The National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago, and
- The Tobago House of Assembly.

These MDAs demonstrated improved responsiveness and cooperation with the Office, together with a willingness to engage constructively in addressing and resolving complaints referred to them. Particularly encouraging was the personal engagement of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, and the Chief Administrator of the Tobago House of Assembly, both of whom consistently provided timely, respectful and constructive responses to the Office's inquiries. The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Homeland Security, also demonstrated a commendable willingness to assist the Office in securing the resolution of complaints. Their efforts during the reporting period are acknowledged and commended.



The Ombudsman's Casebook



1. A Retired Officer's Long Wait for Justice
2. A Retiree's 14-Year Struggle for His TTPS Gratuity
3. When the Hope for Help Erodes: Flood Relief Drainage Works Delayed as Property Slips Away
4. Hardship through Delayed HDC Repairs
5. Delayed Processing of Retirement Benefits
6. Nine-Year Failure to Restore Salary and Statutory Benefits Following Unsubstantiated Allegations Against Employee
7. Delayed Drainage Maintenance and Administrative Inaction
8. Eighteen-Year Delay in the Payment of Contract Gratuity
9. Administrative Silence and Public Confidence
10. A Widower's Decade-Long Wait – Administrative Delay, Missing Records, and Financial Hardship
11. When Emergency Assistance Becomes a Waiting Game
12. When Enforcement Delays Become Administrative Injustice
13. When Administrative Delay Becomes an Injustice
14. Retrospective Approval and Regulatory Delay: The De Verteuil Street Development Complaint
15. Delayed Contract Gratuity Following Failure to Secure Cabinet Approval



A RETIRED OFFICER'S LONG WAIT FOR JUSTICE

The Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service

In October 2024, the Ombudsman received a complaint from Mr. D, a retired officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS). Mr. D reported that, more than seven years after his retirement and sixteen years after first acting in a higher post, he had yet to receive his full and proper retirement benefits. This was attributable to longstanding delays in resolving his outstanding employment entitlements, including the payment of acting allowances and incremental salary awards, and the resulting failure to revise his pension and leave records for the purpose of calculating his retirement benefits.

Mr. D had served as a Fire Sub Station Officer (Grade 3), having acted in the position since April 2008. His promotion was formally confirmed by the Service Commission Department in December 2016, while he was on pre-retirement leave. He retired in January 2017. Mr. D's acting allowances, annual increments (due from 2009 to 2015), and related arrears of salary under the 2011–2013 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Chief Personnel Officer and the Fire Service Association remained unpaid. He continued to receive only an interim pension, pending the proper amendment of his pension and leave records.

The Office of the Ombudsman commenced a formal investigation. Repeated attempts were made to engage the TTFS for clarification and resolution. No response was received. In light of this continued silence and the extended delay, an on-site examination was conducted at TTFS Headquarters on March 13, 2025, pursuant to Section 97(2) of the Constitution. The objective was to determine the status of the case and collect supporting documentation.

Key findings of the investigation included:

- Mr. D's incremental certificates—due annually beginning April 14, 2009—were only prepared and approved on July 19, 2023, more than 14 years after the first increment was due.
- No explanation for the delay was found in his file.
- Despite approval of the certificates, no payments had been made as of the date of inspection.

It was verbally agreed during the examination that these payments would be processed by May 31, 2025 and that the complainant's pension and leave records would then be updated to reflect the correct entitlements. However as of July 2025, this was not completed.

The delay in this case represents more than bureaucratic inefficiency—it is a clear breach of *Regulation 37(2) of the Fire Service (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations, Chap. 35:50.* This regulation requires that incremental certificates be signed and attached to the pay sheets for the month in which the increment becomes due. In Mr. D's case, the breach is both procedural and deeply personal. His personnel file contained multiple commendations and no disciplinary issues. His

performance had never been in question.

Now unwell and in need of surgery, Mr. D continues to experience financial hardship due to the denial of his full pension. The emotional and economic impact of this delay is significant, and unjustifiable.

This Office found that the prolonged failure to process Mr. D's outstanding entitlements was inconsistent with the standards of good public administration and constituted a serious administrative injustice.

The constitutional implications of such delays have been recognised by the High Court. In Samuel Friday v The Attorney General (CV2021-02843) and Cheryl Davis v The Attorney General (CV2023-02479), the Court found that prolonged and unjustified delays in the processing and payment of retirement-related entitlements infringed constitutional rights, including the right to the protection of the law, and awarded vindicatory damages.

These decisions underscore the seriousness of administrative failures that deprive retired public officers of their lawful entitlements and reinforce the obligation of public authorities to discharge their responsibilities within a reasonable time.

As at December 2025, Mr. D had not received his outstanding increments, and his Pension and Leave Records remained incomplete.



A RETIREE'S 14-YEAR STRUGGLE FOR HIS TTPS GRATUITY

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

Mr. B's long-running complaint, previously featured in the Ombudsman's 40th Annual Report under the title "A Nightmare on Dollar Street...", stands as a stark illustration of administrative delay and institutional inertia within the Public Service. What began as a claim for compensation evolved into a decades-long pursuit of justice.

Mr. B's service to the State dates back to May 16, 1973, when he was enlisted in the Special Reserve Police Service (SRP) and assigned to the South Western Division as a full-time Driver. He continued in this capacity until 1988, when illness necessitated a transition to part-time duties. He remained in service until his retirement at age sixty (60) in September 2008.

In 2003, the Complainant first approached the Ombudsman regarding the delay by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service [TTPS] and the then Ministry of National Security [the Ministry] in compensating him for his full-time duties performed during the relevant period.

Early investigations by this Office revealed that a *Cabinet decision by way of Minute 1279 dated July 12, 2000 agreed inter alia:-*

1. ***That Special Reserve Police officers who have completed two (2) years of continuous full-time service as on 1.8.00 should be considered for absorption into the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.***
2. ***That they meet other specific criteria."***

While Mr. B did not qualify for absorption, the TTPS acknowledged that there were precedents for the award of compassionate gratuities to similarly situated officers and indicated that representations would be made to the then Ministry for Mr. B to be compensated for his service during the period 1973 to 1988, upon his attainment of the age of sixty (60) years.

The years that followed, however, were marked by protracted correspondence and limited progress.

By February 2011, Mr. B returned to the Ombudsman, reporting that his claim remained unresolved. The matter became mired in a cycle of administrative exchanges involving the TTPS, the Ministry, the Office of the Adjutant, and the Office of the Chief Personnel Officer. Although a draft Cabinet Note proposing the payment of a compassionate gratuity was prepared in February 2015, it was never forwarded for Cabinet consideration.

It was not until January 2019 that the TTPS indicated that further clarification was being sought from the Chief Personnel Officer before advancing the matter. Even then, decisive action remained elusive. Over the course of the investigation, multiple Summons Hearings were convened, requiring representatives of the TTPS and Ministry to provide evidence under oath before the Ombudsman.

The most recent of these Hearings occurred on March 27, 2024.

A renewed effort appeared to materialize in April 2024, when the Ombudsman was informed that a Cabinet Note had been submitted seeking approval for Mr. B's gratuity. Yet, by July 2024, that Note was withdrawn by Cabinet and returned to the TTPS for further review which once again prolonged the resolution of this matter without clear direction. Subsequent enquiries confirmed that the matter remained under review, with no defined scope or timeline.

The Ombudsman's investigation found that Mr. B had been subjected to an unjustifiable delay of fourteen (14) years in the processing of his claim. The lack of coordination between the TTPS and the Ministry of Homeland Security was a central factor, with neither institution assuming clear responsibility for advancing the matter. This failure reflected a broader deficiency in administrative accountability and a disregard for the duty of care owed to former public officers.

By this stage, Mr. B, then seventy-seven (77) years old, had spent over two decades seeking redress. He had done so under the reasonable expectation that appropriate representation would be made on his behalf, particularly given the policy communicated to him regarding Special Reserve Police Officers, such as himself, who do not occupy pensionable offices. The absence of a timely and definitive decision constituted a clear injustice arising from administrative fault.

By letter dated June 10, 2025, this Office, in accordance with section 96(2) of the Constitution, reported its findings to the Permanent Secretary and recommended that all necessary administrative steps be taken to resolve the matter by November 30, 2025.

On November 14, 2025, the TTPS confirmed that approval had been granted for the payment of Mr. B's compassionate gratuity. Shortly thereafter, on November 25, 2025, Mr. B confirmed that a cheque was ready for collection.

While the eventual resolution brought closure to Mr. B's long-standing claim, the case underscores the profound impact of administrative delay and highlights the urgent need for improved coordination, accountability, and responsiveness within public institutions.



WHEN THE HOPE FOR HELP ERODES: FLOOD RELIEF DRAINAGE WORKS DELAYED AS PROPERTY SLIPS AWAY

The Ministry of Works and Infrastructure

This complaint was initially lodged with the Ombudsman in April 2016. At that time, the then Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) advised that drainage works had been undertaken in the area, providing the Complainant with some degree of erosion protection. The MOWT indicated that the property was not in immediate danger and classified the matter as a low-priority project, to be monitored and considered for implementation subject to funding availability. The matter was subsequently closed.

In April 2023, Mr. K resubmitted his complaint following renewed and visible erosion caused by repeated flooding. He reported that despite multiple approaches to MOWT, no sustained intervention had been undertaken to address the drainage issues affecting his property. Although he had initiated construction of a drain with limited assistance from the Siparia Regional Corporation and the MOWT, the works were not completed. Materials provided by the MOWT were reportedly removed shortly after delivery, and no further assistance was rendered. As a result, the incomplete drainage infrastructure contributed to ongoing flooding and progressive erosion of his land.

By correspondence dated April 19, 2023, the Ombudsman referred the matter to the Permanent Secretary of the MOWT, requesting an investigation and response. In its reply dated October 23, 2023, the Ministry indicated that the works were scheduled for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. However, in January 2024, the MOWT advised that the Drainage Division was awaiting confirmation of funding from the Ministry of Finance.

During a visit to the Office in January 2024, Mr. K expressed frustration about the prolonged delay, noting that the issue had persisted since the 1970s and that previous interventions by various agencies—including the MOWT and the Siparia Regional Corporation—had not resulted in any tangible or lasting solution. He further reported that repeated site visits were conducted by officials, but no substantive works followed. Additionally, he indicated that the lack of maintenance of the nearby river had contributed to overgrowth and obstruction of the waterway, exacerbating flooding in the vicinity of his home. He also highlighted structural damage to a retaining wall he had constructed, which had begun to crack due to soil erosion.

Subsequent updates from the MOWT indicated incremental progress. By February 2024, documentation for the project was being prepared for execution under the National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIPDEC). In May 2024, the project was confirmed as having been tendered, and by June 2024, it had reached the evaluation stage at NIPDEC. In January 2025, the MOWT reported that the evaluation process had been completed, that the award of contract was pending finalization under NIPDEC and on May 5, 2025, the Ministry confirmed that the drainage project had been completed in April. This was corroborated by the Complainant's son.

Regrettably, Mr. K passed away on May 20, 2025, only a few weeks after the completion of the long-delayed works.

While the drainage works were ultimately completed, the significant delay, spanning several decades and involving repeated unfulfilled commitments, reflects a clear instance of fault in administration.



HARDSHIP THROUGH DELAYED HDC REPAIRS

The Housing Development Corporation

In August 2020, Mr. B sought the assistance of the Ombudsman regarding the delay by the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) in effecting repairs to his HDC rental Unitwwww. He indicated that, in August 2019, his home was damaged by an electrical fire, as documented in a report prepared by the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service. He was left without a supply of electricity. Subsequent to this misfortune, he approached the HDC with the relevant documentation to submit a report in order for repairs to be conducted. He complained, however, that despite his repeated efforts to engage the HDC, the matter remained unresolved.

In October 2020, this Office wrote to the Managing Director of the HDC to highlight Mr. B's concerns. Thereafter, the assigned Investigator maintained regular contact with both the Complainant and the HDC, seeking updates and encouraging the timely resolution of the outstanding issues. In November 2021, the Complainant revealed that the HDC made minor repairs to his property (these repairs included painting, installation of ceiling tiles and minor electrical rewiring). Further repairs were stalled due to lack of funds, material and manpower.

In 2024, the HDC informed the Ombudsman that a site visit was conducted at Mr. B's residence for an assessment of the outstanding repairs. In October 2024, recommendations pursuant to section 96(2) were issued to the HDC by the Ombudsman. In June, 2025, the HDC advised this Office that the remedial works were completed in May 2025, and a Completion Certificate was endorsed by the Complainant.

The facts of this case demonstrate systemic deficiencies within the HDC in the timely assessment and execution of repairs to its rental housing units. While the matter was eventually resolved, the prolonged delay of 5 years for the completion of the repairs caused considerable hardship to the Complainant.



DELAYED PROCESSING OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago

In 2022, Mr. M submitted a Retirement Benefit claim to the National Insurance Board (NIB) together with all required documentation. Despite the timely submission, the claim was not processed within the stipulated timelines.

In February 2024, Mr. M sought the assistance of the Ombudsman regarding the delay. The Office wrote to the Executive Director of the NIB, highlighting Mr. M's concerns. In December 2024, the NIB advised that investigations for the claim were being conducted, specifically in relation to the complainant's former employer.

Due to the prolonged delay by the NIB to process and finalize the payment of the benefit to Mr. M, the matter was escalated to the issuance of a summons to appear before the Ombudsman. The Hearing, however, was adjourned after the NIB provided substantial information regarding the ongoing investigations which subsequently led to the resolution of the matter in February 2025.

Mr. M confirmed receipt of his Retirement Benefit in March 2025 and the matter was considered to be finally resolved.

Investigations determined that Mr. M's allegations were substantiated, as his claim was not processed within the timelines stipulated by the NIB, resulting in a years-long wait for Mr. M to see his benefits materialize.



NINE-YEAR FAILURE TO RESTORE SALARY AND STATUTORY BENEFITS FOLLOWING UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEE

The Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago (ZSTT)

In February 2022, Ms. C. lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman concerning the prolonged failure of the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago (ZSTT) to pay arrears of salary, increments, and statutory deductions, including National Insurance contributions, for the period March 2011 to February 2017.

The complainant had been employed at the Emperor Valley Zoo since 1994 and was confirmed by the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission (SASC) in 1999. In 2011, following allegations of misconduct, she was instructed by the SASC to cease reporting for duty pending the outcome of a police investigation. Thereafter, in March 2011, the ZSTT ceased paying her salary and discontinued the remittance of the applicable statutory deductions, including National Insurance contributions, notwithstanding that the SASC had not interdicted her salary pursuant to the applicable Regulations. The SASC subsequently confirmed that she remained entitled to receive her full salary throughout the relevant period. The allegations of misconduct were never substantiated, and the police subsequently confirmed that no report had ever been made against her.

Despite clear directions from the SASC in 2015 requiring the ZSTT to facilitate payment of all monies owed to the complainant, the ZSTT failed to resume her salary, failed to remit statutory deductions, and failed to regularize her employment records. The matter remained unresolved notwithstanding repeated interventions by Ombudsmen, including formal correspondence, a Summons Hearing convened pursuant to section 97(1) of the Constitution, and direct engagement with the supervising Ministry.

The Ombudsman found that the complainant suffered a significant administrative injustice arising from years of inaction, disregard of lawful directives issued by the SASC, and the failure of the ZSTT to demonstrate any genuine urgency in resolving the matter. In 2025, recommendations were issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution for the immediate payment of arrears, remittance of statutory deductions, and correction of the complainant's personnel records.

The ZSTT subsequently complied with the Ombudsman's recommendations, resulting in the complainant receiving the outstanding payments to which she was entitled, the remittance of the applicable statutory deductions and the regularisation of her employment records.

This case revealed multiple and serious indicators of maladministration. These included the unlawful withholding of salary and benefits despite the absence of any lawful interdiction; disregard of express directions issued by the SASC; failure to act after the police confirmed that no allegations were recorded against the complainant; failure to communicate effectively with the complainant; failure to maintain and update proper employment and personnel records; failure to respond promptly to correspondence from the Ombudsman; failure to provide any reasonable explanation for withholding emoluments; failure to comply with requests from the supervising Ministry for a definitive resolution plan; and the extraordinary delay of more than nine years in addressing a matter affecting the complainant's livelihood, pension, statutory contributions, and financial security. The case further

highlighted institutional inertia, lack of accountability, disregard for established statutory processes, and a sustained failure to treat the complainant fairly, reasonably, and with administrative propriety.

Of particular concern to the Ombudsman is the apparent absence of any disciplinary action against those responsible for disregarding the lawful instructions of the SASC, notwithstanding the serious and prolonged injustice suffered by the complainant.



DELAYED DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INACTION

The Ministry of Works & Infrastructure

In 2022, Mr. S., a resident of Carapichaima, complained to the Ombudsman regarding the prolonged failure of the relevant authorities to carry out routine maintenance and desilting works to drainage channels in the vicinity of his home. The complainant reported persistent flooding caused by overgrown vegetation, heavy silt build-up, and blocked waterways, despite repeated requests to both the Regional Corporation and the then Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT).

The investigation revealed that multiple agencies were aware of the condition of the waterways and had acknowledged the need for maintenance works. The MOWT advised that several waterways fell under the responsibility of different authorities, including the Highways Division, the Drainage Division, and the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation. The Office also confirmed through its own enquiries and site visits that significant desilting and cleaning works were required in the affected area.

Although the MOWT initially advised that cleaning exercises had been completed, the complainant disputed this assertion. Consequently, a joint site visit was conducted in February 2025, involving representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Drainage Division. During the visit, it was observed that the complainant's concerns remained unresolved and that the drains continued to contain stagnant water, garbage, vegetation, and significant silt accumulation.

Following the intervention of the Ombudsman, the MOWT subsequently advised that remedial action had been undertaken. By memorandum dated August 5, 2025, the Highways Division confirmed that desilting operations along Coconut Drive and Waterloo Main Road in the vicinity of the complainant's property had been completed and indicated that the drainage issues raised by the complainant had been addressed. The MOWT thereafter requested that the matter be treated as resolved and closed.

The Ombudsman identified several indicators of faults in administration arising from the investigation, including the failure of the responsible authorities to act promptly despite repeated complaints, inadequate coordination between agencies responsible for drainage maintenance, and the failure to discharge a core public duty relating to the upkeep of public infrastructure. The investigation also raised concerns regarding fairness and consistency in the delivery of public services, particularly where residents repeatedly sought assistance without timely or effective intervention. Recommendations were subsequently issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution to strengthen inter-agency communication and prioritize maintenance works in the affected area.



EIGHTEEN-YEAR DELAY IN THE PAYMENT OF CONTRACT GRATUITY

Division of Education, Research and Technology (THA)

In January 2025, Ms. S., a former contract employee attached to the Tobago Library Services within the Division of Education, Research and Technology, Tobago House of Assembly (the Division), complained to the Ombudsman concerning the prolonged non-payment of contract gratuity arising from periods of employment between 2006 to 2008 and 2008 to 2010. The complainant maintained that despite satisfactorily completing her contractual engagements, the gratuity owed to her remained unpaid for approximately eighteen years.

The investigation revealed that the complainant's matter had been delayed by a combination of administrative deficiencies, including errors in employment documentation, delays in rectifying salary discrepancies, prolonged internal processing, and the continued reliance on Employment Confirmation Letters (ECLs) which were not required by the Comptroller of Accounts Circular governing the decentralization of gratuity payments.

The Ombudsman found that the Division had underpaid the complainant due to a typographical error in her employment records, failed to prepare and execute employment contracts over consecutive years of service, and introduced additional administrative requirements which unnecessarily prolonged the processing of her gratuity. The investigation further disclosed that despite directives issued by the Chief Administrator to discontinue reliance on certain internal THA contract guidelines, the Division continued to utilize procedures that contributed to delay and administrative inertia.

The Ombudsman concluded that the complainant had sustained an administrative injustice arising from faults in administration, particularly the protracted delay of approximately eighteen years in processing and paying gratuity owed to her. The Ombudsman further observed that, without the intervention of the Office, the steps necessary to resolve the matter may never have been actioned, as the complaint had remained effectively dormant for many years.

Following the intervention of the Ombudsman and recommendations issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution, the Division subsequently confirmed that all arrears owed to the complainant had been calculated and approved. The Division advised that the gratuity file had been processed through the relevant administrative and accounting channels for payment, thereby bringing the matter toward resolution after many years of delay.

This case highlighted broader concerns regarding contract administration, record management, compliance with Comptroller of Accounts directives, and the impact of unnecessary administrative procedures on the timely payment of employment-related entitlements within the Public Service.



ADMINISTRATIVE SILENCE AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

Ms. G., a resident of Tobago, lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman in December 2024, through the Tobago Regional Office, concerning the failure of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) to respond to formal correspondence she had directed to the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) regarding the towing and impounding of her motor vehicle in September 2023. The complainant indicated that after querying the towing fees and circumstances surrounding the impounding of her vehicle, she was advised by the TTPS that she should seek redress either before the Magistrates' Court or by submitting a formal complaint to the Commissioner. She subsequently wrote to the Commissioner outlining her concerns but received no response.

The Office of the Ombudsman repeatedly contacted the Office of the Commissioner seeking clarification as to why the complainant's correspondence had not been addressed through the internal mechanisms of the TTPS responsible for treating with such matters. Repeated follow-up correspondence and reminders were issued throughout 2025. Extensions of time were repeatedly requested by the TTPS while indicating that instructions and reports were being obtained.

In correspondence to the Commissioner, the Ombudsman acknowledged that not every communication directed to a public authority, particularly a law enforcement organisation such as the TTPS, necessarily requires a substantive reply. The Office recognised that there are circumstances in which operational, investigative, or legal considerations may justify caution in responding to members of the public. However, the Ombudsman emphasised that the circumstances of this particular case were materially different. The complainant had been expressly advised by officers of the TTPS to formally write to the Commissioner if she wished to pursue clarification regarding the towing of her vehicle. In those circumstances, principles of good public administration required that the citizen receive an appropriate response within a reasonable time. Whether that response confirmed, denied, clarified, or declined the request was ultimately a matter for the Commissioner to determine. However, complete silence in response to a formally submitted concern, made in the manner directed by the authority itself, was found to be inconsistent with good public administration.

The Ombudsman concluded that the complainant had sustained an injustice arising from a fault in administration, namely the failure of the TTPS to provide a response to formal correspondence submitted by a citizen concerning a matter directly affecting her.

Following the intervention of the Ombudsman and recommendations issued pursuant to Section 96(2) of the Constitution, the TTPS subsequently provided a substantive response to the Complainant, clarifying the circumstances surrounding the towing and impounding of her vehicle. The TTPS explained that the vehicle had been parked in a gazetted "No Parking" zone on Hamilton Street, Scarborough, causing an obstruction to the free flow of traffic, and that the vehicle had therefore been lawfully towed in accordance with established traffic wrecking procedures. The TTPS further clarified that certain white road markings relied upon by the complainant were not authorized by the Tobago House of Assembly's Traffic Management Unit and had been painted contrary to the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act. The TTPS also acknowledged and expressed regret for the delay in responding to the complainant's correspondence.



A WIDOWER'S DECADE-LONG WAIT – ADMINISTRATIVE DELAY, MISSING RECORDS, AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The Ministry of Education

Mr. M. lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman in August 2024, through the San Fernando Regional Office, concerning the prolonged delay in obtaining the death gratuity owed following the death of his wife, a Technical Vocational Teacher IV attached to the Point Fortin West Secondary School. His wife died in 2014, and although Letters of Administration and the required supporting documents had been submitted to the Ministry of Education (MoE), the complainant remained unable to secure payment of the death benefit due to her estate, despite years of repeated enquiries and multiple resubmissions of documents.

The investigation revealed that, notwithstanding multiple correspondence from the Ombudsman between August 2024 and March 2025, no substantive response had been provided by the Ministry. The investigation further disclosed significant administrative difficulties affecting the processing of the gratuity, including the inability to retrieve pay-record cards required for calculations because of restricted and unreliable access to a records vault, unresolved salary arrears and increment issues, and an alleged overpayment query relating to salary payments made after the officer's death.

During an on-site examination of records conducted pursuant to section 97(2) of the Constitution, officers of the Ministry acknowledged that critical records remained outstanding and that the complainant's matter had stalled due to failures in record retrieval, inter-departmental coordination, and unresolved accounting queries. Undertakings were subsequently given by the Ministry to retrieve the relevant records, address the outstanding discrepancies, and advance the file for audit and processing by the Comptroller of Accounts.

The Ombudsman concluded that the complainant had sustained an injustice arising from failures in administration, specifically the prolonged delay by the Ministry in resolving the matters necessary for the processing of the death gratuity and the Ministry's failure to adequately communicate with the complainant regarding the status of his claim. The Ombudsman also identified broader systemic concerns involving record management, reliance on inaccessible physical archives, inadequate coordination between departments, and the absence of effective procedures for the timely processing of benefits owed to deceased public officers.

Recommendations were issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution calling for the prompt payment of the death gratuity owed to the Complainant, together with improvements to record retrieval systems, digitization of records and stronger inter-departmental coordination.

The Office was subsequently informed in October 2025 that the death benefit cheque had been processed, and the complainant later advised that he had received the payment for which he expressed deep gratitude.

WHEN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE BECOMES A WAITING GAME

The National Self Help Commission

Ms. M., a resident of Tobago, lodged a complaint with the Tobago Regional Office of the Ombudsman, in July 2023 concerning the prolonged delay in processing her application for emergency housing assistance after her home began to cave. The complainant indicated that she initially applied for assistance in 2019 on the advice of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and subsequently submitted all required documentation to the National Self Help Commission in February 2021. Despite repeated enquiries over several years, the matter remained unresolved.

The investigation revealed a pattern of delay, inconsistent communication, and administrative confusion surrounding the complainant's application. Although the Commission initially referred to the matter as an application for the Minor Repairs and Reconstruction Grant (MRRG), this Office was later informed during an on-site inspection that the complainant had in fact applied for the Emergency Repairs/Reconstruction Assistance Grant.

The Commission advised that an initial site visit had been conducted and that a follow-up reassessment was delayed after unsuccessful attempts to contact the complainant. However, despite repeated follow-up correspondence by the assigned Investigator throughout 2024, no substantive update was provided regarding the status of the application.

During an on-site inspection conducted by this Office in April 2025, it was disclosed that the complainant's application was eventually approved in September of 2024, and that a purchase order had been prepared in favour of a supplier. According to the Commission, purchase orders may be cancelled for a number of reasons, including unavailability of materials at the designated supplier, unavailability of the applicant, or expiration of the order, which is valid for a period of six months.

The Ombudsman concluded that the complainant had sustained an injustice arising from a fault in administration due to the Commission's protracted delay in processing the application for emergency assistance. Recommendations were subsequently issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution calling for the immediate reissuance of the purchase order, improvements to communication and follow-up protocols with applicants, and stronger documentation of efforts to contact persons seeking assistance.

The investigation also highlighted broader concerns regarding responsiveness, internal coordination, and the treatment of citizens seeking urgent assistance in circumstances involving deteriorating living conditions and potential risk to personal safety.



WHEN ENFORCEMENT DELAYS BECOME ADMINISTRATIVE INJUSTICE

The Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation

Mr. H., a resident of Guaracara, lodged a complaint through the San Fernando Regional Office in August 2023, concerning the prolonged failure of the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporationn (the Corporation) to address what he alleged was an unlawful encroachment onto a road reserve opposite his residence. The complaint centred on the construction of walls, fencing, and barriers associated with a nearby mosque which, according to the complainant, obstructed the free flow of traffic.

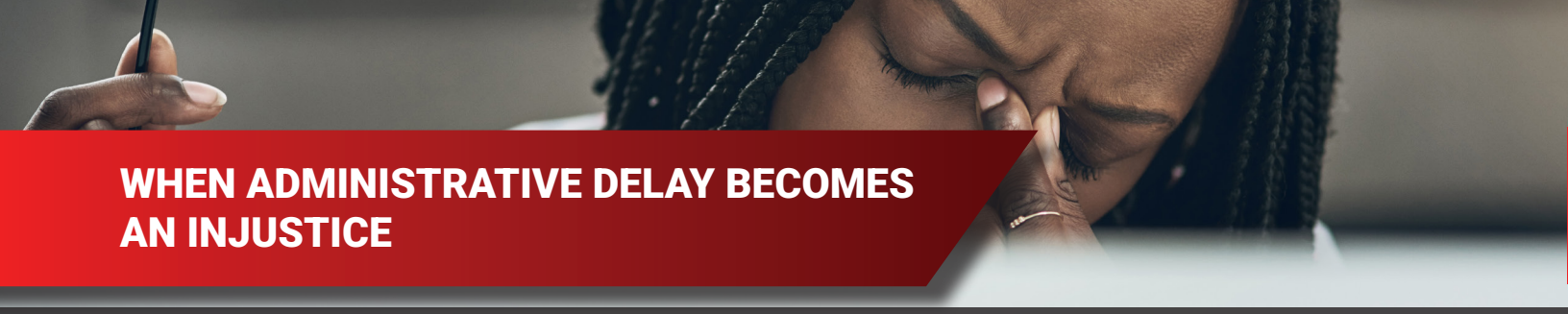
The investigation revealed that the Corporation had been aware of the matter and in February 2024, prepared and issued a Show Cause Notice pursuant to section 127 of the Municipal Corporations Act concerning the alleged encroachment. Despite this, no effective enforcement action followed for an extended period, notwithstanding repeated requests by the Office of the Ombudsman for updates on the matter.

During a joint on-site visit conducted by this Office and officers of the Corporation in August 2025, it was confirmed that the concrete wall, iron barrier, and supporting posts had in fact been erected within the designated road reserve. The investigation further established that the obstruction significantly affected access by residents and road users.

Recommendations were subsequently issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution calling for immediate enforcement action, written progress updates, and improvements to the Corporation's internal procedures for monitoring and following up on enforcement matters initiated under section 127 of the Municipal Corporations Act.

Following the intervention of the Ombudsman, the Corporation advised that a fresh show cause notice had been issued and gave assurances of its commitment to resolving the matter as soon as possible.

The Ombudsman concluded that the complainant had sustained an injustice arising from a fault in administration, namely the failure of the Corporation to exercise its statutory authority in a timely and effective manner despite having knowledge of the encroachment. The Ombudsman observed that the prolonged inaction of the Corporation effectively permitted the continued obstruction of the road reserve and undermined confidence in the enforcement of municipal laws.



WHEN ADMINISTRATIVE DELAY BECOMES AN INJUSTICE

The Human Resource Advisory Committee and the Office of the Chief Personnel Officer

Mrs. M., a former contract employee of a State agency, sought the assistance of the Ombudsman after years of waiting for the payment of contract gratuities earned over successive periods of employment covering 2010 to 2019. Although she had completed her contractual service in each case, payment could not proceed because the relevant terms and conditions of employment required approval through the Human Resource Advisory Committee (HRAC), a Cabinet sub-committee chaired by the Minister of Finance, which oversees wage and salary negotiations and approves terms and conditions of employment for certain categories of State employees. The Chief Personnel Officer serves as Secretary to that Committee.

The investigation revealed that responsibility for the delay in the payment of Mrs. M was dispersed among several public bodies. The Ministry of Labour, the Occupational Safety and Health Agency, the Chief Personnel Officer and the HRAC process each performed distinct functions, yet the absence of timely coordination meant that the complainant remained without the gratuities to which she claimed entitlement years after completing her service. Correspondence received by this Office confirmed that the matter is before the HRAC for consideration. However, despite repeated enquiries, no indication has been provided as to when the HRAC is expected to meet to consider this and other matters presently before it.

This case illustrates a recurring feature of public administration encountered by the Office during 2025. Where administrative processes depend upon the consideration of committees or multiple agencies, there must nevertheless be systems that ensure matters are dealt with within a reasonable time. Citizens should not be left indefinitely awaiting decisions because no meeting has yet been convened, no timetable exists, or no mechanism is in place to prioritize long-outstanding matters.

The Office recognizes that bodies such as the HRAC perform important functions in balancing employment policy with national financial considerations. However, those responsibilities must be discharged with an appreciation that administrative decisions affect the lives and livelihoods of real people. Delays measured in years undermine confidence in public administration and are inconsistent with the principles of fairness, accountability and efficiency that should characterize the exercise of public power.

This Office does not determine Government policy or direct how committees should exercise their discretion. Its constitutional role is to investigate complaints of administrative injustice suffered by individuals as a result of faults in administration by public authorities, and to remind those authorities that citizens are entitled to good public administration. Whether a matter concerns one citizen or many, public institutions have a duty to organise their affairs so that decisions are made fairly, transparently and within a reasonable time.

Although some progress was made during the course of the investigation, at the time of reporting, Mrs. M remains without payment of the gratuities due in respect of her final two contractual periods.



RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL AND REGULATORY DELAY: THE DE VERTEUIL STREET DEVELOPMENT COMPLAINT

The Port of Spain City Corporation The Town and Country Planning Division

This matter arose from a complaint lodged with the Ombudsman in October, 2023, through the Port of Spain regional office, by Mrs. O, a resident of Woodbrook, concerning a development being undertaken at Nos. 35–37 De Verteuil Street, Port of Spain. By the time Mrs. C. lodged her complaint with the Ombudsman, she had already engaged the relevant public authorities and pursued several applications under the Freedom of Information Act in an effort to obtain information concerning the nature, scope, approvals, and legality of the development. The complaint centred on concerns that the structure being erected was unauthorized, inconsistent with approved planning permissions, and incompatible with the residential character and lease restrictions governing the property.

The investigation undertaken by this Office revealed that planning permission had originally been granted on August 18, 2021 for a development described as a guest house with an in-house restaurant and basement parking. However, concerns quickly emerged from neighbouring residents, that the scale, height, internal configuration, and apparent intended use of the structure did not correspond with the approved plans or with the concept of a small guest accommodation facility.

The Office's investigation further established that the lands are subject to a 1997 Head Lease between the Port of Spain City Corporation (the Corporation) and the lessee. That lease contains restrictive covenants limiting use of the premises essentially to a single-family private dwelling house, unless express written permission is granted by the Corporation. The complainant and neighbouring residents consistently expressed concerns that the development appeared commercial in nature, exceeded the scope of any lawful approval, and threatened the residential environment of the area.

The Corporation first issued a discontinuance notice to the developer Heng Chiang Lei Chang under section 162 of the Municipal Corporations Act on November 7, 2022 in relation to the unauthorized development. However, notwithstanding the issuance of that notice, construction works continued. The Ombudsman's investigation found no evidence that effective enforcement measures were pursued for a considerable period thereafter.

By February 2023, the Town and Country Planning Division (the TCPD) itself observed that the construction did not reflect the approved use or configuration and advised the Port of Spain City Corporation that unauthorized development activity appeared to be taking place. The TCPD also informed the Corporation that enforcement action under the Town and Country Planning Act was complicated by the fact that the land was vested in the Corporation itself, and therefore urged the Corporation to address the matter under its own statutory and contractual powers.

During the course of the investigation, this Office engaged in continuous follow-up with both the TCPD and the Port of Spain City Corporation, undertook on-site visits and convened a formal Hearing before the Ombudsman on August 15, 2024. At that hearing, representatives of the Corporation acknowledged the existence and enforceability of the Head Lease covenants, accepted that the ongoing development was unauthorized, and confirmed that the lease restrictions had been breached.

Of particular concern to this Office was the subsequent approach adopted by the regulatory authorities. On October 11, 2024, TCPD granted fresh planning permission for the "retention" of the structure as it then existed, treating the development as a guest house with an in-house restaurant. TCPD described this as a "mediated outcome" reached after discussions among the developer, the Corporation, and the Division.

This Office noted, however, that significant concerns remained. Even after the grant of the fresh planning permission, TCPD confirmed that no building permit application had been made to the Corporation in relation to the revised approval as at December 31, 2024. Further, observations made during a joint site inspection on March 17, 2025 raised serious questions as to whether the building, in its internal configuration and overall appearance, was in fact consistent with its approved use as a guest house or whether it appeared to have been configured for broader commercial operations, such as a casino.

In its report to the agencies pursuant to Section 96(2) of the Constitution, this Office also expressed concern regarding the apparent willingness of regulatory authorities to proceed with planning approvals notwithstanding acknowledged breaches of the Head Lease covenants. The Ombudsman observed and informed both agencies that separating planning approvals from known lease contraventions risked undermining coherent regulatory oversight and public confidence in the planning and enforcement framework.

The report highlighted prolonged delays in enforcement action by the Corporation. Although the Corporation later obtained legal advice confirming that enforcement action was available and appeared to be actively considering the pursuit of enforcement proceedings, much of those steps occurred only after the structure had been substantially completed.

While this Office acknowledges that efforts at regulatory engagement eventually occurred between the Corporation, the TCPD and the developer, the matter nevertheless raises broader concerns regarding delayed enforcement, retrospective regularisation of unauthorised developments, coordination between regulatory agencies and transparency in decision-making. The case further highlights the impact that such faults in administration may have on neighbouring residents and public confidence in the administration of planning and municipal laws.



DELAYED CONTRACT GRATUITY FOLLOWING FAILURE TO SECURE CABINET APPROVAL

The Office of the Prime Minister – Central Administrative Services Tobago

Ms. M complained to the Ombudsman regarding the prolonged non-payment of gratuity following the successful completion of her contract with the Office of the Prime Minister – Central Administrative Services Tobago (OPM-CAST) in 2020. The Complainant advised that, despite completing the entirety of her contractual term and repeatedly following up with the relevant authorities over several years, her gratuity remained unpaid.

The investigation conducted pursuant to section 93 of the Constitution revealed significant administrative deficiencies in the manner in which the Complainant's contractual engagement had been managed. The evidence disclosed that the OPM-CAST only sought the determination of the Complainant's terms and conditions from the Chief Personnel Officer approximately two and a half years after the expiration of the contract. It was subsequently revealed that Cabinet approval for the creation or retention of the contract position had not been obtained at the time the Complainant was engaged, notwithstanding longstanding guidelines governing contract employment within the Public Service requiring such approval prior to engagement.

The investigation further revealed that the Complainant accepted the employment in good faith, diligently performed the duties associated with the position throughout the contractual period, and was repeatedly assured that steps were being taken to regularise the position and finalise the necessary approvals. These assurances understandably gave rise to the expectation that gratuity and the ordinary benefits associated with the contract would be paid upon the successful completion of service. Instead, years after the contract had ended, the Complainant remains without payment of an entitlement which had become due through no fault of his own. The prolonged delay, uncertainty, repeated assurances, and absence of timely administrative action created understandable frustration and financial uncertainty for the Complainant, particularly in circumstances where she had honoured her obligations to the State in full while the administrative deficiencies remained entirely within the control of the relevant public authorities.

The Ombudsman found that the delay in processing the gratuity arose not from any failure on the part of the Complainant, but from failures within the administrative systems of the OPM-CAST itself, including the failure to secure Cabinet approval at the outset, the consequent delay in requesting terms and conditions, and the continuing failure to regularize the position in a timely manner. Given that the governing guidelines for contract employment and the processing of gratuities had been in existence for many years, no satisfactory explanation was provided for the departure from those established procedures.

Recommendations were issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution calling upon the OPM-CAST to urgently secure the necessary Cabinet approval, pursue the determination of terms and conditions by the Chief Personnel Officer, finalize payment of the gratuity within a specified timeframe, and review its internal procedures to prevent recurrence of similar administrative failures. Yet, the

matter remains unresolved as at the time of reporting.

During the course of the Ombudsman's continued engagement with the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office was subsequently informed, in March 2026, that a Cabinet Note seeking covering approval for the position had been prepared and submitted to the Honourable Prime Minister for consideration and approval. The Office of the Prime Minister further advised that the matter remained under active consideration pending further instructions.

This matter highlighted the serious administrative unfairness which may arise where persons are engaged by the State, permitted to perform duties over extended periods, and led to reasonably believe that their employment arrangements have been properly regularized, only for deficiencies in internal administrative processes to later emerge when lawful entitlements become due. The case further underscored the importance of Ministries and Departments adhering strictly to established guidelines governing contract employment, Cabinet approval, and gratuity processing, so that the consequences of faults in administration are not unfairly borne by employees who acted throughout in good faith.

Statistical Report

- Summary
- Review of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Matters
- Overview of FOIA Complaints in 2025
- Distribution of 2025 Complaints Across MDAs and Performance of MDAs
- Statistical Overview of Investigations
- The Five MDAs with the Highest Number of New Complaints Received in 2025
- Monitoring and Compliance for the 2025 Reporting Period
- The Brought-Forward Caseload: Operational Trends and Systemic Barriers
- Analysis of Brought-Forward Cases and Systemic Barriers
    1. Institutional Capacity and Resource Constraints
    2. Administrative Non-Responsiveness
    3. Inadequate Engagement and Follow-Up
    4. Deficiencies in Record Management
- Addressing the Backlog of Longstanding Complaints



Summary

In 2025, the Office of the Ombudsman reviewed 3,730 complaints across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), comprising 1,638 (44%) new complaints and 2,092 (56%) unresolved matters brought forward from previous years.

Of the 2,092 complaints brought forward, most originated in the preceding reporting period, although some remained unresolved since before 2020. Notably, 40% of these complaints involved three public authorities: the National Insurance Board, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

By the end of the reporting period, five MDAs (the National Insurance Board (NIB), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government) accounted for 61% of new complaints. The principal areas of complaint were as follows:

- 38% involved delays in the processing of applications;
- 38% related to delays in processing retirement benefits;
- 17% involved delays in routine administrative matters;
- 3% related to delays in infrastructure maintenance;
- 4% involved delays in issuing official documentation.

Investigations established administrative injustice in 84% of matters. Of particular concern is the fact that 56% of matters had remained unattended by the relevant MDA for more than a year, highlighting the prolonged delays experienced by complainants in obtaining administrative redress.

The Office is mindful that, as with Ombudsman institutions worldwide, the complaints it receives represent only a fraction of the difficulties experienced by citizens in their everyday interactions with public authorities and in accessing and utilising public services. Yet even this fraction provides significant insight into where administrative systems are under strain, where procedures require strengthening and where improvements are needed to advance the State's commitment to efficient, fair and responsive service delivery.

The Parent Ministry Profiles Report is not merely diagnostic; it is prescriptive. The evidence supports the need for:

1. stronger human resource management
2. stronger mechanisms for accountability and effective supervisory oversight
3. improved communication and timely responses across all MDAs
4. streamlined and modernised social welfare systems
5. greater attention to infrastructure maintenance

6. improved records management
7. stronger adherence to established procedures

Taken together, the 2025 findings underscore both the scale of the Ombudsman's work and the seriousness of the administrative challenges facing many public bodies. While the Office remains a vital safeguard for fairness in public administration, the responsibility now rests with Permanent Secretaries and MDA leadership to transform administrative culture. The aim is not simply to identify weaknesses, but to chart a path toward meaningful reform; one that strengthens responsiveness, restores efficiency and rebuilds the public's trust in the institutions created to serve them.

Review of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Matters

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Chap. 22:02 provides members of the public with a general right of access to official documents in the possession of public authorities. This is not, however, an absolute right, and public authorities may refuse access to particular documents on the basis of exemptions provided for under the FOIA. The Ombudsman provides an independent avenue for examining complaints concerning public authorities' decisions on access to official documents.

For the period January to December 2025, the Ombudsman received a total of one hundred and thirty-five (135) complaints pursuant to the FOIA. Of the one hundred and thirty-five (135) complaints, one hundred and thirty (130) or 96% were closed and five (5) matters or 4% remained under investigation as at December 31, 2025. See **Figure 1** below.

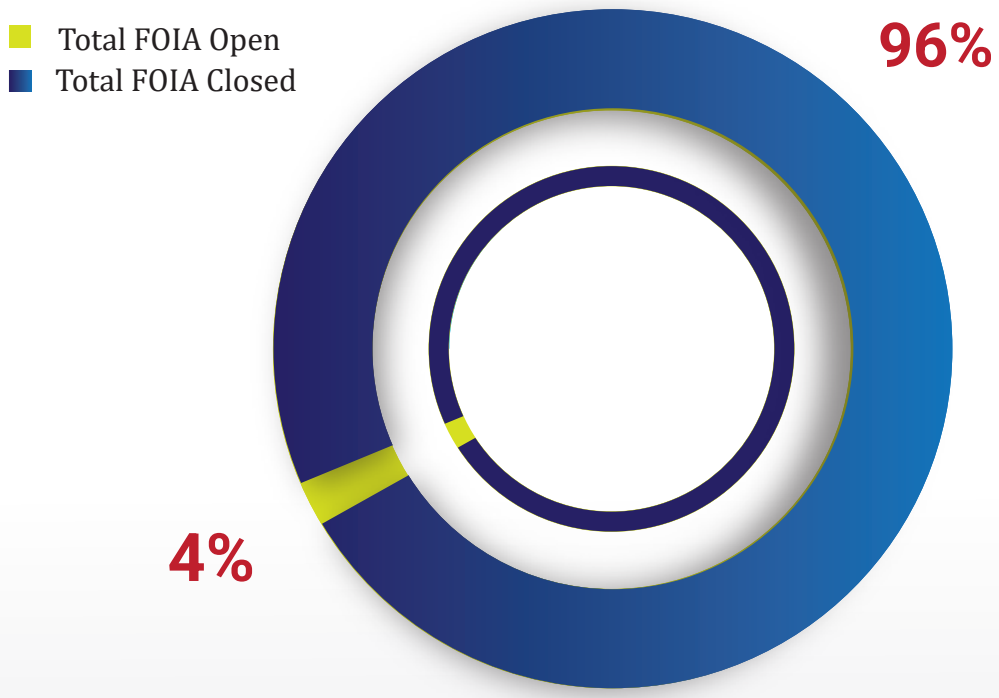


Figure 1. *Percentage of FOIA Matters Closed and those that Remained Under Investigation from January to December 2025*

Overview of FOIA Complaints in 2025

Table 1 below shows the number of Freedom of Information (FOIA) matters received by the Office in each quarter during the period 2023 to 2025. Overall, the Office recorded a 53% increase in FOIA complaints in 2025 compared with 2024.

YEAR	1ST QUARTER	2nd QUARTER	3rd QUARTER	4th QUARTER	TOTAL
2023	13	16	28	19	76
2024	20	29	17	22	88
2025	27	33	39	36	135

Table 1. *Quarterly Distribution of FOIA Complaints Received, 2023–2025*

As the table shows, of the FOIA complaints received during 2025, twenty-seven (27) were received in the first quarter, thirty-three (33) in the second quarter, thirty-nine (39) in the third quarter and thirty-six (36) in the fourth quarter.

Sixty (60) of the complaints received in 2025 concerned instances in which applicants were not notified of a decision on their FOIA requests within the statutorily prescribed period of thirty (30) days. In those instances, the applicants were informed of their right to apply instead for Judicial Review and the public authority was notified of the complaint. This approach is intended to reduce the need for court proceedings by providing the public authority with an opportunity to resolve the matter without the intervention of the courts, particularly where the request may not have been brought to the attention of the designated officer or other appropriate officer.

Following careful review of the one hundred and thirty-five (135) FOIA complaints received during 2025, ninety-two (92) could not proceed to substantive review by the Ombudsman (No jurisdiction complaints). As seen in **Figure 2** below, this figure included the sixty (60) complaints referred to above in which applicants had not been notified of a decision within the prescribed period. Among the remaining thirty-two (32) complaints were applications made before the statutory period available to the public authority had expired, as well as applications made after the twenty-one (21) day period for seeking review by the Ombudsman had elapsed.

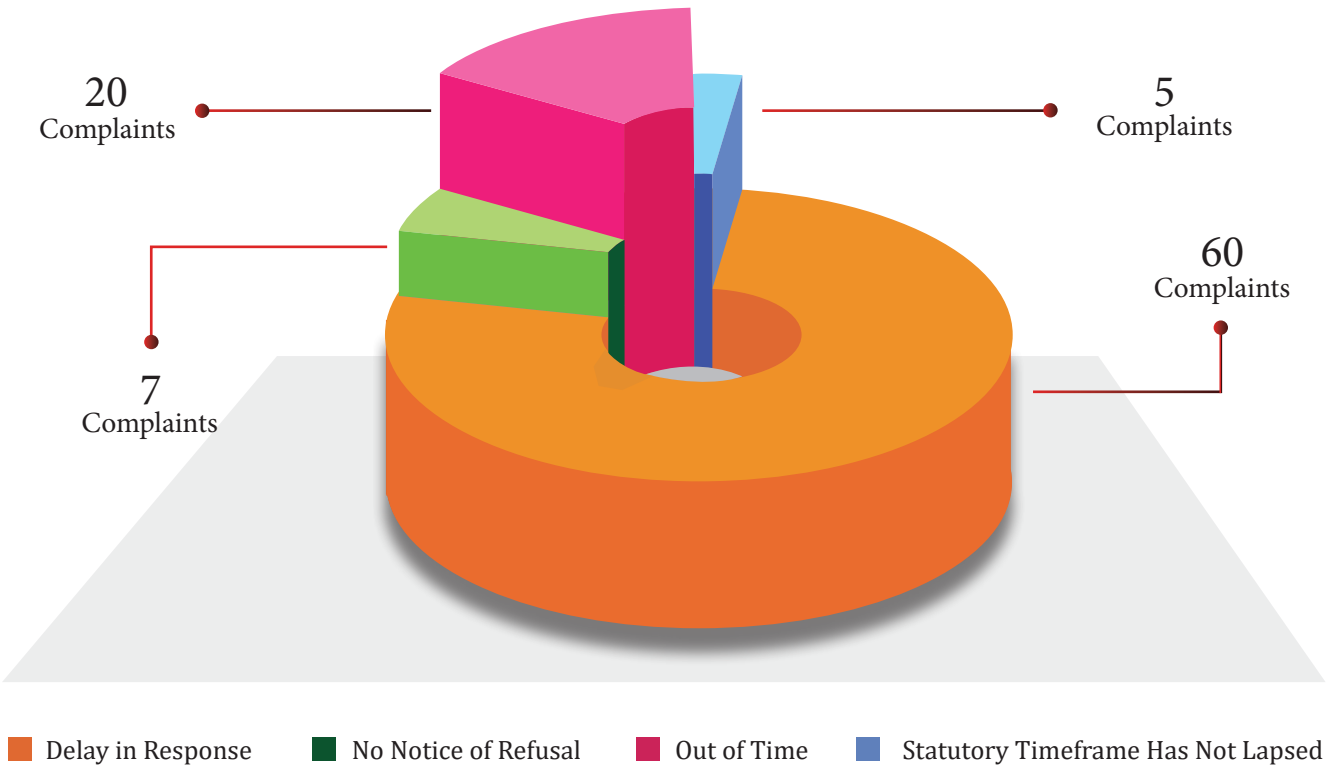


Figure 2. *Types of No Jurisdiction Complaints Received in 2025*

The remaining forty-three (43) complaints proceeded to substantive review by the Ombudsman. As seen in **Figure 3** below, these matters concerned decisions by public authorities to refuse access to requested documents, either in whole or in part. In conducting these reviews, the Office considered the reasons given by the public authorities for refusing access and whether their decisions were consistent with the requirements of the FOIA, including the statutory exemptions relied upon. Upon completion of a review pursuant to section 23(1)(3) or section 38A of the FOIA, the Office communicated the outcome of the review to both the applicant and the relevant public authority. Where the Office was not satisfied with the response of the public authority, it made such recommendations as were appropriate, including, where warranted, that access be granted to the documents requested.

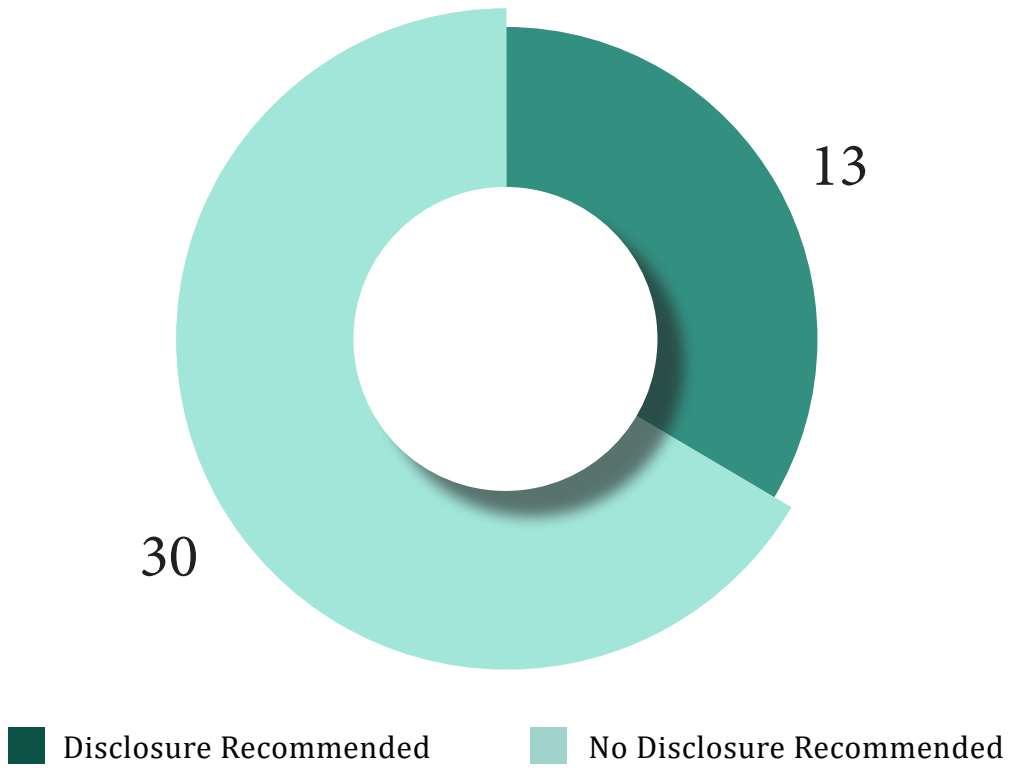


Figure 3. *Review of FOIA Refusal Matters Investigated in 2025*

Of the forty-three (43) complaints reviewed, the Office recommended disclosure in thirteen (13) cases. In the remaining thirty (30) cases, no recommendation for disclosure was made.

Distribution of 2025 Complaints Across MDAs & Performance of MDAs

The following Parent Ministry Profiles provide an overview of the distribution of new (2025) complaints received against Ministries, Departments and State Agencies during the reporting period as well as an assessment of their performance. These profiles do not include complaints that were brought forward from previous reporting periods.

Auditor General's Department

- **3** complaints received
- **67%** resolution efficiency score
- **2** cases resolved
- **1** case under review
- **19** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **67%** responsive to the Office
- **100%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **67%** of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- **10** weeks avg. taken for the office and MDA to resolve complaints

Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

- **1** complaint received
- **0%** resolution efficiency score
- **0** cases resolved
- **1** case under review
- **35** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **100%** responsive to the Office
- **100%** of complaints due to human resources issues
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **100%** of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- **0** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation

- **5** complaints received
- **0%** resolution efficiency score
- **0** cases resolved
- **5** cases under review
- **41** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **40%** responsive to the Office
- **60%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **1** complaint required higher level intervention
- **60%** of complaints related to delays in infrastructure and maintenance
- **0** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Director of Personnel Administration

- **10** complaints received
- **20%** resolution efficiency score
- **2** cases resolved
- **8** cases under review
- **26** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **40%** responsive to the Office
- **50%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **40%** of complaints related to delays in issuing documentations
- **20** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Director of Public Prosecutions

- **6** complaints received
- **50%** resolution efficiency score
- **3** cases resolved
- **3** cases under review
- **19** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **33%** responsive to the Office
- **83%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **83%** of complaints related to delays in administrative processes
- **19** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA)

- **7** complaints received
- **29%** resolution efficiency score
- **2** cases resolved
- **5** cases under review
- **20** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **71%** responsive to the Office
- **100%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **86%** of complaints due to delays in issuing retirement benefits
- **17** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Elections and Boundaries Commission

- 2 complaints received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 2 cases resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 23 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to non-adherence to standard procedures
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 30 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Environmental Management Authority (EMA)

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 12 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% other
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 9 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Equal Opportunity Tribunal

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 14 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to delays in issuing documentation
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Heritage Petroleum Company Limited

- 2 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 1 case under review
- 14 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% other
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 17 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago

- 24 complaints received
- 58% resolution efficiency score
- 14 cases resolved
- 10 cases under review
- 19 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 71% responsive to the Office
- 63% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 29% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing general matters
- 15 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Legal Aid and Advisory Authority (LAAA)

- 2 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 1 case under review
- 11 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 8 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation

- 4 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 2 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 50 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 40% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% other
- 24 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

- 9 complaints received
- 33% resolution efficiency score
- 3 cases resolved
- 6 cases under review
- 26 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 67% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 44% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 22 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Culture and Community Development

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 34 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to human resource issues
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Defence

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 56 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% other
- 25 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Education

- 111 complaints received
- 20% resolution efficiency score
- 22 cases resolved
- 89 cases under review
- 53 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 41% responsive to the Office
- 71% of complaints due to poor communication
- 6 complaints required higher level intervention
- 58% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 20 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Finance

- 67 complaints received
- 47% resolution efficiency score
- 31 cases resolved
- 35 cases under review
- 31 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 59% responsive to the Office
- 83% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 73% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 19 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affiars

- 2 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 1 case under review
- 17 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 18 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Health

- 24 complaints received
- 17% resolution efficiency score
- 4 cases resolved
- 20 cases under review
- 28 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 58% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 38% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 18 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Homeland Security

- 39 complaints received
- 28% resolution efficiency score
- 11 cases resolved
- 28 cases under review
- 32 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 54% responsive to the Office
- 72% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 33% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 15 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Housing

- 28 complaints received
- 18% resolution efficiency score
- 5 cases resolved
- 23 cases under review
- 55 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 25% responsive to the Office
- 79% of complaints due to poor communication
- 2 complaints required higher level intervention
- 39% of complaints related to delays in addressing infrastructure and maintenance
- 19 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Justice

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 0 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development

- 8 complaints received
- 38% resolution efficiency score
- 3 cases resolved
- 5 cases under review
- 34 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 88% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to non-adherence to standard procedures
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 19 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Land and Legal Affairs

- 8 complaints received
- 38% resolution efficiency score
- 3 cases resolved
- 5 cases under review
- 63 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 63% other
- 12 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development

- 4 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 2 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 37 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 75% other
- 22 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Public Utilities

- 28 complaints received
- 25% resolution efficiency score
- 7 cases resolved
- 21 cases under review
- 28 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 82% responsive to the Office
- 82% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 75% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 18 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government

- 30 complaints received
- 27% resolution efficiency score
- 8 cases resolved
- 33 cases under review
- 41 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 63% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 0% other
- 18 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 0 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 0% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 0% other
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training

- 6 complaints received
- 67% resolution efficiency score
- 4 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 57 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 67% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 0% other
- 19 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services

- 76 complaints received
- 39% resolution efficiency score
- 30 cases resolved
- 46 cases under review
- 31 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 68% responsive to the Office
- 13% of complaints due to human resource issues
- 2 complaints required higher level intervention
- 97% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 17 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 23 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to human resource issues
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 22 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation

- 3 complaints received
- 33% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 38 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 67% responsive to the Office
- 67% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 67% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 8 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Ministry of Works and Infrastructure

- 13 complaints received
- 31% resolution efficiency score
- 4 cases resolved
- 9 cases under review
- 41 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 85% responsive to the Office
- 77% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 38% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 21 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

National Commission for Self-Help Limited

- 2 complaints received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 60 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 50% of complaints due to human resources issues
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to delays in payments and financial matters
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

National Insurance Board (NIB)

- 244 complaints received
- 40% resolution efficiency score
- 98 cases resolved
- 146 cases under review
- 48 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 40% responsive to the Office
- 93% of complaints due to poor communication
- 12 complaints required higher level intervention
- 79% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 18 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)

- 2 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 1 case under review
- 29 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 50% of complaints due to human resources issues
- 0 complaint required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to delays in payments and financial matters
- 11 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA)

- 4 complaints received
- 25% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 3 cases under review
- 25 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 25% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to delays in payments and financial matters
- 8 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA)

- 20 complaints received
- 35% resolution efficiency score
- 7 cases resolved
- 13 cases under review
- 36 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 65% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 75% of complaints related to delays in payments and financial matters
- 22 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Office of the Attorney General

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 69 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints related to human resource issues
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Office of the Chief Personnel Officer

- 8 complaints received
- 25% resolution efficiency score
- 2 cases resolved
- 6 cases under review
- 19 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 75% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaint required higher level intervention
- 75% of complaints related to delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 26 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Office of the Prime Minister

- 9 complaints received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 case resolved
- 9 cases under review
- 53 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 44% responsive to the Office
- 89% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 78% of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Penal/Debe Regional Corporation

- 4 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 2 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 32 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 75% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% other
- 26 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 13 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% other
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 15 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Princes Town Regional Corporation

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 26 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to delays in infrastructure and maintenance
- 31 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Regulated Industries Commission (RIC)

- 1 complaint received
- 100% resolution efficiency score
- 1 case resolved
- 0 cases under review
- 10 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% other
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 11 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Siparia Regional Corporation

- 3 complaints received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 3 cases under review
- 66 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 33% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 1 complaint required higher level intervention
- 100% of complaints related to delays in infrastructure and maintenance
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA)

- 10 complaints received
- 50% resolution efficiency score
- 5 cases resolved
- 5 cases under review
- 19 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 80% responsive to the Office
- 60% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 40% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 11 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Statutory Authorities Service Commission

- 2 complaints received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 2 cases under review
- 7 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 50% responsive to the Office
- 50% of complaints due to non-adherence to standard procedures
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 50% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Tobago House of Assembly

- 43 complaints received
- 53% resolution efficiency score
- 23 cases resolved
- 20 cases under review
- 30 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 53% responsive to the Office
- 79% of complaints due to poor communication
- 5 complaints required higher level intervention
- 35% of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- 21 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC)

- 1 complaint received
- 0% resolution efficiency score
- 0 cases resolved
- 1 case under review
- 41 days avg. to respond to the Office
- 100% responsive to the Office
- 100% of complaints due to poor communication
- 0 complaints required higher level intervention
- 100% other
- 0 weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

- **28** complaints received
- **32%** resolution efficiency score
- **9** cases resolved
- **19** cases under review
- **36** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **57%** responsive to the Office
- **89%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **1** complaint required higher level intervention
- **43%** of complaints related to administrative delays in processing payments
- **17** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation

- **2** complaints received
- **50%** resolution efficiency score
- **1** case resolved
- **1** case under review
- **43** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **50%** responsive to the Office
- **100%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **50%** of complaints related to administrative delays in issuing retirement benefits
- **18** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (WASA)

- **6** complaints received
- **67%** resolution efficiency score
- **4** cases resolved
- **2** cases under review
- **19** days avg. to respond to the Office
- **33%** responsive to the Office
- **83%** of complaints due to poor communication
- **0** complaints required higher level intervention
- **50%** other
- **9** weeks avg. taken for the Office and MDA to resolve complaints

Statistical Overview of Investigations

For the period under review, the Ombudsman managed a caseload of three thousand seven hundred and thirty (3,730) complaints—an increase of one hundred and twelve (112) compared to the previous reporting period. This total comprised one thousand six hundred and thirty-eight (1,638) new complaints received in 2025 and two thousand and ninety-two (2,092) matters brought forward from previous years. **Appendix I** sets out the number of new complaints that progressed to investigations, broken down by the individual divisions within each MDA. **Appendix II** provides detailed insight to the total number of brought forward cases managed for the reporting period.

A forensic review of both physical and electronic case files undertaken during the reporting period identified a significant number of legacy complaints, most of which predated the introduction of the Office's digitized case management system in 2022. Although these matters remained active, they had not been reflected in earlier statistical analyses. Their reactivation in 2024 accounted for the higher number of complaints carried forward into 2025. **Figure 4** below demonstrates the total number of new complaints received and brought forward from previous years over a five (5) year period (2021-2025).

Of the one thousand six hundred and thirty-eight (1,638) new complaints received, four hundred and seventy-three (473), or 30%, related to matters which, following careful review and consideration of the circumstances of each complaint, were determined to fall outside the jurisdiction of the Office. In making such determinations, the Office carefully considers the issues raised to ascertain whether any aspect of the complaint falls within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and may properly be investigated. Where a complaint falls outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, complainants are directed, where possible, to the appropriate authorities or agencies responsible for addressing their concerns. A further one hundred and thirty-five (135) complaints were Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) matters. Accordingly, one thousand and thirty (1,030) new complaints alleging administrative injustice proceeded to investigation pursuant to Section 93 of the Constitution.

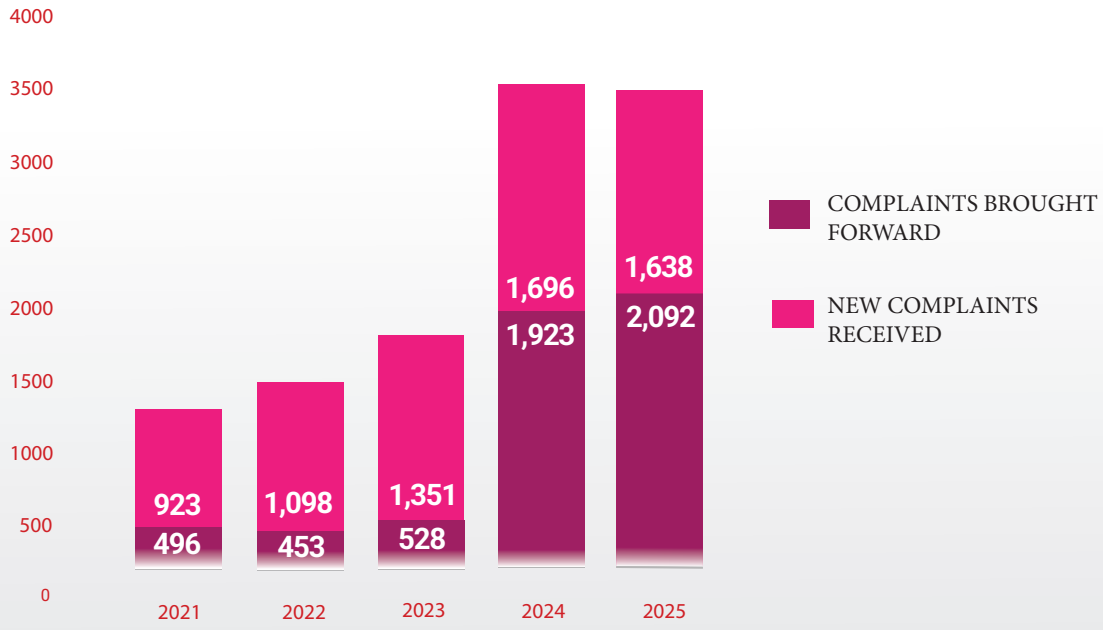


Figure 4. *Total Number of New Complaints Received and Brought Forward from Previous Years Over a Five (5) Year Period (2021-2025)*

The Five MDAs with the Highest Number of New Complaints Received in 2025

Figure 5 below illustrates the five (5) MDAs with the highest number of complaints.

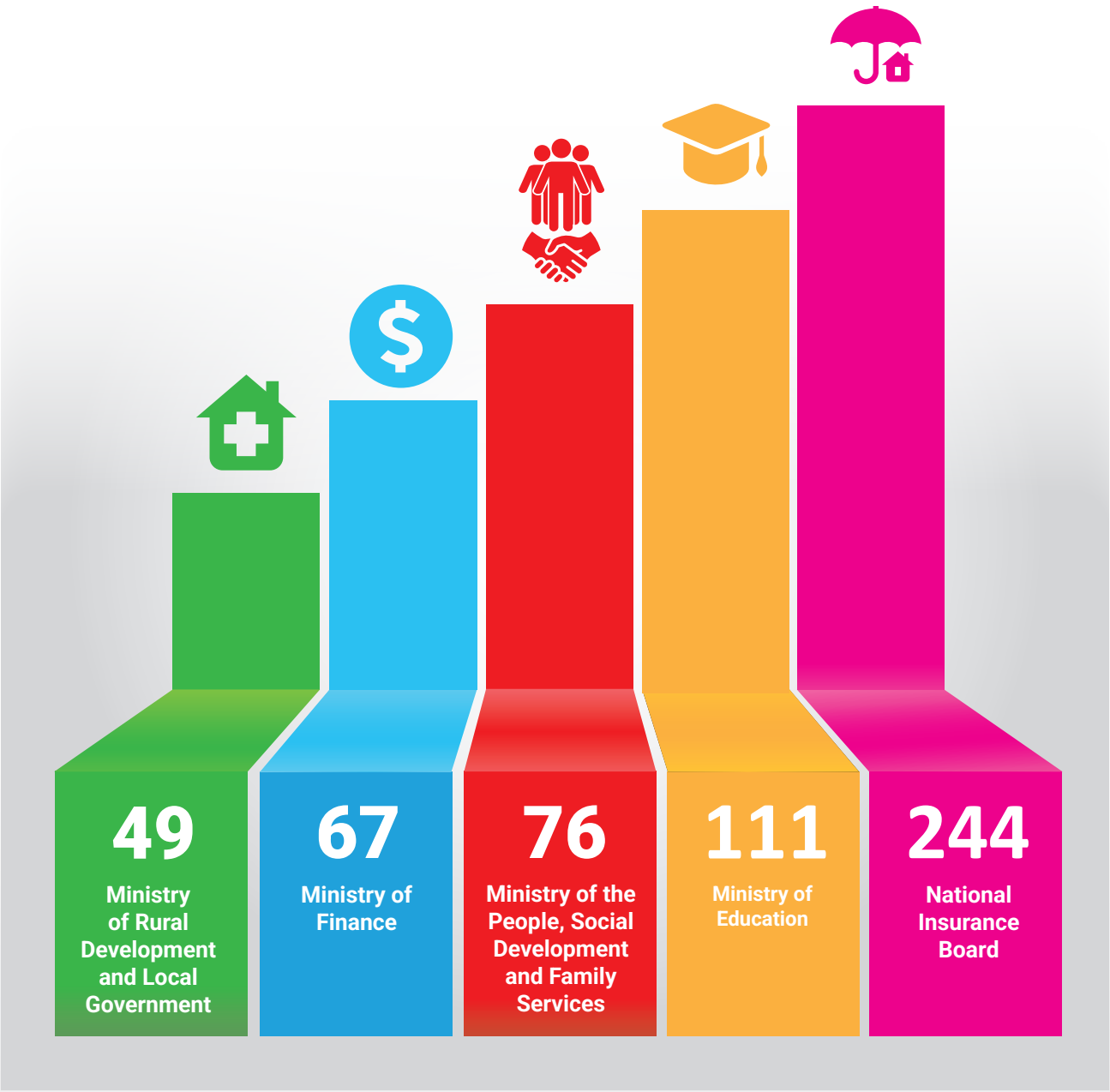


Figure 5. *The Five MDAs with the Highest Number of Complaints Received in 2025*

Monitoring and Compliance for the 2025 Reporting Period

During the reporting period, one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven (1,197) reports were issued pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution, following the completion of investigations. Of these two hundred and sixty-six (266) progressed to the post-report monitoring phase, comprising forty-two (42) 2025 complaints and two hundred and twenty-four (224) complaints brought forward from previous years. As shown in **Figure 6** below, by the end of the year, one hundred and seventy-nine (179) of those cases had been fully resolved. The remaining eighty-seven (87) continued to be monitored.

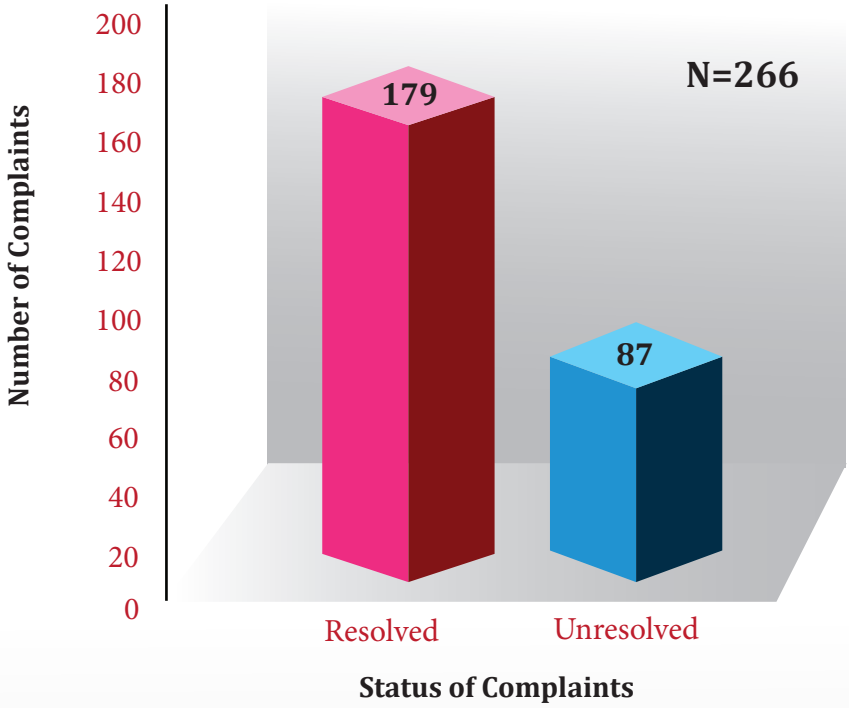


Figure 6: *Status and Number of Complaints at the Monitoring Phase by the End of the Reporting Period*

As shown in **Figures 7-8** below, the unresolved complaints under monitoring vary considerably in age. Eight (8) originated in 2022, nineteen (19) in 2023, thirty-five (35) in 2024, and eighteen (18) in 2025. Of particular concern, seven (7) complaints pre-date 2022, including one (1) dating as far back as 2005 which, despite the completion of the investigative stage, remained under monitoring at the time of reporting.

Analysis of the eighty-seven (87) unresolved complaints revealed that delays in the processing of pensions and gratuities for public officers and retirees accounted for a significant proportion of the matters still awaiting resolution. A smaller number related to public works and infrastructure.

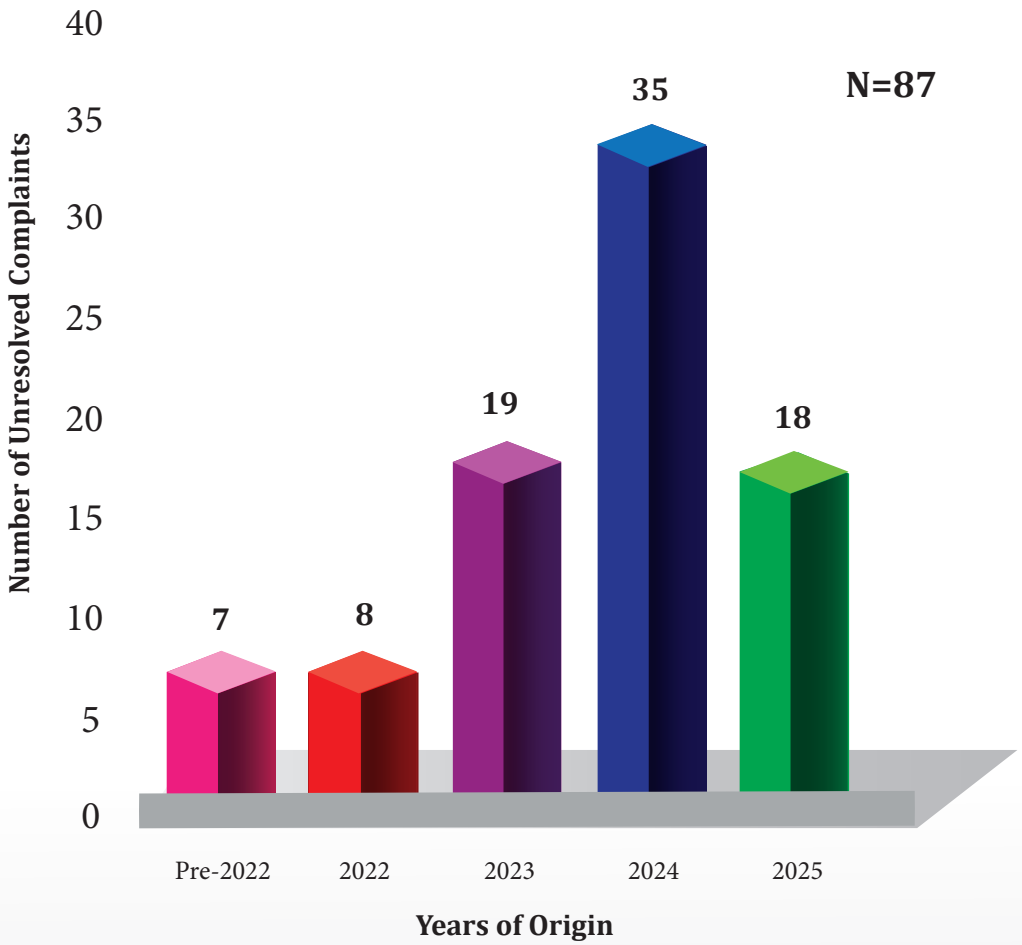


Figure 7: *The Number and Year of Origin for Unresolved Complaints at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period*

Figure 8 below provides a detailed illustration of the subject areas represented among complaints that remained unresolved and under monitoring at the end of the 2025 reporting period.

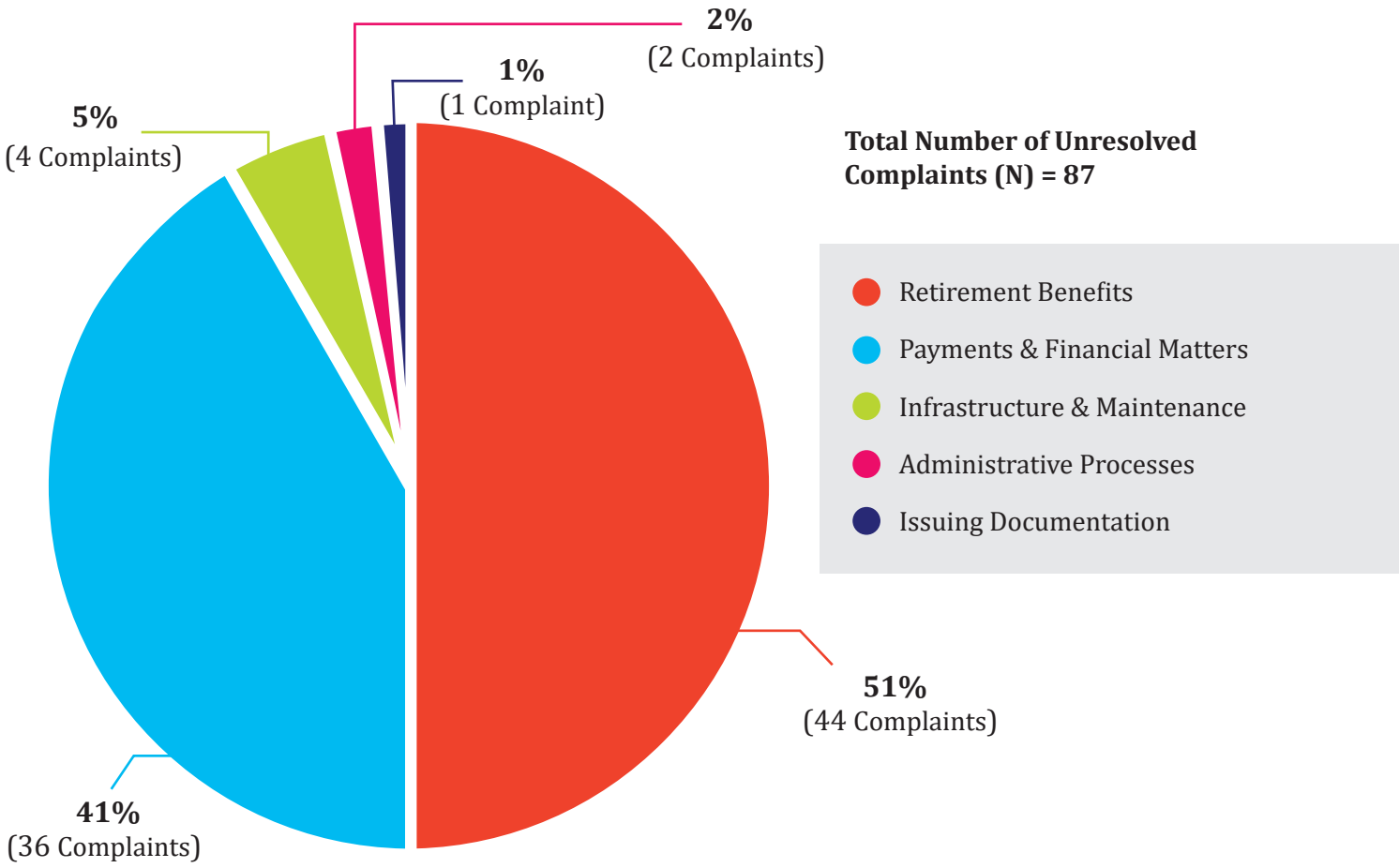


Figure 8: *Total Number of Unresolved Complaints by Issue at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period*

Figure 9 below shows that fifty-one (51) of the unresolved complaints under monitoring were concentrated among three public authorities: The MTS, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Homeland Security. The MTS accounted for the largest number, with twenty-one (21) unresolved complaints, all relating to delays in retirement benefits. The Ministry of Education accounted for sixteen (16) complaints, comprising delays in retirement benefits and outstanding payments or other financial matters, while the Ministry of Homeland Security accounted for fourteen (14) complaints, predominantly involving retirement entitlements and other financial matters. These figures highlight the continuing impact of delays in the settlement of financial and retirement-related entitlements.

Figure 9: *Ministry/Department/Agency with the Highest Concentration of Unresolved Complaints by Issue at Monitoring Phase by the End of the 2025 Reporting Period*

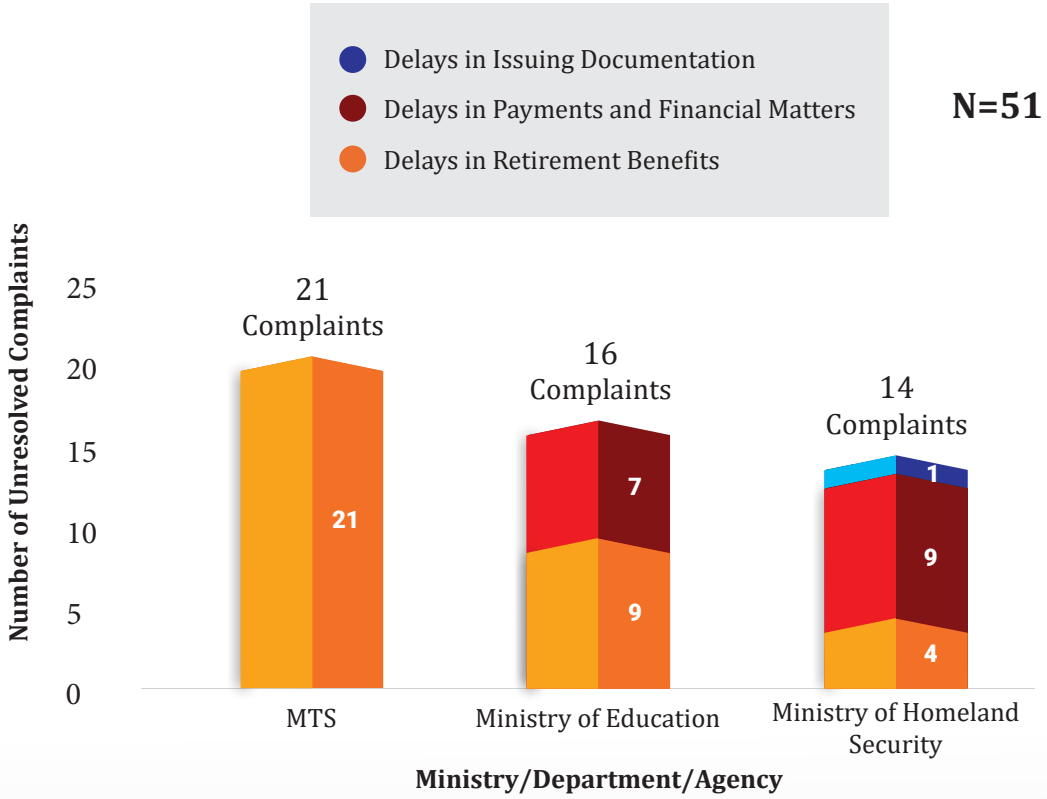


Table 2 identifies the Ministries, Departments and Agencies with matters that remained unresolved beyond the timelines stipulated following the issuance of recommendations pursuant to section 96(2) of the Constitution.

Table 2: *List of MDAs that Failed to Meet Resolution Deadlines Specified Following Recommendations Made Under Section 96(2) of the Constitution*

MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT/AGENCY	TOTAL NUMBER OF UNRESOLVED MATTERS
National Maintenance Training and Security Company (MTS)	**21**
Ministry of Education	**16**
Ministry of Homeland Security	**14**
Division of Education, Skills and Innovation, THA	**5**
Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	**4**
Division of Public Infrastructure and Transportation, THA	**3**
Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation	**3**
Ministry of Finance	**3**
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	**3**
Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development	**2**
Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	**2**
Office of the Prime Minister	**2**
Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago	**1**
Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development	**1**
Ministry of Housing	**1**
Ministry of Public Utilities	**1**
Ministry of Works and Infrastructure	**1**
Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	**1**
Treasury Division, Ministry of Finance	**1**
Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation	**1**
San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation	**1**
Total	**87**

The Brought-Forward Caseload: Operational Trends and Systemic Barriers

During the 2025 reporting period, the Office managed a total of two thousand and ninety-two (2,092) brought-forward complaints.

The age distribution of the 2,092 brought-forward matters is illustrated in **Figure 10** below.

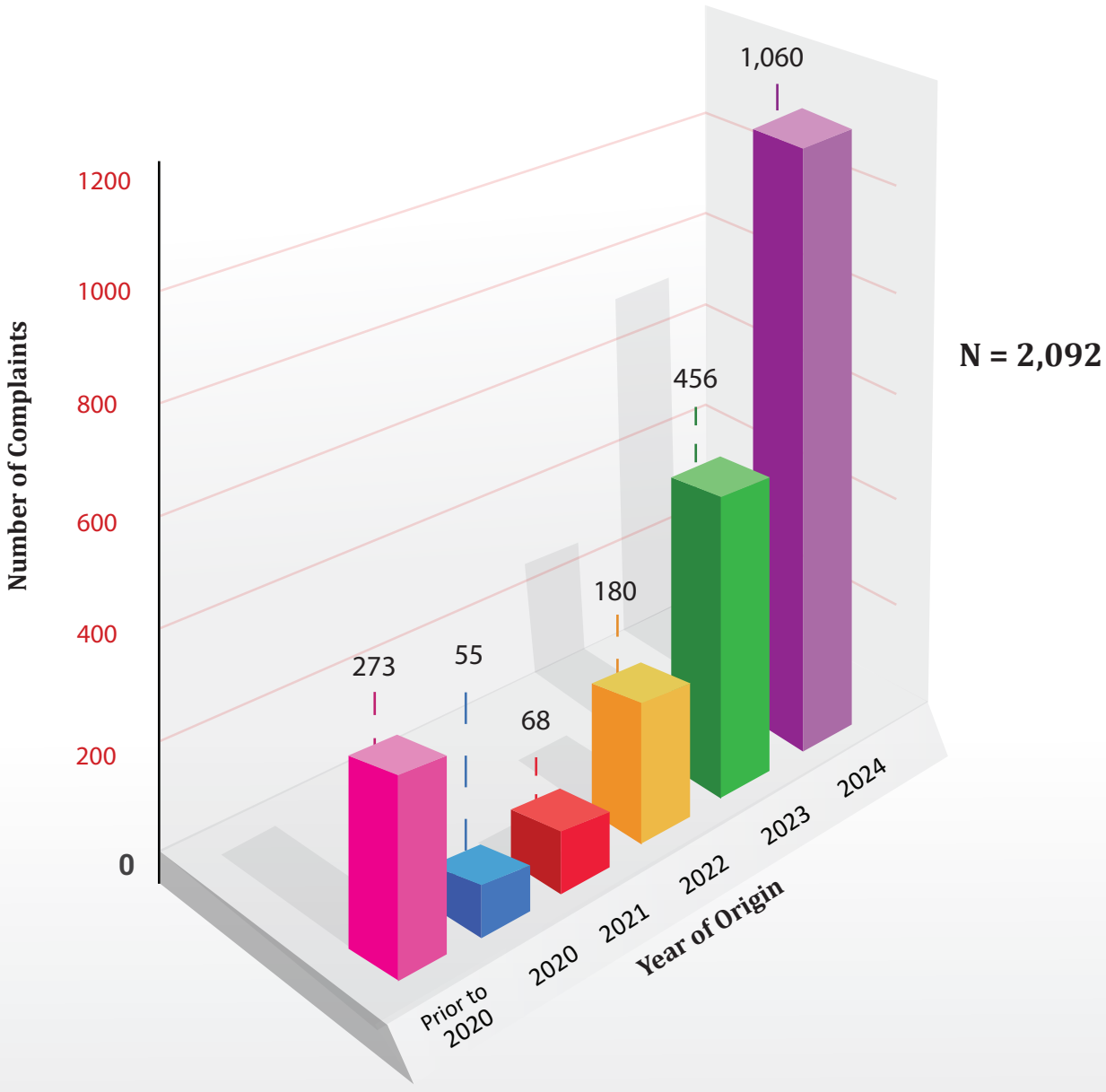


Figure 10: *Year of Origin and Total Number of Brought Forward Complaints for the 2025 Reporting Period*

Figure 11 identifies the three MDAs with the largest brought-forward caseloads: the National Insurance Board, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

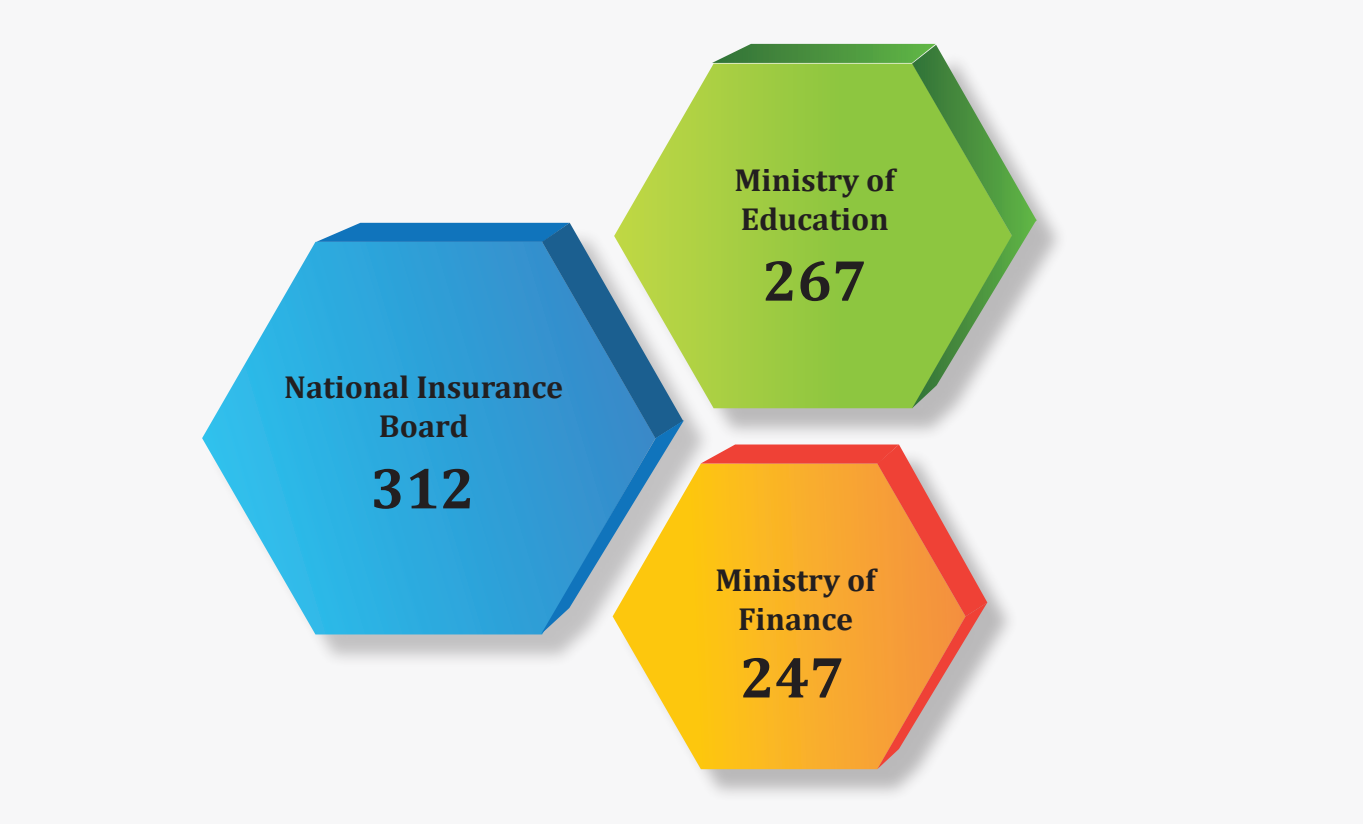


Figure 11. *The Three MDAs with the Highest Number of Brought Forward Complaints in 2025*

These three MDAs account for 39% of all brought-forward complaints for the reporting period.

Analysis of Brought Forward Cases and Systemic Barriers

An examination of complaints brought forward from previous reporting periods revealed that many of the systemic administrative weaknesses identified elsewhere in this Report also contributed to their prolonged resolution. Four recurring factors were particularly evident in the accumulation of these longstanding complaints.

1. Institutional Capacity and Resource Constraints

Staff shortages, frequent personnel changes and inadequate specialised knowledge have affected the ability of some MDAs to resolve complaints promptly. Delays are compounded when officers fail to seek timely guidance from relevant central authorities.

2. Administrative Non-Responsiveness

Delayed or absent responses from MDAs, together with difficulties identifying responsible officers, continue to impede investigations and prolong the resolution of complaints.

3. Inadequate Engagement and Follow-Up

Some MDAs provide vague or incomplete responses that fail to address the issues raised. This necessitates repeated follow-up by the Office, consuming investigative resources and delaying progress.

4. Deficiencies in Record Management

Poor record-keeping, missing files and inadequate archiving systems hinder investigations and, in some instances, prevent necessary decisions or legal advice, leaving complaints unresolved.

Addressing the Backlog of Longstanding Cases

Backlog reduction requires each MDA to identify outstanding Ombudsman matters, assign accountable officers, set realistic completion dates and provide regular progress reports. Priority should be given to retrieving missing records and securing outstanding technical or legal advice.

Measures for 2026

During 2026, the Office will prioritise longstanding complaints while continuing to investigate new matters. Greater use will be made of its constitutional investigative powers where cooperation is lacking, supported by the operational reforms outlined earlier in this report.

The objective is to reduce the existing backlog while preventing the further accumulation of unresolved complaints.

The Ombudsman's Investigative Toolkit

The Ombudsman's investigative toolkit comprises the constitutional and statutory powers, together with the practical methods employed by the Office to obtain information, investigate complaints and facilitate appropriate administrative remedies.

- Summons [Section 97(1)]
- Notice of Entry [Section 97(2)]
- Site Visits
- Reporting to MDAs [Section 96(2)]
- Special Reports [Section 96(4)]



Summons - Section 97(1)

Section 97(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 1:01 states –

> *"The Ombudsman shall have the powers of the High Court to summon witnesses to appear before him and to compel them to give evidence on oath and to produce documents relevant to the proceedings before him and all persons giving evidence at those proceedings shall have the same duties and liabilities and enjoy the same privileges as in the High Court."*

The power to issue a Summons is therefore an important constitutional investigative tool available to the Ombudsman. It enables the Office to compel the attendance of witnesses, obtain evidence under oath and require the production of documents relevant to an investigation.

Table 3 below presents the number of summonses issued in 2025. During the reporting period, nineteen (19) summonses were issued in relation to fifty (50) complaints.

YEAR	NO. OF COMPLAINTS	NO. SUMMONSES ISSUED
2025	50	19

Table 3. *Number of Summonses Issued*

A Summons Hearing is generally convened at an advanced stage of an investigation where previous efforts to obtain information or cooperation from an MDA have been unsuccessful. The summons is ordinarily directed to the Permanent Secretary or Head of the MDA, who is expected to attend unless the Ombudsman approves representation by an officer of comparable rank.

At the Hearing, evidence is given under oath, outstanding issues are examined, and undertakings may be obtained to provide information or take specified action within an agreed timeframe. Failure to honour such undertakings may prolong the investigation and warrant further action by the Ombudsman.

Notice of Entry - Section 97(2)

Section 97(2) of the Constitution empowers the Ombudsman to enter and inspect the premises of public authorities, examine and, where necessary, retain relevant documents, and conduct investigations on-site. This power enables the Office to obtain information, examine records and establish facts relevant to complaints under investigation.

During 2025, the Ombudsman exercised this authority through the issuance of seventy (70) Notices of Entry to MDAs, as detailed in **Table 4** below.

OFFICE	NOTICE OF ENTRY {SECTION 97(2)} ISSUED
Head Office (Port Of Spain)	40
San Fernando Regional Office	22
Tobago Regional Office	8
Total	**70**

Table 4. *Number of Notices of Entry Issued per Office Location for 2025*

Site Visits

In the course of its investigations, the Office of the Ombudsman conducts site visits as part of its evidence-gathering function. These visits are undertaken in matters that require an on-site assessment to verify technical details, observe conditions and obtain first-hand information relevant to the complaint.

Site visits allow the investigative team to corroborate documentary evidence, speak with affected parties and assess the actual circumstances surrounding the issue raised. This approach ensures that investigations are thorough, objective and grounded in verifiable facts, thereby supporting the fair and just resolution of complaints.

As seen in **Table 5** below, a total of **fifty-six (56) site visits** were conducted during the reporting period.

OFFICE	NUMBER OF SITE VISITS
Head Office (Port Of Spain)	28
San Fernando Regional Office	23
Tobago Regional Office	5
Total	**56**

Table 5. *Total Number of Site Visits per Office Location for 2025*

Reporting to MDAs - Section 96(2) Reports

Section 96(2) of the Constitution requires the Ombudsman, upon completion of an investigation, to inform the MDA concerned of the results and, where administrative injustice is found, to provide reasons for that finding and make such recommendations as the Ombudsman considers appropriate.

In discharging this constitutional obligation, the Ombudsman communicates with Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments or Agencies to:

(a) Communicate the findings and outcome of the investigation;

(b) Indicate whether, in the Ombudsman's opinion, any person has suffered injustice as a consequence of a fault in administration;

(c) Provide reasons for that opinion, where administrative injustice has been identified; and

(d) Make such recommendations as the Ombudsman considers appropriate, including corrective measures and, where warranted, proposed timeframes for implementation.

As seen in **Table 6** below, a total of one thousand, one hundred and ninety seven (1,197) reports pursuant to Section 96(2) were issued for the reporting period. Of the total number issued during the reporting period, two hundred and eighty (280) or 23% were specific to complaints received in the year 2025.

OFFICE	SECTION 96(2)
Head Office (Port Of Spain)	623
San Fernando Regional Office	426
Tobago Regional Office	148
Total	**1,197**

Table 6. *Total Number of Section 96(2) Reports Issued by Regional Offices for 2025*

Special Reports - Section 96 (4)

Where recommendations made following an investigation are not adequately addressed, the Ombudsman may submit a special report to Parliament in accordance with section 96(4) of the Constitution.

For the period January to December, 2025, the Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago submitted two Special Reports to the Parliament.

The full reports can be reviewed on the Office of the Ombudsman's website via the QR codes below:

Special Report #1 of 2025

Administrative Injustice by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Undue Delay in Addressing Pension Cheque Fraud

Special Report #2 of 2025

Administrative Injustice by the National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited

Delay in Payment of Retirement Benefits

The Investigations Department's Community Outreach Services

During the period under review, the Office of the Ombudsman held several community outreach events, the details of which were published in advance. Investigators were present at each event, giving citizens an opportunity to learn about the role and services of the Office. While valid complaints may be taken during these sessions, much of the engagement involves advising citizens on administrative issues that are frequently raised. Outreach events also provide an opportunity for follow-ups with complainants who already have matters under investigation. Overall, these engagements help to educate the public, guide citizens toward the appropriate avenues for assistance and strengthen the Office's connection with communities.

Table 7. *Community Outreach Reports for the Period January to November 2025*

OUTREACH LOCATIONS	COMPLAINTS TAKEN	ADVISED	FOLLOW-UP	TOTAL PERSONS SERVED
Arima	9	27	1	37
Chaguanas	12	28	2	42
Couva	10	4	2	16
Mayaro/Rio Claro	22	4	5	31
Point Fortin	29	15	8	52
Roxborough, Tobago	1	1	0	2
Sangre Grande	24	54	13	91
Siparia	12	0	3	15
Total Persons Served via Community Outreach Programme				**286**

Schedule of
Community Visits

ARIMA

Mayor's Box, Arima Velodrome
Hollis Avenue, Arima
2nd Monday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

COUVA

Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation
Railway Road, Couva
3rd Wednesday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

POINT FORTIN

Engineering Services Compound
Point Fortin Borough Corporation
Guapo Cap-de-Ville Road, Point Fortin
2nd Wednesday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

SANGRE GRANDE

Technical Department Conference Room
Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
Robert Paul Street, Sangre Grande
Last Tuesday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

CHAGUANAS

Chaguanas Borough Corporation
Cor. Taitt & Cumberbatch Street, Chaguanas
2nd Friday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

MAYARO/RIO CLARO

Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation
Rann's Plaza, High Street
Last Thursday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

ROXBOROUGH

Conference Room
Roxborough Administrative Complex
Windward Road, Roxborough
2nd Wednesday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

SIPARIA

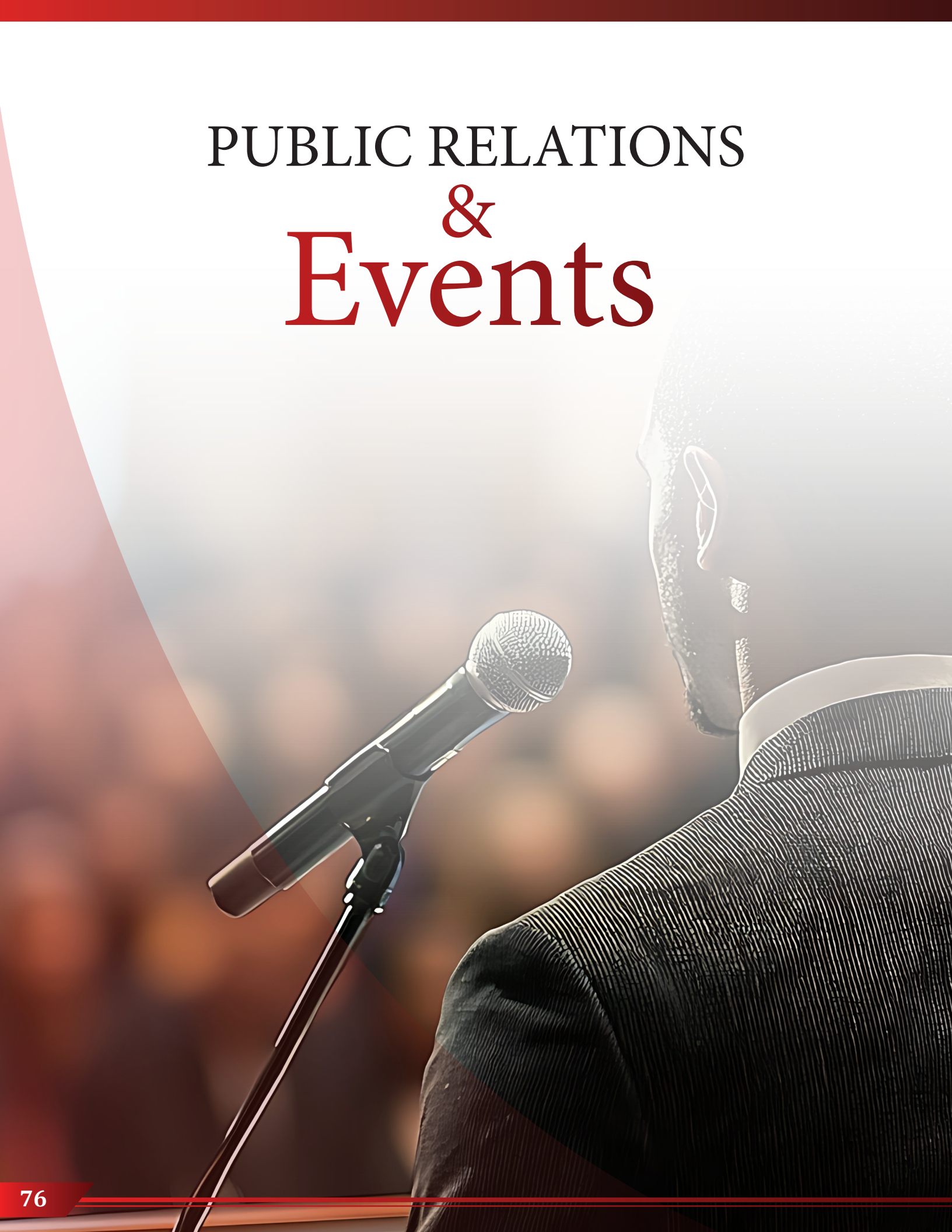
Ministry of Labour, Siparia Office
Level 2, Siparia Administrative Complex
Cor. Allies Street and S.S. Erin Road, Siparia
3rd Monday of each month
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Staff Training and Development

The Office of the Ombudsman's staff participated in the following training programmes within the period January to December 2025.
Disciplinary Procedures in the Public Service
Introduction to Ethics and Values
Ethical Issues in the Public Service
Ethics, Accountability and Good Governance
Accounting Procedures in Government
Preventing Substance Use in the Workplace
Managing Stress in the Workplace
Office Etiquette for Administrative Support
Leading for Results from the Middle



PUBLIC RELATIONS & Events



Protocol, Business Image & Telephone Etiquette Training

The Office of the Ombudsman's staff engaged in training in 'Protocol, Business Image & Telephone Etiquette' on Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th January, 2025. The programme was facilitated by Ms. Catherine Gordon, Principal Consultant of Catherine Gordon's Institute of Finishing Elements.

The workshop covered areas such as effectively engaging clients via telephone and in person, professional business attire and conduct, the national order of precedence and the essentials of protocol. The programme was part of the Office's focus on enhancing service delivery through affording staff opportunities for personal and professional development.



Teams deliver their group work presentations.



Office of the Ombudsman staff engage in a practical session on professional contact and non-contact greetings.





Facilitator Catherine Gordon leads an activity.

Courtesy Call to the Ombudsman by American Citizen Services Chief, U.S. Embassy

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson Meiguel, Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed Ms. Alicia Arendt, American Citizen Services Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago for a courtesy call on Monday, June 9, 2025, at the Head Office.



From left to right: Ms. Alicia Arendt, American Citizen Services Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, Ombudsman Jacqui Sampson Meiguel and Ms. Avelon Solomon-Gibbs, Senior Investigator (Ag.) during a courtesy call to the Ombudsman at our Head Office.



Ombudsman Jacqui Sampson Meiguel presents a token of appreciation to Ms. Alicia Arendt, American Citizen Services Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago during a courtesy call to the Ombudsman at our Head Office.

The Office of the Ombudsman participates in Princes Town SDA Church's Free Legal Clinic

The Office of the Ombudsman participated in a free legal clinic hosted by the Princes Town Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sunday 6th July, 2025.

Our Investigators addressed attendees' queries or complaints involving government ministries, departments or state agencies.







Investigations Team engaging with participants of the SDA Church's free legal clinic in Princes Town.

WINAD Free Legal Aid Clinic in Princes Town

The Office of the Ombudsman participated in free legal aid clinics hosted by the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD). The initiative was part of WINAD's 2025 work programme which sought to offer free legal support to nationals of Trinidad and Tobago through legal clinics.



Saturday 26th July, 2025 at the Princes Town Regional Corporation. Photos courtesy: Women's Institute for Alternative Development



Friday 22nd August, 2025 at the Tabaquite Community Centre



Saturday 23rd August, 2025 at the Princes Town Regional Corporation Sub Office

NIB Courtesy Call to the Ombudsman

Executive Director of the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Niala Persad-Poliah, visited the Office of the Ombudsman on Monday 28th July, 2025, for a courtesy call to Ombudsman Jacqui Sampson Meiguel.



Performance Management Appraisal Training

The Office of the Ombudsman attended a Performance Management Appraisal Training conducted by the Personnel Department and facilitated by the Office of the Parliament. The training session took place over three days, August 14th, 19th and 20th, 2025.

CAROA Symposium

Representatives from the Office of the Ombudsman's Head Office, San Fernando Regional Office and Tobago Regional Office, attended the virtual Symposium for the Members of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association (CAROA).

Under the theme "Building Sustainable Futures: Preparing the path for the strengthening of CAROA," the symposium, conducted from Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd October, 2025, tackled topics such as: the importance of Public Relations and Communications, the roles and challenges of Investigations, best practices of the Ombudsman's Office and building sustainable futures.







Ombudsman's Team Attends Integrity Commission's Training Seminar

The Office of the Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago participated in the Integrity Commission's Senior Leadership and Management Training Seminar held from Monday 27th to Friday 31st October 2025. The Commission's seminar targeted managers and supervisory staff of anti-corruption and integrity-focused organisations in Trinidad and Tobago.



(From left to right) Mr. Dayne Gellineau, Executive Officer Ag., Mrs. Loraine Latchman, Senior Investigator (Ag.), Dr. Roger Koranteng, Ms. Avelon Solomon-Gibbs (Ag.), Senior Investigator and Ms. Allison Quita Superville.

Facilitating the programme was Dr. Roger Koranteng- Adviser and Head, Public Sector Governance, The Commonwealth Secretariat of the United Kingdom. The seminar offered training in areas such as Management Functions, Promoting Good Governance, Conflict and Conflict Management, Overcoming Corruption Challenges, and Public Sector Performance.

ELA Free Legal Clinic - Brazil Community Outreach

The Office of the Ombudsman participated in the Eastern Lawyers Association's free legal clinic hosted at the Brazil Community Centre on Saturday 8th November, 2025.

The clinic served to provide free legal assistance to members of the public, especially those from underserved communities who may not have easy access to legal services.









Members of the Office of the Ombudsman's Investigations and Legal Units.

The Ombudsman's Huddle 2025

The Office of the Ombudsman's Investigations and Legal Units participated in a two-day workshop facilitated by Ms. Maria Mason-Roberts on the 11th and 12th of November 2025.

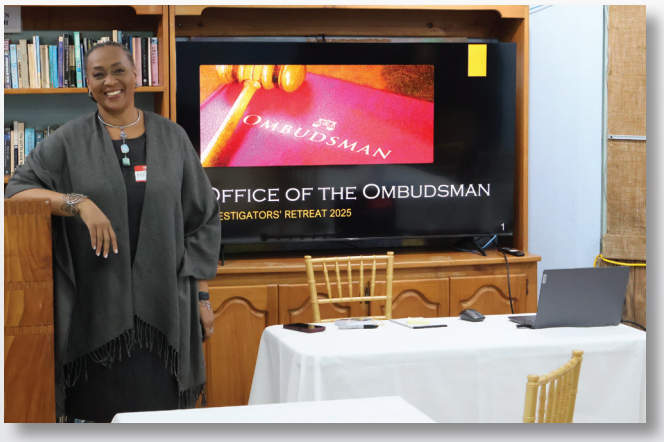
The training retreat focused on topics relating to management skills and systemic data collection and analysis to aid in identifying patterns of maladministration, institutional performance and evidence-based reform. These areas covered will improve the Office's execution of investigations and resolution work. Staff also gained insight on how to transform data into actionable solutions while maintaining transparency and accountability to improve service delivery.











Plan Ahead- Public Officers' Educational Campaign

A significant proportion of complaints received by the Office concern administrative delays in processing public officers' employment and retirement entitlements, including pensions, gratuities, increments and allowances. In response, the Office developed a public education campaign titled 'Plan Ahead, Stay Ahead', aimed at helping public officers better understand and prepare for these processes.

The campaign, furnished with talent from within the Office's staff complement, encouraged public sector employees to be proactive by always keeping informed about their HR affairs. The Office received the support of the Information Division of the then Ministry of Communications, in recording the radio content for the campaign.



In addition to online, radio and television broadcasts, the Office engaged the Heads and Permanent Secretaries of public authorities to disseminate the campaign's video series directly to their staff through their HR and Communications Units.

Radio Drama Production





Video Production









TESTIMONIALS

I am particularly grateful for the professionalism, persistence, and integrity demonstrated throughout this process. Your efforts have made a meaningful difference in my life, and I deeply appreciate the time and diligence invested in bringing this matter to a successful resolution.

After years of uncertainty and distress, your intervention brought not only a just outcome but also a renewed sense of confidence in public accountability and administrative fairness. Your dedication to due process, transparency, and the protection of citizens' rights exemplifies the critical role of your Office in safeguarding justice.

Please extend my heartfelt thanks to all those involved. Your work continues to uphold the principles of equity and justice within our society. My sincere thanks once more.

I write to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to the Office of the Ombudsman for your steadfast representation and commitment in resolving my longstanding financial matter.

I submitted a request for your intervention with the NIB for a review of my retirement benefit. The matter was resolved within three months after waiting over six years for a response from NIB. I would like to thank you and your staff for giving a voice to the voiceless.

Types of Complaints

Examples of Complaints We Investigate

Delays & Omissions (Undue Delay/Failure to Act)

- Undue delay in processing and paying pension benefits, contract gratuity or severance benefits
- Undue delay in obtaining birth certificates, passports, ID cards, or medical reports
- Delays by Municipal Corporations in maintaining/constructing roads and drains
- Failure to issue land tenure documents, state land approvals or leases
- Undue delay in processing NIB claims, and social welfare support
- Failure to update or correct public records after repeated requests
- Failure to acknowledge or act on repeated follow-up letters from citizens
- Non-action or failure to make a decision when required (omission)

Procedural Unfairness (Unreasonableness/ Error/ Bias)

- Failure to act in accordance with regulations and standard procedures
- Decisions or advice that are contrary to established procedure or policy
- Decisions that appear unreasonable, unjust, or arbitrary
- Unexplained changes to previously communicated decisions
- Applying criteria inconsistently between citizens in similar situations
- Misinterpretation or misapplication of eligibility rules
- Decision-making influenced by irrelevant considerations
- Making a decision without first hearing from the citizen or allowing them to explain the circumstances
- Refusal to correct a clear administrative error
- Failure to follow published timelines or service standards
- Unequal treatment of similarly placed applicants for the same service

Examples of Complaints We Investigate

Communication Failures (Poor Service/ Lack of Transparency/ Disrespect, Indifference or Arbitrary Treatment)

- Delay/ failure by Government Departments in responding to official letters of complaint or requests for assistance
- Discourtesy, disregard for the citizen and the exercise of public power in a dismissive or arbitrary manner
- Giving conflicting information to citizens on the same matter
- Lack of updates after repeated requests
- Failure to inform a citizen of the status of an application
- Not providing reasons for a refusal or adverse decision
- Calling citizens out repeatedly to offices without resolving the issue
- Providing incorrect advice that causes a citizen to lose a benefit
- Unprofessional conduct toward elderly or disabled applicants
- Failure to direct citizens to the correct office or procedure
- Inconsistent application of rules
- Unexplained switching of citizens between waiting lists
- Discretion exercised in a way that appears biased or punitive
- Public officers treating citizens with hostility or contempt
- Failure to provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities
- Unreasonable requirements for documents beyond what policy demands

Examples of Complaints We Cannot Investigate

1. Court Proceedings/Decisions

- Matters that are currently before any court (civil or criminal) or issues that have already been adjudicated (decided) by a court
- Right of appeal, reference, or review before an independent tribunal other than a Court

2. Public Service Personnel Matters

- Complaints challenging action taken in relation to human resource management matters involving public officers, specifically the determination of pay and other terms and conditions of employment, appointments, promotions, transfers, termination of employment and disciplinary proceedings

3. Ministerial/Government Policy

- Policy decisions of Ministers or Government Departments e.g. HDC Housing Allocations, Town and Country, etc.

4. Commercial Transactions

- Action taken in relation to contractual or commercial transactions involving government departments or authorities, except transactions concerning the acquisition or disposal of land acquired compulsorily, or in circumstances where compulsory acquisition was possible

5. Matters Involving the Armed Forces

- Matters concerning the terms and conditions of service, any order, command, penalty or punishment given to members of the Defence Force

Examples of Complaints We Cannot Investigate

6. Criminal Matters/National Security, Foreign Governments/ International Organisations

- Action taken for the purpose of investigating crime or of protecting the security of the state
- Extradition/fugitive offenders
- Action taken affecting relations/dealings with foreign government/international organisations

7. Private Matters

- Disputes between private individuals
- Complaints against private companies

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1) WHAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE A COMPLAINT IS MADE?

- Before approaching the Ombudsman, a person should ordinarily report the matter to the relevant government MDA.
- The MDA should be given a reasonable amount of time to adequately address the matter before a complaint is lodged with the Ombudsman.

2) HOW DO I LODGE A COMPLAINT?

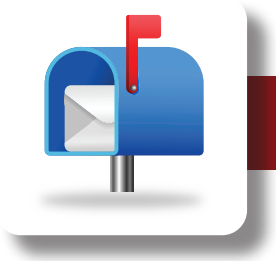
All complaints must be made IN WRITING to the Ombudsman. Complaints can be lodged:



In person at any of our 3 Office locations OR at a monthly public outreach visit



Via Our Website



By Mail/Post



By Via Dropbox

If you are unsure whether you have a valid complaint, you may contact the Office for further information.

3) WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD MY COMPLAINT INCLUDE?

Your complaint should include:

- Name
- Telephone contact
- Residential address and/or mailing address
- Email address (optional)
- A summary outlining:
  - The facts of the complaint and the current status of the matter
  - The government department involved
  - The date on which the matter was first reported to the relevant government MDA
  - The name of the person(s) to whom you have reported the matter
- Copies of documents pertinent to your complaint (if available)

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Distribution of Complaints Received in 2025 that Progressed to Investigation

Appendix II

Distribution of Complaints Brought Forward from Previous Years

APPENDIX I

Distribution of Complaints Received in 2025 that Progressed to Investigation

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	PRIMARY COMPLAINTS	SECONDARY COMPLAINTS	TOTAL
AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES	8	1	9
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	1	0	1
DEFENCE			1
Ministry of Defence - Defence Force	0	1	1
EDUCATION	110	1	111
FINANCE			67
General	22	2	24
Caribbean Airlines Limited	1	0	1
Customs and Excise Division	2	0	2
Inland Revenue Division	26	0	26
Treasury Division	14	0	14
FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS	2	0	2
HEALTH			24
General	19	0	19
County Medical Officers of Health	3	1	4
Public Health Inspector	1	0	1
HOMELAND SECURITY			42
General Administration	26	1	27
Immigration Division	4	1	5
Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service	6	1	7
Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service	3	0	3
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT			28
General	6	1	7
Housing Development Corporation (HDC)	21	0	21
JUDICIARY			26
General	20	1	21
Criminal Registry	0	1	1
District Courts	3	0	3
Magistrate's Courts	1	0	1
JUSTICE			2
General	0	1	1

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	PRIMARY COMPLAINTS	SECONDARY COMPLAINTS	TOTAL
Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre	1	0	1
LABOUR, SMALL AND MICRO ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	8	0	8
LAND AND LEGAL AFFAIRS			8
General	4	0	4
Commissioner of State Lands (COSL): Land Management Division	3	0	3
Valuation Division	1	0	1
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER			9
General	8	0	8
Central Administrative Services Tobago	1	0	1
PEOPLE, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY			76
General	17	0	17
Social Welfare Division (Trinidad)	57	0	57
Social Welfare Division (Tobago)	1	0	1
St. Jude's School for Girls	1	0	1
PLANNING, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT			4
General	3	0	3
Town and Country Planning Division	1	0	1
PUBLIC UTILITIES			28
General	3	0	3
National Maintenance Training and Security Company Ltd. (MTS)	23	0	23
Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT)	2	0	2
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT			49
General	11	0	11
Borough Corporations	9	0	9
City Corporations	10	0	10
Regional Corporations	18	1	19
SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS	1	0	1
TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS			6
General	1	1	2
Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)	1	0	1
The College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)	1	0	1

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	PRIMARY COMPLAINTS	SECONDARY COMPLAINTS	TOTAL
University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT): John S. Donaldson Campus	1	0	1
The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (UWI)	1	0	1
TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			43
General	1	0	1
Community Development, Youth Development and Sport	5	0	5
Education, Research and Technology	5	1	5
Finance, Trade and the Economy	2	0	2
Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development	3	0	3
Health, Wellness and Social Protection	13	0	13
Infrastructure, Quarries and Urban Development	8	0	8
Office of The Chief Secretary	3	1	4
Settlements, Public Utilities and Rural Development	1	0	1
Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation	1	0	1
TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM	1	0	1
TRANSPORT AND CIVIL AVIATION			3
Licensing Authority - Transport Division	1	0	1
Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC)	2	0	2
WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	11	2	13
General	10	2	12
Drainage Division	1	0	1
AUDITOR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT	2	1	3
CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	1	0	1
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION	5	5	10
Service Commissions Department	5	5	10
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS	3	3	6
EASTERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (ERHA)	7	0	7
ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION	2	0	2
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (TOBAGO)	1	0	1
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRIBUNAL	1	0	1
HERITAGE PETROLEUM COMPANY LIMITED	2	0	2
LEGAL AID ADVISORY AUTHORITY(LAAA): Port of Spain District Office	2	0	2

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	PRIMARY COMPLAINTS	SECONDARY COMPLAINTS	TOTAL
NATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM AUTHORITY (NALIS)	2	0	2
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SELF-HELP LIMITED	1	1	2
NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD (NIB)			244
Trinidad	214	0	214
Tobago	30	0	30
NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (NCRHA)	4	0	4
NORTH WEST REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (NWRHA)	20	0	20
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL	1	0	1
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER	3	5	8
PORT AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	1	0	1
REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION	1	0	1
SOUTH WEST REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (SWRHA)	10	0	10
STATUTORY AUTHORITIES SERVICE COMMISSION (SASC)	1	1	2
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ELECTRICITY COMMISSION (T&TEC)	1	0	1
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE (TTPS)	26	2	28
WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (WASA)	6	0	6
	891	**38**	**927**

APPENDIX II

Distribution of Complaints Brought Forward from Previous Years

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	TOTAL
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	36
General	29
Regional Administration Offices	6
The National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO)	1
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	10
DEFENCE	1
Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force	1
EDUCATION	267
ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES	1
FINANCE	247
General	76
Caribbean Airlines Limited	1
Comptroller of Accounts	6
Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (CBTT)	1
Customs and Excise Division	14
Inland Revenue Division (Trinidad)	134
National Lotteries Control Board (NLCB)	2
Treasury Division	13
FOREIGN AND CARICOM AFFAIRS	2
HEALTH	76
General	55
County Medical Officers of Health	15
Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago	1
Insect Vector Control Division	4
Public Health Inspector	1
HOMELAND SECURITY	125
General Administration	64
Immigration Division	17
Probation Services Division	3
Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service	18
Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service	23
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	112
General	48

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	TOTAL
Housing Development Corporation (HDC)	62
Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Bank (TTMB)	2
JUDICIARY	41
General	22
Chief Magistrate' s Chambers	6
Family Court - Trinidad	2
Family Court- Tobago	2
Magistrates' Courts	7
Supreme Court	2
JUSTICE	2
Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre	2
LABOUR, SMALL AND MICRO ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT	13
LAND AND LEGAL AFFAIRS	58
Commissioner of State Lands (COSL): Land Management Division	45
Land Settlement Agency (LSA)	6
Land Survey Board of Trinidad and Tobago	1
Registrar General's Department	2
Valuation Division	4
NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD (NIB)	312
Trinidad	252
Tobago	60
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL	11
General	8
Office of the Solicitor General	3
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER	14
General	13
Tobago Regional Health Authority (TRHA)	1
PLANNING, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT	19
General	6
Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA)	1
Town and Country Planning Division	12
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	3
General	1
Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)	2
PUBLIC UTILITIES	47
General	12

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	TOTAL
National Maintenance Training and Security Company Ltd. (MTS)	31
Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT)	2
Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPOST)	2
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	181
General	28
Borough Corporations	34
City Corporations	22
Regional Corporations	95
Unemployment Relief Programme (URP)	2
PEOPLE, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SERVICES	81
General	40
Social Welfare Divisions (Trinidad)	39
St. Jude's School for Girls	1
Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association	1
SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS	4
TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING	3
General	1
The College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)	1
University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) (John S. Donaldson Campus)	1
TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	88
General	2
Community Development and Social Protection	4
Education, Skills and Innovation	18
Finance, Trade and the Economy	1
Food Security	8
Health and Wellness	12
Housing, Settlements and Public Utilities	2
Office of The Chief Secretary	6
Public Infrastructure and Transportation	31
Tourism, Antiquities and Creative Industries	4
TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM	1
TRANSPORT AND CIVIL AVIATION	11
Airport Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad)	1
Licensing Authority - Transport Division (Trinidad)	5
Licensing Authority - Transport Division (Tobago)	1

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT/AGENCIES	TOTAL
Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC)	4
WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	66
General	59
Ministry of Works and Infrastructure (Drainage Division)	6
Trinidad and Tobago Inter-Island Transportation Company Limited	1
DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION	14
Service Commissions Department	11
Teaching Service Commission	3
Director of Public Prosecutions	9
Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA)	10
Elections and Boundaries Commission	1
Environmental Management Authority	12
Equal Opportunities Tribunal	1
HERITAGE PETROLEUM COMPANY LIMITED	3
LEGAL AID ADVISORY AUTHORITY (LAAA): Port of Spain District Office	2
National Commission for Self-Help Limited	5
National Insurance Appeals Tribunal (NIAT)	7
National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)	1
North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA)	6
North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA)	34
Office of the Financial Services Ombudsman (OFSO) - Trinidad	1
Personnel Department (Office of the Chief Personnel Officer)	5
Police Complaints Authority (PCA) - Trinidad	3
Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago	2
South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA)	36
Statutory Authorities Service Commission (SASC)	4
The Tax Appeal Board of Trinidad & Tobago	1
Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC)	6
Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	76
Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (WASA)	12
Other - Private Matter	9
	2092

OFFICE OF THE
OMBUDSMAN
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

A publication of:
The Office of the Ombudsman of Trinidad and Tobago
Level 12, Tower D, International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain
Tel: 1 (868) 624-3121
Email: communications@ombudsman.gov.tt

ombudsman.gov.tt