

Property Sector Liaison Panel –Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

The Property Sector Liaison Panel (SLP) is an advisory panel to identify emerging trends and issues, to improve standards, maintain and promote effective complaint handling in the sector. The relationship exists to ensure that Ombudsman Services and the sector are well informed through the sharing of concerns, information, ideas and proposals.

2 Membership

Membership of the Property SLP will be as determined from time to time by Ombudsman Services and will consist of representatives from;

- Estate agents
- Letting agents
- Managing agents
- Landlords.
- RICS Surveyor
- RICS Scotland Surveyor
- RICS UK
- Surveyors
- Green deal provider
- Chief Ombudsman
- Ombudsman Services – Relationship manager
- Other representatives from Ombudsman Services may attend as appropriate.

Baroness Jones will chair the panel, to be reviewed after 12 months.

The Chief Ombudsman will chair the panel in the chair's absence.

Attendance at the meetings may be extended to others who are not SLP members at the Chair's discretion, where it is deemed desirable to do so and where the expertise or contribution of those others would be of benefit to the meeting, task or issue in hand.

Appointment to the SLP will be undertaken in accordance with any procedure required by Ombudsman Services.

3 Role

The Property SLP:

- To act as a key forum for Ombudsman Services to raise and inform on matters relevant to all stakeholders within the sector.

- To consider and advise Ombudsman Services on key policies and issues relating to the sector and to developments in regulation of the sector, including any relevant Code of Practice.
- To advise Ombudsman Services on the general effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution as a means of strengthening trust and confidence in service provision.
- To receive updates on the work of Ombudsman Services together with the relevant sector reports.
- To discuss the means of improving the signposting arrangements between companies and Ombudsman Services and other relevant bodies to ensure a successful customer experience.
- To discuss trends in contacts, complaints and remedies to assist in the early identification of concerns and solutions, assist in forecasting and to feedback to the sector.
- To act as a forum where matters relating to consumer information and education about dispute resolution and Ombudsman Services can be discussed.

4 Operation and administration

4.1 Frequency of meetings

The SLP will normally meet at least three times a year, with provision for additional meetings as necessary.

The Secretary will be responsible for arranging the date and location of the meetings.

4.2 Agenda

Members may submit items for inclusion in the agenda, together with any supporting documentation, to the chair at least two weeks before the date fixed for a regular meeting.

The finalised agenda and associated papers will be circulated by the secretary to representatives one week in advance of the date of a meeting.

4.3 Notes of the meetings

The chair shall summarise the outcome of the discussions, detailing the opinions expressed by all members and state for the secretary the decisions agreed and further actions required.

Notes and a decision / action log will be maintained and updated by the secretary.

Ombudsman Services will provide the administrative support for the SLP.

5 Confidentiality

In order to maximise the spirit of openness and free exchange of views, members must not misuse or divulge any information that is discussed on a confidential basis at a meeting of the sector liaison panel.

6 Responsibility

The Chief Ombudsman has responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this terms of reference.

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Lewis Shand Smith
Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman

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