

Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA) and the Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association (ITSPA) appoint Ombudsman Services

Ombudsman Services to provide complaints handling scheme for members of the Internet Services Providers' Association and the Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association

Ombudsman Services has been awarded contracts to provide an alternative dispute resolution scheme for providers registered with two communications bodies and their customers:

- Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association (ITSPA) – the national trade body for companies who offer next generations communications services
- Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA) – the UK trade association for providers of Internet services

As of 1 January 2016, Ombudsman Services has replaced the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS) in this role. CISAS will continue to deal with complaints currently logged with them, but will be taking on no new cases.

Under the scheme, customers who have an unresolved complaint with member companies of ITSPA and ISPA can ask that their case be referred to Ombudsman Services: Communications who will try to resolve the dispute. Using the ombudsman will be free to the customer.

Commenting on the news, Chief Ombudsman Lewis Shand Smith said: *“Ombudsman Services’ roots began with resolving telecommunication complaints. We are the largest communications dispute resolution service and are delighted to be working with the companies that provide services through ITSPA and ISPA.*

“We look forward to further helping them to improve their customer service models, as well as offering customers our free and impartial resolution service should they encounter a problem with internet telephony products or services.”

ITSPA Chair, Eli Katz said: *“ITSPA is delighted to now be able to offer our members membership of Ombudsman Services. This is a benefit of ITSPA membership, which comes at no extra cost to member companies. All communications providers must, under law, provide their customers with access to an independent dispute resolution scheme and we are pleased to be working with Ombudsman Services to ensure that our members are compliant.”*

ISPA Secretary General Nicholas Lansman said *“Free ADR is an important member benefit for ISPA members and their customers, giving peace of mind should a dispute arise. We are pleased to be working with Ombudsman Services.”*

Ombudsman Services is an alternative dispute resolution scheme set up for consumers to turn to when a complaint they have made directly with a company has reached a deadlock stage, or has been on-going for eight weeks or more.

The role of Ombudsman Services is to investigate complaints fairly by taking into account both sides of the story and making a recommendation on what, if any, action should be taken to resolve the complaint. So that complaints can be handled effectively, companies using the scheme agree to provide the necessary information and to abide by the ombudsman’s decision.

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About Ombudsman Services

- Ombudsman Services operates the consumer ombudsman, an online service which can be accessed at www.consumer-ombudsman.org or by telephone at 0333 300 1620.
- Ombudsman Services is a not for profit, private company limited by guarantee.
- Ombudsman Services runs national, private sector ombudsman schemes which provide independent dispute resolution for the communications, energy, property, copyright licensing sectors, the Green Deal, the ABFA, Reallymoving.com and Which? Trusted Traders scheme.
- Ombudsman Services provides an expert dispute resolution service. The service focuses on encouraging early-agreed resolution wherever possible and does not charge a fee to consumers so it's able to offer access to redress for consumers to resolve their complaints without proceeding to the civil courts.
- Ombudsman Services is a full member of the Ombudsman Association (OA) and adheres to its principles.
- Further information about Ombudsman Services can be found at www.ombudsman-services.org.

About ITSPA

ITSPA is the UK's trade association for VoIP and next generation communication services providers. Founded in 2004, we represent the views of over 90 members ranging from the largest Tier one operators to the new entrants in the telecommunications sector. Aside from Internet telephony, our members offer video, instant messaging and other "over the top" services to millions of customers in both the business and residential communication markets.

About ISPA

The Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA UK) has around 200 members and is the voice of the UK Internet industry to policy makers, the media and the public and is now in its 20th year. For a list of members or other information about ISPA, please visit our website on www.ispa.org.uk or follow us on twitter @ISPAUK. You can also reach us by phone on 0203 397 3308.