



# Complaint Handling

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## England, Wales & Northern Ireland

All **property agents and professionals** carrying out estate, lettings and property management work in the property industry have a legal responsibility to join an authorised redress scheme and signpost this to their customer. By joining the Property Redress Scheme (PRRS), businesses can comply quickly and easily with this requirement.

**Property Redress Scheme (PRRS)** membership is also open to other property professionals, adding value to their business and giving their customers (consumers) peace of mind that a complaint can be resolved by an independent third party who have experience in dealing with consumer complaints. However, please be aware that the disciplinary process for property professional members differs to the one for property agents.

(See our guide to 'Complying with decisions' in our [resources section](#)).

A 'consumer' is a person who uses the services provided by the property agent or property professional.

- Estate agent consumers will be both sellers and buyers of a property
- Letting agent consumers will be both landlords and tenants
- Property management agent consumers will generally be the freeholder, head leaseholder or residents' management company
- Property professional consumers will be any person that uses the services of our member companies, such as inventory clerks, cleaners, company landlords, painters/decorators and gardeners
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**When making a complaint**, our members and consumers will both benefit from our simple three stage process to resolve the complaint:

1. The member will first be given an opportunity to resolve the complaint directly
2. We will then offer a negotiated resolution service
3. If needed, we will make a formal decision on the complaint
- 4.

When making a decision the PRRS will consider any terms of business agreed by both parties, all relevant laws and, where appropriate, any code of practice the member has agreed to.

**For us to consider a complaint** - there is a set of criteria which must be met including:

1. The agent/professional must be a PRRS member which can be [checked here](#)

2. The person making the complaint must show that a formal written complaint was sent to the member within 12 months of the incident relating to the complaint occurring
3. The person making the complaint allowed the member a minimum of 8 weeks to investigate the complaint and respond
4. Once the member has provided a final response, which person making the complaint remains unsatisfied with or no response was provided, a complaint can be raised with the PRS within 12 months of the dated the formal letter of complaint was sent to the member. This process is clearly set out in our ['How to make a complaint' guide](#)
- 5.

For more detailed information on the criteria and our process please see the Conditions of Complaints and Terms of Reference in our [resources here](#).

Some important points to note:

Language - complaints are expected to be raised using English. We have a translation service at the bottom of each page of the website which provides a translation of the information on the page in various languages.

Withdrawing from the procedure - consumers can withdraw from the complaints process at any time.

Costs - there is no cost to consumers to raise a complaint with the PRS and direct costs a consumer may incur in advising them on dealing with the complaint will not be awarded by the PRS.

Receiving full complaint file - consumers and members will be informed when we have received the full complaint file, at this point we will attempt an early resolution on the case will proceed to the proposed decision. A final decision on the complaint will be achieved within 90 days of this date unless there are extenuating circumstances of which we will communicate to the parties.

Consumers must note that the result of our complaint procedure may differ from an outcome received at court and the consumer should take their own advice on this point before deciding whether to use our process or issue a court claim.

All time limits are in place to allow us to deal with complaints fairly and they are recognised as reasonable under the Arbitration Act 1996.