

Welcome to Ombudsman Services

Thank you for joining Ombudsman Services. You are now a participating company of our service.

Telling your employees

It is important that your employees know who we are, what we do and when we can help. This information should be included in training for every member of staff, not just the people who will be dealing with the escalated complaint.

If you would like help in doing this, please let us know.

If you or your employees would like to visit us to see how we work, please give us a call.

We sometimes hold open days. These are popular events for us to share experiences and to improve standards. We will let you know when the next one is happening in our sector newsletter.

Telling your customers

By signing up to our service you are demonstrating your commitment to customer care. It is important that your customers know when and how to contact us. To do this:

(1) Include information about us in your complaints handling procedure/code of practice so your customers know what to do if something goes wrong and you are unable to resolve the problem. Here is some wording you may wish to use:

If we are unable to deal with your complaint, Ombudsman Services may be able to help. Ombudsman Services is an independent dispute resolution service. For more information, visit www.ombudsman-services.org

(2) Write to your customers explaining they can contact us once their complaint has been with you for eight weeks. For energy and communications companies, the industry regulators Ofgem and Ofcom require this. Here is some wording you could include in your eight week letter:

As it has been eight weeks since you first told us about your complaint, you now have the right to refer your complaint to Ombudsman Services.

(3) If at any time you decide you will no longer be considering your customer's complaint, provide them with a full and final response letter (deadlock letter) that explains what they should do next. For example:

We can do nothing more to resolve your complaint and this is our final response. If you wish to pursue your complaint please contact Ombudsman Services for advice.

You can also download signposting leaflets from our website and include these with your final response letter.

(4) Display our logo on your bills, website and other literature to show that you are a participating company of Ombudsman Services. A range of formats and sizes are available – just let us know.

Guidelines about how to display our logo and different formats of the logo are available on our website.

If you are a property company, we can supply window stickers to be displayed in your business premises. Please email applications@ombudsman-services.org and state the quantity required.

Useful information

Our fact sheets explain in plain English what we do and how we work. Please give these to your employees and customers. You can download PDFs of the fact sheets from our website: www.ombudsman-services.org/supporting-improvement.

We may use your contact details to send you information about any changes in our processes or services and to update you on other news that may be of interest to you. We issue newsletters regularly and publish these on our website: www.ombudsman-services.org/supporting-improvement.

Contact us

Relationship Manager Sue Jackson is the main point of contact for participating companies. You should contact Sue if you wish to arrange a meeting with us. Please also let her know if you make any changes that affect us – for example, changes in staff, business processes or contact details. You should notify Sue about any issues that are likely to increase your number of complaints so that we may help to manage your customers' expectations. Please email sjackson@ombudsman-services.org.

For general information about your subscription, email applications@ombudsman-services.org.

If you have any questions/queries about the acceptance of a case, email casequery@ombudsman-services.org and an enquiry manager will respond.

If you have questions about a specific case, please contact the investigation officer dealing with the case.

Check list of actions

Here is a reminder of what you need to do and where to go for further information:

- Write, or update, your complaints handling procedure/code of practice to include details about Ombudsman Services.
- Provide us with your complaints handling procedure/code of practice, contact names, an example bill and any other relevant company information.
- Use our logo and literature.
- Train your staff about the role of Ombudsman Services and our process.