



University  
of Victoria

School of Public Administration

# Research & Practice Forum

**Complaint System Design for the Public Sector: Trends and innovations from international jurisdictions**

**Wednesday, September 12, 1:00-4:00 pm**

Union Club, 805 Gordon St, Victoria, BC

RSVP by September 10 to [jkhall@uvic.ca](mailto:jkhall@uvic.ca) (Free: Seating limited)

## **Presenters:**

Introduction: **Jay Chalke** (BC Ombudsperson)

**Chris Gill** (University of Glasgow)

**Carol Brennan** (Queen Margarets University)

**Jane Williams** (Queen Margarets University)

**Darren Thompson & Dave Merner** (BC AG)

**Dave Murray & Rachel Warren** (BC Ombuds Office)



## Overview

Citizens in a democratic society expect fairness and reasonable treatment from public sector organizations. To ensure this right, governments and institutions must establish effective complaint systems to address concerns raised by the public.

The increasing importance of complaint systems was recently underscored in British Columbia by the 2017/2018 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson. The report noted that 2017/2018 registered a 10-year high in complaints lodged against public agencies in the province. In the report, the Ombudsperson explained that the 10-year high was both positive and negative in that:

“It’s great that people know we are here to receive and investigate concerns about fair and reasonable treatment by provincial and local governments. However, it also signals that there is still lots of work to be done until public bodies in the province are treating all people fairly.” ([Annual Report 2017/18](#)).

Building on the BC Ombudsperson’s challenge, this three-hour workshop will bring together a diverse set of practitioners and academics whose work focuses on the design and implementation of public sector complaint systems. Expert practitioners, researchers, and trainers from Europe, the United States, and Canada will share cutting-edge knowledge and experiences with the aim to improve the design and facilitate the successful implementation of effective complaint systems in public sector organizations.

## Format

This workshop will focus on dialogue and the sharing of knowledge between all participants on the subject of complaint system design and implementation. This will be accomplished through a series of guided small group discussion activities. Each activity will begin with the brief introduction of an example of current research on, or practical implementation of a complaint system. Participants will then engage in discussion around a question relevant to the introductory presentation. We welcome public sector practitioners who have first-hand knowledge of challenges and successes in this work. All knowledge shared throughout the day will be captured and summarized in a summary report.

## Sponsor

Social Science and Humanities Connections Grant “Co-constructing Justice” awarded to Tara Ney, Associate Professor, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

## **Agenda**

### **1:00 Welcome**

**Tara Ney** - School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

### **1:05 Opening Remarks**

**Jay Chalke**, BC Ombudsperson

### **1:15 - 2:30 Workshop**

**25 Minutes: Chris Gill**, Glasgow University  
Research on Scotland's new system for local authority complaint handling

**25 Minutes: Darin Thompson** and **Dave Merner**, BC Attorney General  
Recent Developments with BC's Civil Resolution Tribunal

**25 Minutes: Carol Brennon**, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh  
Incorporating innovations to training for professionals in complaint handling at Queen Margaret University

### **2:30 – 2:45 Refreshment Break**

### **2:45 – 3:35 Workshop**

**25 Minutes: Dave Murray** and **Rachel Warren**, BC Ombuds Office  
Building capacity in BC local government complaints handling

**25 Minutes: Jane Williams**, Queen Margaret University  
How do complaints affect those complained about?

### **3:35 - 4:00 Summary and Final Discussion**

Facilitator: **Michael Litchfield**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

