

## Independent redress scheme

Should the conciliation process fail, the trader and code sponsor must allow you access to the independent redress scheme. The scheme will vary from sponsor to sponsor.

It could, for example, involve taking a case to arbitration or the use of an Ombudsman Scheme. Whichever method is offered will have important and different legal implications which must be fully explained to you at the outset.

## Making a complaint / seeking advice

Consumer Direct is a national consumer advice service, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry. A factsheet giving guidance on making a complaint is available from their website at [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

Advice is also available by calling **08454 04 05 06** in the areas where the service has already been launched.

If Consumer Direct is not available in your area, please call the trading standards service of your local council.

In Northern Ireland, please call ConsumerLine on **0845 600 62 62** or go to [www.consumerline.org](http://www.consumerline.org)

## Contacting the OFT

The OFT is not able to offer advice or resolve your individual dispute.

If your complaint involves a breach of any of the consumer protection laws it would be to the benefit of all consumers if you send the details to us.

Please write to:

**OFT Enquiries Unit**  
**Office of Fair Trading, Fleetbank House,**  
**2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX**

Telephone **08457 224499** or  
 email [enquiries@oft.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@oft.gov.uk)

If you are dissatisfied with how the code sponsor or trade body has dealt with your complaint we would be interested to hear from you.

Please write to

**OFT Approved codes**  
**Office of Fair Trading, Fleetbank House,**  
**2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX**

or email us at [consumercodes@oft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consumercodes@oft.gsi.gov.uk)

## OFT Approved codes website

All the latest news, publications and further information about the OFT's Consumer Codes Approval Scheme including details of new and current OFT Approved codes can be found here: [www.oft.gov.uk/codes](http://www.oft.gov.uk/codes)

This information is available in other formats and other languages on request. Please ring 0800 389 3158

Published by the Office of Fair Trading  
 Printed in the UK on paper comprising  
 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp  
 Product code OFT776  
 Edition 03/05 Printed 03/05/10,000  
 Crown copyright 2005

# Making a complaint

under the OFT Consumer Codes  
 Approval Scheme



## What does the OFT Approved code logo mean?

If the trader you are dealing with is a member of a trade body that is signed up to an OFT Approved code of practice they are committed to offering you a higher level of customer service than is required by law and you can feel secure in the fact that you will be treated fairly.

The Office of Fair Trading's (OFT) Consumer Codes Approval Scheme is a new approach to business self regulation.

The OFT has the power to approve consumer codes of practice which meet the OFT's stringent core criteria and set challenging standards of customer service. The OFT will only approve and promote codes that are shown to safeguard and promote consumers' interests beyond the basic requirements of the law.

The core criteria include the provision of clear pre-sales information, fair contracts, and the availability of an independent redress process if problems arise.

After gaining approval it is up to the code sponsor of an OFT Approved code to continually monitor their code's performance, and report the results to the OFT on an annual basis. The individual code's performance is also monitored directly by the OFT through a variety of means including the monitoring of complaints.

## Who should I complain to if something goes wrong?

### Firstly: the trader.

By signing up to an OFT Approved code a trader has made the commitment to a high standard of customer care. It is not a guarantee of quality of goods, service or workmanship but it does mean that you are dealing with a trader who will treat you fairly if problems arise.

The trader must give you:

- full details of who to contact in the company if you are dissatisfied
- details of how to follow their complaints procedure
- information on how long it is likely to take before they will be able to give you a response, and
- what to do if your complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily.

### Secondly: if the problem is unresolved you can contact the code sponsor or trade body.

The code sponsor administers the code of practice that the trader is signed up to. The code sponsor's logo is displayed next to the OFT Approved code logo which you will find on all marketing material used by the trader. Contact details for the code sponsor are in the complaints handling information that will be given to you by the trader as well as the code itself which should be freely available from the trader.

The code sponsor can give you information about the conciliation service which is the next step. Conciliation is a method of trying to get both parties to reach an agreement by using a third party to liaise between them. Many disputes can be resolved by using conciliation, but if agreement is still not reached, under an OFT Approved code you have the right to use an independent redress scheme.

