

How do I make an effective complaint to my service provider?

- 1 Use the company's formal complaints procedure
- 2 Be clear, refer to events in a logical order and ask clearly for what you want
- 3 Be considerate, patient and prepared to compromise

Whichever company you are making a complaint to, CEDR believes these tips will help you to make an effective complaint:

1 Raising your complaint properly

- Make a complaint directly to the company as soon as possible, using their formal complaints process. You can ask the company how to do this, or likely find instructions online – sometimes you will find information about this in your terms and conditions.
- CEDR recommends writing to/emailing the company, at least initially, and you should keep a record of each time you do this.
- Keep regular notes. A timeline can be helpful with this, and you can add to it every time you speak with the company. Make sure you write down dates and what was discussed as part of this.

➤ Why?

- By raising the issue formally, the company will be given the opportunity to make things right and it could result in a fairly quick resolution once they know what's wrong.
- Keeping notes will mean that remembering the details of the complaint will be easier – this can help you accurately explain what's happened so far when speaking with the company.
- You may need to complain for a certain period of time before you can approach an ADR body, like CEDR. Keeping a record will mean you can show you have tried to resolve it before you bring your dispute to ADR.

2 Making sure you are clear

- Breakdown your complaint into points and the remedies you would like for each one. Try to remain consistent about the resolution you are asking for.
- Whenever you talk with the company, try to recap the things you have talked about at the end of the call/letter/email.
- If you miss something or do not understand a point raised by the company, ask for clarification. Ask the company to explain how it will carry out any remedy offered.

➤ Why?

- Breaking down your complaint avoids different problems and remedies getting mixed together.
- Recapping what you have talked about, or asking the company to explain how it will carry out a remedy, allows you to check that the company have understood what you are asking for and that you have understood what the company have said.

3 Being considerate and patient

- When talking to a company, try to be calm and polite. The person you are speaking with may only be seeing your issue for the first time, and is also likely not the cause of your problem.
- Avoid demands and raising your voice, and be prepared to compromise.

➤ Why?

- Being calm and polite is likely to lead to a more productive conversation.
- It's understandable if you are frustrated, but it can prevent effective dialogue that may stop you from getting things resolved as quickly.
- You may need to compromise, accepting that a company might not be able to do or give you everything you would like.