

About Ombudsman Services: Property

We resolve consumer complaints about property firms that have signed up to our service. These include:

- chartered surveyors that are members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS);
- surveyors;
- residential managing agents, including those that are members of the Association of Residential Managing Agents (ARMA);
- residential letting agents, including those that are members of the National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS) or the UK Association of Letting Agents (UKALA); and
- other property professionals.

We are also approved by the Office of Fair Trading as an estate agents redress scheme.

Our service is free to use for consumers.

Who can use our service?

You can use our service if:

- a property firm has provided (or is contracted to provide) a service to you;
- you have relied upon the services of this property firm;
- you are the buyer or potential buyer or seller or a residential property; or
- you are representing a customer who meets the above conditions.

Who is your complaint about?

A list of the firms that have signed up to our service is available on our website:

<http://www.ombudsman-services.org/memberlists/property/>

When can we become involved?

Before contacting us you must give the property firm a reasonable opportunity to resolve the complaint. The firm will usually give information on its website about how to complain or will provide you with a written copy of its complaints procedure.

If you receive the property firm's final response to a complaint and you remain unhappy, or eight weeks pass and the complaint is unresolved, we may be able to help.

What can we handle?

The types of complaints that we can deal with include:

- an apparent breach of obligations;
- unfair treatment;
- avoidable delays;
- failure to follow proper procedures;
- rudeness or discourtesy;
- not explaining matters; and
- poor or incompetent service.

Putting things right

Our role is to resolve the complaint appropriately for you. We are not here to punish firms when things go wrong. Our decisions are binding on the firm and enforceable in court.

We can require:

- An apology
- An explanation of what went wrong
- A practical action to correct the problem
- A financial award up to £25,000

We may also make recommendations to the firm so that it can avoid similar problems happening again.

If you accept our decision it becomes final and the firm has 28 days to put the remedy in place. If you reject our decision you lose the right to the resolution we have offered, but you retain your right to take your complaint elsewhere, such as the courts.

Contact us

You can contact us by visiting our website (www.ombudsman-services.org) and completing an online complaint form or general enquiry form.

You can also call us Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, or you can email us, fax us, textphone or write to us.

Our contact details:

Phone: 0330 440 1634

Fax: 0330 440 1635

Textphone: 0330 440 1600

Email: enquiries@os-property.org

Post: Ombudsman Services: Property
PO Box 1021
Warrington WA4 9FE