

Invitation to Tender

Ombudsman Services Website

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Ombudsman Service Limited (Ombudsman Services) is a private not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. Membership of the Service is by application and is open to those companies which engage in any of the areas that are within the scope of individual schemes. The company has the potential to expand into different industry sectors in the short to medium terms.
- 1.2 Terms of Reference can be viewed on the website www.ombudsman-services.org
- 1.3 The governance structure has been designed to protect the independence of the Ombudsman.
- 1.4 The company is funded by its industry members.
- 1.5 Currently, four schemes are operated:
 - Office of the Telecommunications Ombudsman (Otelco) (2003)
 - Energy Ombudsman (2006)
 - Ombudsman Services Property (2007)
 - Ombudsman Services: PRS for Music (2009)

2.0 What does Ombudsman Services do?

- 2.1 The primary objective of the company is to receive, consider and investigate complaints from members' customers (consumers or small businesses), and, by issuing final decisions, reach fair and balanced outcomes to those complaints.

3.0 Current situation

- 3.1 There are currently five separate websites.

Otelco:	www.otelco.org.uk
Energy Ombudsman:	www.energy-ombudsman.org.uk
Ombudsman Services: Property:	www.os-property.org
PRS for Music Ombudsman:	www.prsformusic-ombudsman.org
Ombudsman Services:	www.ombudsman-services.org

- 3.2 Two of these have a secure access member's extranet (each member has a unique log in).

<http://www.otelco.org.uk/members/login.php>
<http://www.ombudsman-services.org/members/login.php>

- 3.3 One has a publicly accessible member's extranet
<http://www.surveyors-ombudsman.org.uk/members/index.php>

4.0 A time for change

- 4.1 Each scheme currently has a distinct brand with its own website. During 2010-11 we will move to a family branding structure. Ombudsman Services will remain as the name of the commercial operating company with other services flowing from this, for example;

- Ombudsman Services: Otelo
- Ombudsman Services: Energy
- Ombudsman Services: Property
- Ombudsman Services: Copyright Licensing.

- 4.2 To support this move a single website is required.

5.0 Strategic goal for the new website

- 5.1 Provide a one-stop-shop for consumers, reducing the volume of incoming calls and postal correspondence to the company by using up-to-date technologies and user-friendly functions. The website must have the capacity to incorporate future services, if our business grows and have a life-span of at least five years.

6.0 Content of the site

- 6.1 The main 'Ombudsman Services' area will give information which is common across schemes including (but not exhaustive):

- OS processes and procedures
- How to complain
- Corporate information:
 - Governance
 - About us
 - Background
 - People
 - Structure
 - Council
 - Member Boards
 - Council minutes
 - Performance
 - Uploaded documents
 - Vacancies
 - News
 - Media
 - Useful links
 - Downloads (Annual Reports etc)
 - How to become a member
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- An intuitive complaint form is also required for this area. Requirements for this are set out at 9.0.

6.2 From the main site there will be tabs to each sector ombudsman. These pages will be individually branded and include information such as:

- List of members with link to their website
- The kind of complaints that can be handled
- What is excluded
- Sector specific external links
- Case studies
- Frequently Asked Questions.

These sector areas must be directly accessible, as well as accessible from the main corporate site.

7.0 Audiences

7.1 The website will primarily be aimed at consumers and consumer organisations. Other stakeholders will include member companies and regulators such as Ofcom and Ofgem. Users can be generally broken down into the following groups:

- Consumers bringing complaints for consideration to our service
- Member companies, requiring information, support and possibly access to a secure area
- Other browsers looking for general information.

8.0 Requirements

8.0.1 Tenders will not be considered unless they meet the requirements of 8.1 and 8.2. 8.3 is a preferred option.

8.1 Accessibility

8.1.1 Usability and accessibility must be a priority and industry standards should be adopted as the minimum standard. This should include WAI and DDA compliance. "Browse aloud" should be considered as should the ability of the user to easily alter text colour, size, font, and background.

8.1.2 Users of the website may use operating or browsing systems other than internet explorer, such as MAC, Firefox and Opera. The site must support access from these and other platforms and browsers

8.2 Content Management

It is required that the full content of the website should be able to be managed in-house. This will include the facility to easily list and edit member companies in each sector, and be able to add website links.

See <http://www.otelo.org.uk/membercompanies.php>

8.2.1 We require a user-friendly Content Management System (CMS), which will allow changes to be easily made to:

- page content

- main and submenu headings
- the order of menus and submenus
- images

8.2.2 We need to be able to:

- upload and download documents
- make links to documents and external sites
- allow for multiple administrators

8.2.3 We need to be able to add additional sectors and extranets in-house, for example if a new area of business was developed – OS should be able to set up the main structure and content in house,

8.2.4 A website that can interact with our members' database (IRIS) would be beneficial

8.3 Extranets

8.3.1 There should be three specific areas for the following groups

- Otelco Members
- Energy Members
- Property Members

8.3.2 These sites will contain information specific to these groups including downloadable documents. Access to these areas is not required to be secure though the content will not be designed for consumer consumption.

9.0 Complaint form

9.1 There must be a facility for consumers with complaints to send in details of that complaint, via an easy to use on-line form. The form needs to capture details such as:

- Name and address (postcode finder/auto-fill function)
- Contact details (email /phone/mobile)
- Dates (in a day/month/year format)
- Free-text description of the complaint up to 3000 characters
- The facility to attach/upload supplementary documents in word or PDF

9.2 The completed form will be forwarded, as an email to the Ombudsman Services case management system, for consideration.

10.0 Emerging Media and other functionality

10.1 The website should use up-to-date technologies and user-friendly functionality. It should have the capacity to incorporate future services including the possibility of developing Social Media methodology, for example:

- Blog and micro-blog functions
- Capacity to include short video clips
- Able to support RSS feeds

- Free-text “ask a question” function which directs the user to answers in the FAQs.
- 10.2 The site must have the ability to host third party features, for example, from time to time we will commission third party agencies to carry out research on the functionality and ease of use of the website.
- 10.3 As a future option we require the site to support other facilities for members, for example, on-line registration/application and for it to be possible to interconnect this functionality with the OS database of members.
- 11.0 Support**
- 11.1 Technical support must be available within regular working hours.
- 12.0 Training**
- 12.1 Provision for staff training should be included in the proposed costs.
- 13.0 Design**
- 13.1 Agencies are invited to propose suitable design options.
- 13.2 Colour palettes should be in-line with corporate branding.
- 13.3 Logos are available upon request.
- 13.4 Agencies will be expected to understand the routes taken by other ombudsman schemes such as the Financial Ombudsman www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk and the SPSO www.spsso.org.uk, however we would welcome examples of best practice from organisations in the private and third sectors who are also involved in membership schemes.
- 14.0 Selection criteria**
- 14.1 When selecting the agency the factors, which will consider include:
- relevant experience in the sector
 - agency background and references
 - examples of previous work
 - ability to understand our business and its customers
 - creative concepts and innovation
 - understanding of accessibility requirement and our needs
 - able to complete within the required timescale
 - cost
 - ease of use of CMS
 - the availability of technical support.
 - overall practicality and usability of the proposed solutions

15.0 Budget

15.1 We will expect tenders to be proportionate to the needs of the business. A budget will be established to meet the costs of a suitable proposal.

16.0 Deadline

16.1 Please apply by email to rchorley@ombudsman-services.org

16.2 Tender documents must be received by 12 noon on 30 June 2010

16.2 Contact Rachel Chorley on rchorley@ombudsman-services.org or 01925 431 010 for further information.

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