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# **Public Complaint Mechanisms in Social Security Organizations An International Review**

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# Abstract

## Background

Accessible and effective complaint and appeal mechanisms are essential for the proper functioning of the social security system and for realizing the right to social security. The Department of Public Inquiries at the National Insurance Institute serves as the complaint mechanism for service users, enabling them to complain on all subjects related to its activities. In June 2022, the department contacted the Quality Assurance Team at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute and asked that it review global trends and best practices for managing an internal public complaint mechanism that is run by the organization to which the complaint is addressed.

## Objective

The objective was to review trends and best practices in operating internal complaint mechanisms in public services in select countries worldwide, with an emphasis on social security organizations.

## Method

The review was based on a variety of information sources: scholarly articles from the Israeli and international professional literature, as well as information on websites, official documents, and policy papers (publicly available sources). In order to characterize complaint mechanisms in social security organizations around the world, organizations in seven developed welfare states (Australia, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK) were reviewed.

## Main Findings and Conclusions

The right to complain is a procedural right granted to citizens of modern states by virtue of their entitlement to good governance, and is a condition for their ability to realize their right to social security. The review identified unique best practices in internal complaint mechanisms in public organizations that contribute to their effectiveness. These practices may be subsumed under five main themes: (1) *Accessibility*: Identifying and addressing the barriers preventing service users from submitting a complaint; (2) *Fairness*: Objective, impartial and transparent handling of the complaint; (3) *The commitment of the entire organization to deal with complaints*: Addressing service users' dissatisfaction even before they submit a complaint through the mechanism; (4) *Efficiency*: Smart

use of resources in order to ensure quick handling of the complaint and appropriate remedies; and (5) *Drawing conclusions*: Gathering information from the complaints and using it to improve service both in the context of the complaint mechanism and in the context of the entire organization.

The review of social security organizations in these countries found that they primarily prioritize practices related to accessibility, fairness in reexamining decisions, the organization's commitment to handling complaints, and efficiency. There is less emphasis on practices concerning fairness in the complaint handling processes and in drawing conclusions.