

# Terms of service

## Registering your complaint

Before you contact us you should give the company you are complaining about a reasonable opportunity to resolve the issue. If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact us via the following:

- Call us on 0333 300 1620
- Email us at [info@consumer-ombudsman.org](mailto:info@consumer-ombudsman.org)
- Find us online at [www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)

## Timescales

Ombudsman Services will not accept a complaint about a matter if the complainant has not submitted it to Ombudsman Services within 12 months\* from the date upon which the participating company has given notice, to the complainant, that it is unable to resolve the complaint with the complainant.

\*Ombudsman Services will only accept complaints about products or services purchased after 1 January 2015

## Our rules

What we can and cannot do is set out in our terms of reference. You can find our terms of reference [here](#). We will decide if your complaint fits in with these terms and whether we have the power to deal with it.

## Resolving your complaint: company agrees to engage with Ombudsman Services

If a company is willing to work with us to resolve your complaint we will aim to reach a resolution within 90 working days of receiving a complete complaint file. We will keep you informed of our progress.

## Resolving your complaint: Company refuses to engage with Ombudsman Services

If a company is unwilling to work with us or we cannot reach a resolution that you are both satisfied with we will give advice about your options. This may be contacting an organisation like Citizens Advice or Trading Standards, or taking your complaint to a small claims court.

## Withdrawal from the process

Complainants have the absolute right to withdraw or discontinue their complaint at any stage.

## Complainant's right to seek redress through the courts

Complainants are free to pursue their complaint through other routes. Using our service does not prevent you from seeking redress through the courts and the outcome may be different to that of a court. If you accept any remedy we propose in resolution of your complaint, a court may take this into account.

## Sharing of information

Any information or documentation that you provide to Ombudsman Services will be taken into account as part of the investigation process.

Any information that you provide to Ombudsman Services may be disclosed in full or in part to the participating company.

## Service standards

At Ombudsman Services, we take complaints about our standard of service very seriously. If you think we have done something wrong please tell us so we have the chance to put things right quickly and effectively. Your complaint will help us learn from our mistakes and improve our service. We can only consider complaints that involve allegations of poor service or performance, for example where we have:

- treated you rudely;
- failed to keep you updated on progress; or
- caused unnecessary delays.

## Our complaints procedure

If you have a complaint about the service we have provided, please email your complaint to: [servicecomplaints@ombudsman-services.org](mailto:servicecomplaints@ombudsman-services.org)

Please note, we will not consider complaints about the investigation officer's resolution of your consumer complaint under our service complaints procedure. If you disagree with the investigation officer's resolution, we will give advice about your options. This may be contacting an organisation like Citizens Advice or Trading Standards, or taking your complaint to a small claims court.

Our customer relations team will respond to your complaint about our service within five working days of receipt. There is no appeal against the customer relations team's response and there will be no further consideration of your complaint.

## Reasonable adjustments

Ombudsman Services is committed to taking reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people who use our service are not disadvantaged. [Our commitment to people with disabilities policy](#) demonstrates our commitment to improving accessibility for everybody we deal with. It sets out some of the basic principles of our duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people and sets out the factors we will take into account when dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

## Privacy policy

The Ombudsman Service Ltd is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that we are responsible for how and why your personal information is used.

We are committed to respecting your privacy and to complying with the Data Protection Act and any other relevant privacy laws. We have provided [this Privacy Policy](#) to help you understand how we collect, use and protect your personal information.

## Unacceptable actions

Our service is independent, impartial and free to the complainant. We believe that complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. We work hard to be open and accessible. Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of individuals using our service makes it very difficult for us to deal with their complaint.

In a small number of cases the actions become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our process. When this happens we have to take action to protect our staff. We consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. You can access our unacceptable actions policy here: [Unacceptable Actions](#)