

Having problems with your communications provider and want to make a complaint?



Tell us if your service provider is not a member of an ADR

Service providers are breaking important consumer protection rules if they don't belong to an ADR scheme. So if your provider won't tell you about its ADR scheme, we need to know, so we can investigate further. Contact us on 0300 123 3333.

Useful contact details

Otelo: 0330 440 1614

Cisas: 020 7520 3827

Ofcom Advisory Team: 0300 123 3333



Ofcom Advisory Team

Phone: +44 (0)300 123 3333

Facsimile: +44 (0)300 123 0811


Textphone: +44 (0)300 123 2024

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It would be great if everything in life ran smoothly, but unfortunately that sometimes isn't the case. If you are having problems with your landline, mobile or internet service provider, this guide sets out what you need to do if you want to complain.

Raise the issue with your service provider

In the first instance you should contact your service provider's customer services department and explain the problem you are experiencing. If you are unable to speak to the service provider's customer services team by phone then try contacting them via their website, by email, by letter or by fax. It is in a provider's own interests to treat its customers fairly and well, and in most cases they will resolve the issue satisfactorily.

Make a formal complaint

If your service provider refuses to resolve your concerns - or says there is nothing it can do - then make a formal complaint to them. Advise your service provider that your complaint should be reviewed in accordance with their own complaints procedure which is contained within their Complaints Code of Practice. This can normally be found on the provider's website. If you are unable to find this information, the service provider's customer service staff should advise you of the process to follow to make a formal complaint.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) schemes act as an independent middleman between the service provider and the customer. If the ADR scheme agrees with your complaint, it can order the service provider to fix the problem and, if needed, pay compensation. It is a requirement that all service providers are members of an ADR scheme.

When to take your dispute to ADR

If you have gone through the service provider's formal complaints procedure and your concerns still aren't resolved, the next thing to try is the service provider's ADR scheme. You do not pay any costs for using an ADR service. The only costs you might have to pay are photocopying or postage costs. ADR schemes are meant to supplement, not replace, a service provider's own formal complaints procedure, so you can only use its ADR scheme if:

- * You have tried to make a formal complaint to the provider and had no success AND 12 weeks or more has passed since you first complained to the company OR;
- * Your provider has written to you to say they're not going to do anything else about your complaint – known as a “deadlock” letter.
- * From 1 September 2009 you will be able to take your complaint to an ADR scheme after 8 weeks.

For updates on your complaint to an ADR scheme, you should contact the ADR scheme directly.

Find out which ADR your service provider is a member of

You should find details of your service provider's ADR scheme in their Code of Practice or from their customer services staff.

Ofcom approves two ADR schemes: Otelo (<http://www.otelo.org.uk/>), and CISAS (<http://www.cisas.org.uk/>).