

employees' worries about and dissatisfaction with their workplace as well as the challenges facing the workplace in the public service, which are causing such worries and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 explores in a complementary manner what causes worries and dissatisfaction of employees as well as the challenges facing the workplace in the public service based on the survey on the workplace in the public service targeting young and mid-level employees (hereinafter referred to as the "Survey of Young and Mid-level Employees") in addition to the survey targeting managerial personnel (hereinafter referred to as the "Survey of Managerial Personnel").

Next, Chapter 3 takes a look at the measures to effectively resolve such worries and dissatisfaction before they become apparent, including what is expected on managerial personnel, what should be done at the workplace as a whole, and the roles the NPA needs to play. In addition, the initiatives taken by private companies are introduced as a reference.

Chapter 1. Status of Complaint Consultation

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1. Establishment of the Complaint Consultation System

It is natural that employees have worries or dissatisfaction on a daily basis with regard to personnel management, such as their working conditions or workplace environment, as long as they work as a member of an organization regardless of whether it is in the public or private sector. If such worries or dissatisfaction of employees are resolved promptly and appropriately at workplace, this will lead to maintenance and improvement of employees' morale and vitalization of the workplace/organization. Otherwise, there are concerns that employees' desire and motivation for work will be lowered. Moreover, distrust in the workplace, superiors, coworkers may cause distortions in human relationships at the workplace, which can lead to mutual distrust among employees and can negatively affect the vitality of the entire organization. Furthermore, it is desirable that such worries and dissatisfaction are prevented as early as possible rather than resolved after the problems occur.

The NPA has long been engaged in the complaint consultation service. This service plays a role as a means to solve daily dissatisfaction of employees, which do not go as far as to be handled as equity process, such as appeal against disadvantageous action or request for administrative action. In the past, many requests for examination and requests for administrative action were associated with labor-management relations. Recently, however, more stable labor-management relations have changed the situation, and complaints of individual employees have become mainstream. In accordance with this, there is a growing need for complaint consultation as a means of solving complaints from individual employees. Under such circumstances, the procedure for complaint consultation was not made clear to the public. This made it difficult for individual employees to be aware of complaint consultation service provided by the NPA and to actually consult the NPA with their complaints.

In addition, increasingly complicated and sophisticated administration have been changing the working conditions and working environment of employees. Given this background, there is a growing number of

complaint consultation on working conditions and issues related to personnel management at workplace, such as bullying/ harassment and sexual harassment at workplace. Moreover, the content of consultation has become more complex and diversified. Accordingly, the complaint consultation has become more important than ever in order to maintain and improve the efficiency of public service.

Based on these circumstances, the NPA decided to promote appropriate measures through newly establishing Rule 13-5 (Consultation of Complaints from Employees) on Jun. 1, 2000 to clarify the procedures and handling methods for complaint consultation.

2. Overview of the Measures through the Complaint Consultation System

When an employee, who has worry or dissatisfaction concerning the working conditions or working environment, requests consultation, a consultant appointed by the NPA responds to the request. A request for consultation can be made anonymously by telephone, e-mail, in writing, or interview, whichever is convenient for the employee concerned. The Complaint Management Division, Equity and Investigation Bureau of the NPA along with nine Regional Bureaus and Local Office receive such requests.

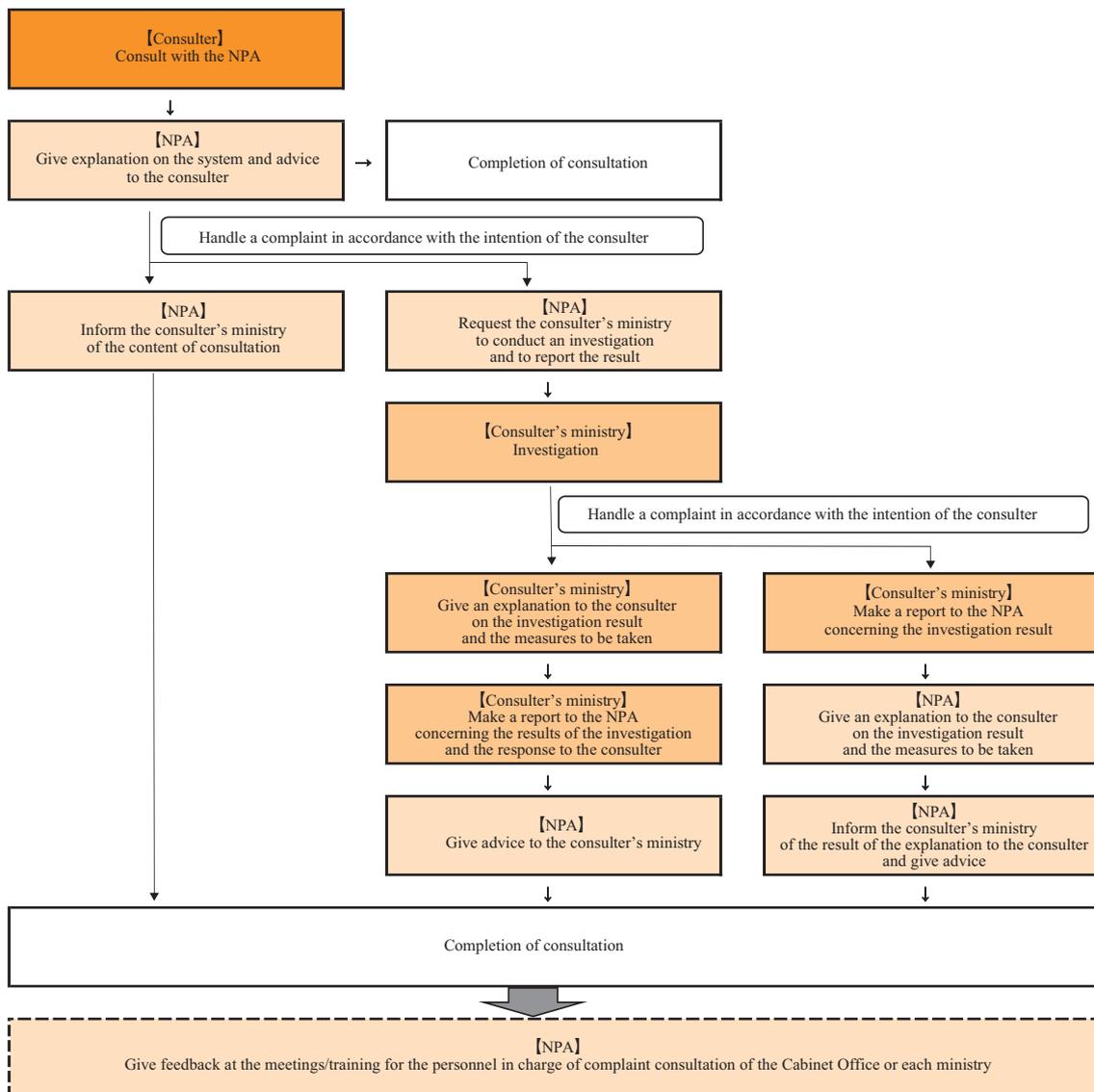
The content of consultation from employees vary greatly ranging from questions about systems related to appointment, remuneration and working hours; worries about human relationships at the workplace; to requests for taking concrete measures due to serious harassment that the employee concerned is currently experiencing. The stance of employees seeking advice also varies widely. Some employees seek consultation anonymously; and others may seek advice after disclosing their real names and ministries they belong to but want to keep their names secret when a consultant contacts their ministries to inform them of the contents of the consultation. In addition, some employees do not care about disclosing their real names because they want their ministries to take concrete measures. The NPA deals with such diversified consultation taking into consideration the intention of the employees seeking advice. For example, consultation related to the questions about systems are often complicated. In such a case, a consultant sorts out the content of the consultations through communicating with the employee requesting consultation; and then, identifies and makes inquires in the relevant department in charge of the system concerned. The consultant gives an explanation or advice to the employee asking for advice taking into account the replies from the relevant department. Furthermore, depending on the content of the consultation, a consultant obtains consent from the employee consulting with the NPA and informs the ministry to which the employee concerned belongs of the content of consultation or requests the ministry to investigate the facts, to take necessary actions and to report the result. In consideration of the intention of the employee seeking consultation, a relevant ministry or the NPA gives an explanation to the employee concerned about the result of investigation or the measures to be taken based on the result. Additionally, when the ministry concerned gives the explanation to the employee, the ministry concerned is required to make a report to the NPA about the result after giving the explanation to the employee seeking advice.

The content of consultations have become more complex and diversified as stated so far. In addition, the NPA receives more than 1,000 cases of consultation per year from employees as described in Section 2 to follow.

Given these facts, the NPA carefully deals with each case in consideration of the intention of the employee seeking consultation and paying due consideration to ensure confidentiality of the content of the consultation so as not to cause any disadvantageous treatment to the employee concerned.

In handling individual complaints, it is important to follow up at the workplace in order that the employees who asked for consultation can concentrate on their duties without any concerns at the workplace toward the future. To realize this, cooperation from the Cabinet Office and each ministry is indispensable. The NPA is working hard to utilize the cases and know-how, which are accumulated through handling complaints received from the employees, for the purpose of personnel management in the Cabinet Office and each ministry. To do this, the NPA provides such information at the meetings for the personnel in charge of complaint counseling of the Cabinet Office and each ministry and conducts the training concerning the methods of handling complaints [Figure 1].

Figure 1 General Flow of Complaint Consultation



Section 2. Trends in the Total Number of Complaint Consultation Cases

The total number of complaint consultation cases has ranged between roughly the latter half of 800s to the first half of 1,400s from FY2000 when the service was launched pursuant to Rule 13-5 till FY2018 [Figure 2]. During this period, the following changes have occurred in the situation surrounding complaint consultation.

First, regarding the number of employees who are subject to the complaint consultation service, the service has been offered to national public employees in the regular service (excluding the employees of Agencies Engaged in Administrative Execution). In Apr. 2001, institutions such as national research institutes became incorporated administrative agencies. In Apr. 2014, national universities, national technical colleges, national hospitals and national sanatoriums became incorporated administrative agencies. Furthermore, in Jan. 2010, the Japan Pension Service was established, and the Social Insurance Agency was abolished in connection with this establishment. Due to the restructuring of national organizations, the employees of these agencies were removed from the range of application of the complaint consultation service, resulting in a substantial reduction in the number of target employees.

Next, regarding the complaint consultation system, the Cabinet Office and each ministry also developed a complaint consultation system for its own employees following the NPA. Since then, the NPA has been encouraging each ministry to make efforts to handle the consultation related to human relationships at the workplace first within the ministry and to solve the problems at each workplace, such as at a complaint consultation desk. At the same time, the NPA provided information and advice at the meetings so that the information and the results of analysis, which were accumulated through offering the complaint consultation service, could be used for personnel management in each ministry. As a result of these efforts, the measures for complain consultation in the Cabinet Office and each ministry have made a progress and become established. Meanwhile, the NPA also started to accept the requests for consultation by e-mail in FY2004 and distributed the leaflets concerning complaint consultation to the Cabinet Office and each ministry with the aim of raising awareness of the NPA's complaint consultation system. In this way, the NPA has created an environment where employees can consult with the NPA easily.

Furthermore, as for the situation surrounding administration during this period, it has become necessary for employees to respond to administrative needs, which have become increasingly complicated and sophisticated, with a limited number of employees due to the streamlining of administration. Accordingly, the workplace environment has become more severe than before, and the values of employees are becoming more diversified.

Under these changes, the total number of complaint consultation cases has shown little change since the establishment of the system despite some ups and downs. In the last five years, in particular, the total number exceeded 1,000 cases. In FY2018, it increased significantly to the highest past record of 1,443 cases, an increase of 29.9% from the previous year. In addition, when it comes to taking a look at the total number of consultation cases per thousand employees after FY2000, when the service started in accordance with Rule 13-5, in consideration of a significant decrease in the number of employees who are subject to the complaint service, it increased significantly from FY2003 to FY2005. After that, the total number of that per thousand employees remained

almost unchanged. In FY2018, however, the said number also hit a record high. [Figure 3].

In addition, with the launch of the complaint consultation system in the Cabinet Office and each ministry, the NPA has been receiving many complicated cases about which employees hesitated to make complaints to their own ministry.

Figure 2 Trend in the Total Number of Complaint Consultation Cases

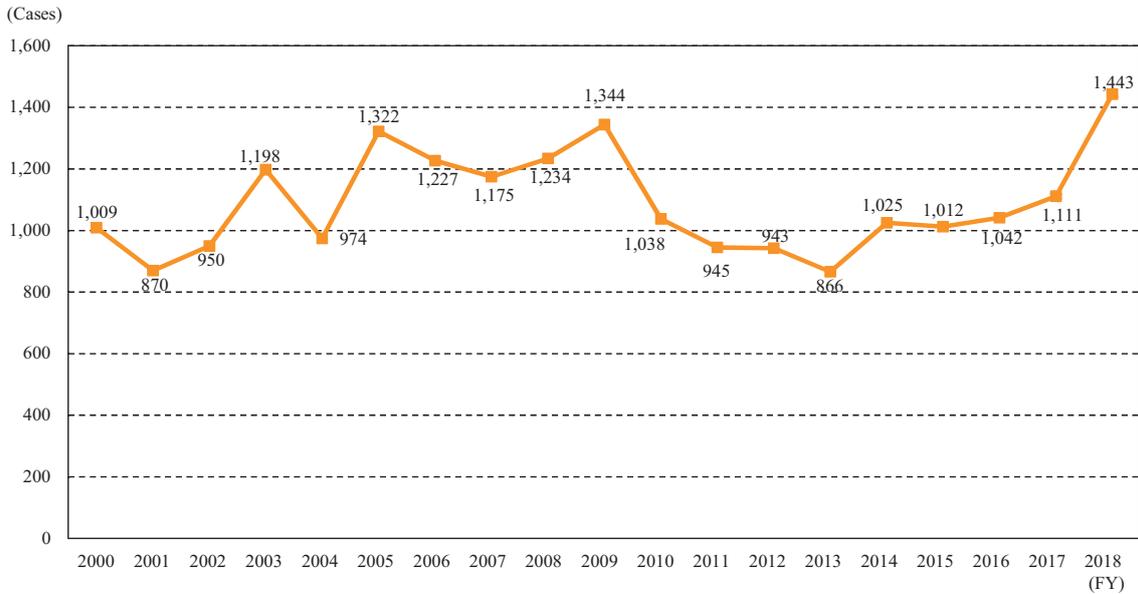
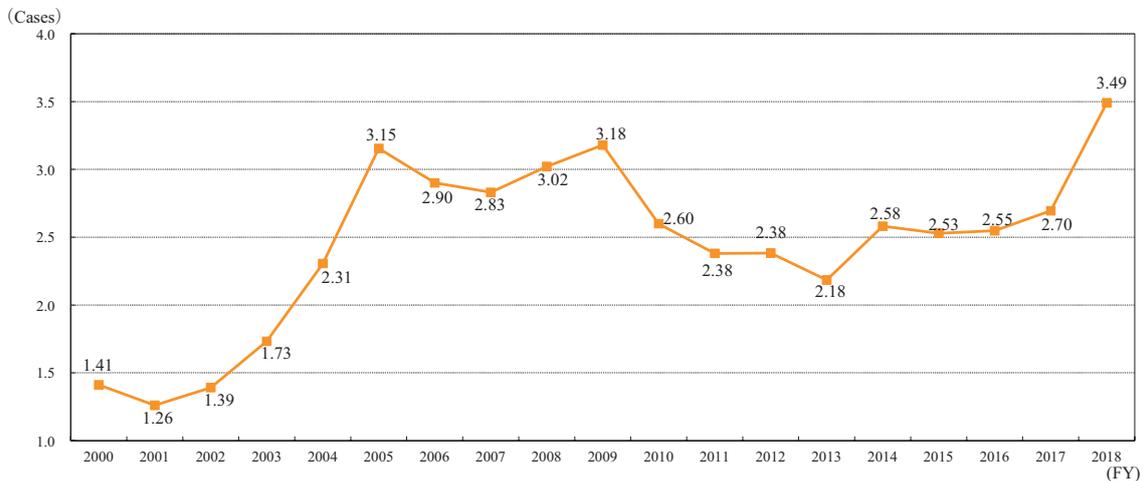


Figure 3 Trend in the Total Number of Complaint Consultation Cases per thousand Employees



Section 3. Overall Trend of the Content of Complaint Consultation

Requests for complaint consultations received at the NPA are categorized based on the main content of the consultation. Specifically, the categories include “appointment-related” such as transfer/replacement and resignation; “remuneration-related” including the decisions of remuneration and operation of various allowance systems (family allowance and commuter allowance); “working-hours-related, leaves-related, service-discipline-

related” such as allocation of working hours and acquisition of leaves; “health and safety-related” including working environment and returning to work from sick leave; and “personnel evaluation-related”, which includes personnel evaluation systems/procedures, personnel evaluation results and reflection of personnel evaluation results to appointment/remuneration. In addition, the categories related to so-called harassment comprise “sexual harassment”, “harassment related to pregnancy, childbirth, childcare or nursing care”, “power harassment” and “bullying/ harassment other than power harassment” for other types of bullying and harassment. Requests for complaint consultation that do not fall into any of these categories are classified as “others.”

Section 3 takes a look at the general trend of complaint consultation based on changes in the total number of complaint consultation cases by content category [Figure 4] in FY2008 and from FY2014 to FY2018.

First, looking at the breakdown in FY2008, “appointment-related” was the most common at approx. 22%, followed by “working-hours-related, leaves-related, service-discipline-related” at approx. 19%, and “power harassment” at approx. 14%. The combined ratio of harassment-related cases was less than 20%.

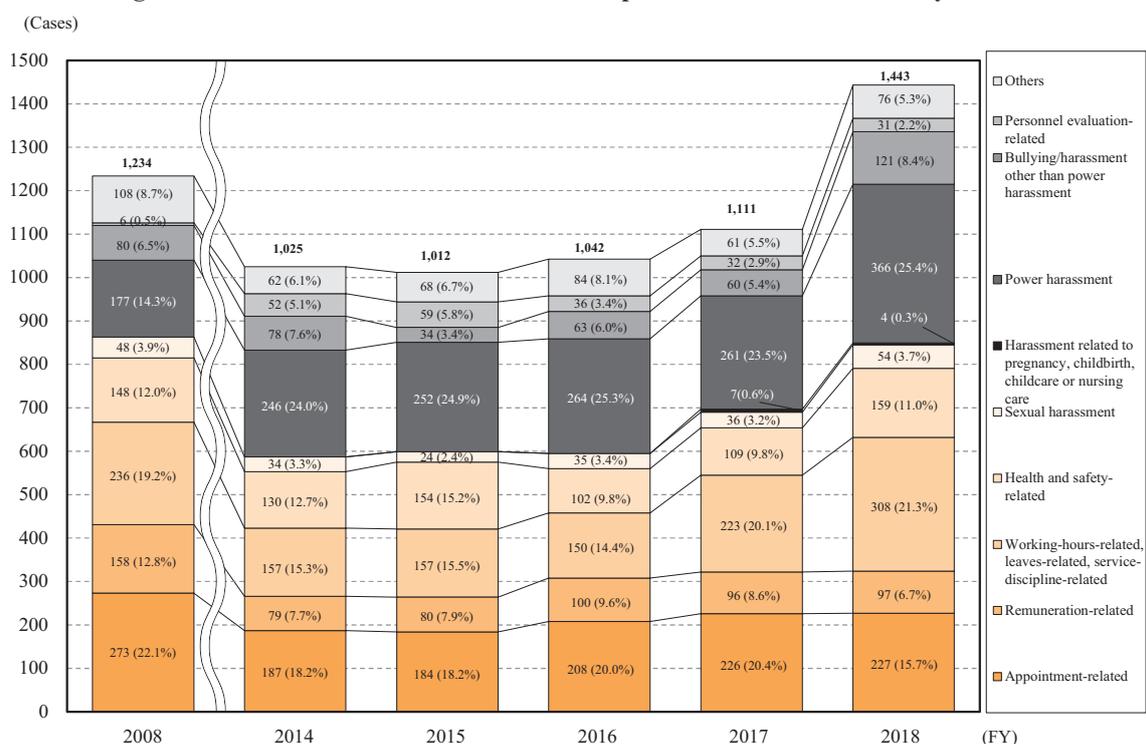
With regard to the breakdown from FY2014 to FY2018, on the other hand, “power harassment” had been the most common throughout the fiscal years, accounting for around 25% of the total in each year. The combined ratio of harassment-related cases was in 25-29%. In addition, “appointment-related” and “working-hours-related, leaves-related, service-discipline-related” were in 15-20%. “Health and safety-related” was in 10-14%. Moreover, an increase in the number of consultation cases related to harassment and appointment can be seen also among part-time employees.

The ratio of harassment-related consultation cases has increased in recent years compared to FY2008. There are several factors behind this trend, including a greater awareness of the word “harassment”, which is spread among the general public, and an increasing number of cases where employees choose to consult with the NPA, which is a neutral and third-party organization, instead of their own ministry because the content of consultation often contains the issues related to personal privacy. When it comes to power harassment (bullying by boss), the Consciousness Survey FY2017 found that about 60% of the employees in their 30s replied they had received strict instructions from their superiors, such as “instructed irrationally”, “scolded in a loud voice”, “their abilities were denied”; and 95.2% of them answered, “I felt the behavior was power harassment” or “I was dissatisfied with the behavior, though I did not go so far as to say it was power harassment.” It deems these things also exist behind the increase in harassment-related consultation.

Besides, in recent years, values of work style have been diversified and an awareness of so-called “work-life balance”, which is the balance between work and family life such as childcare and nursing care, has increased. In addition, according to the Consciousness Survey FY2017, “inability to keep work-life balance due to busy work or working long hours” was the most popular answer, accounting for nearly 50%, to the question about the specific factors that had lowered the motivation for work. Similarly, with regard to complaint consultation, employees facing such diverse circumstances request consultation concerning the balance between work and family life. The content of the consultations include transfer/replacement of employees who are raising children or nursing family members; how to perform duties according to the system of childcare hours and nursing leave; relationships with

supervisors and colleagues; and busy work and overtime work due to the severe situation of manpower. Given these facts, the ratios of “appointment-related” and “working-hours-related, leaves-related, service-discipline-related” have increased. In particular, “working-hours-related, leaves-related, service-discipline-related” exceeded 20% of the total in FY2018.

Figure 4 Trends in the Total Number of Complaint Consultation Cases by Content



Chapter 2. Content of Individual Complaint Consultation Cases

As stated in Chapter 1, the NPA has received over 20,000 consultation cases so far, and the content of the consultations varies widely. This chapter takes a look at the complaint consultation cases that NPA actually received focusing on the ones suggesting issues in the workplace in the public service in order to create a better working environment.

1. Work-life Balance of an Employee Facing Various Circumstances

[Case 1] Workplace Environment surrounding an employee expecting childbirth and childcare

I am an employee of X ministry, and I’m soon going to take maternity leave. But I was told by my boss to come to work during maternity leave or childcare leave to hand over my duties. I have already submitted a report, which I prepared to hand over my duties, to my boss and also handed over my duties to my coworkers. My boss, however, wants me to directly transfer my duties also to another employee, which is the reason why my boss demands that I come to the office during the leave.