

How to make a good complaint

When you purchase a service or goods you are entitled to certain things, such as a good quality products, timely service and good customer care.

See [Consumer advice](#) for more information on your rights as a consumer and what to do if you have problems with products or a service.

When to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service or goods that you have received you can make a complaint, or in some cases you may be able to return the goods and secure a refund.

You should check with the organisation directly to see if they have a complaints procedure, which you can usually find on their website. There are some useful tips below on how to write a good complaint letter to make sure you get all of the issues across effectively and get the best outcome.

There are organisations in Newcastle who can help you if goods or services that you have bought are dangerous or unsafe.

If you believe you have been the victim of unfair trading practices such as cold calling, online scams, overcharging for work or deliberately misleading you, check the [Citizens Advice](#) website for advice..

If you have concerns about the safety of a product you can also report it to [Trading Standards – Newcastle City Council](#).

How to complain effectively

Most organisations have a customer services department that you can direct any issues or complaints to, if not contact the head of the organisation.

1. Act quickly. This gives the organisation an opportunity to try to fix the problem for you.
2. Keep all evidence of your transaction with the organisation. This could include receipts, dates and times of phone calls, a record of who you spoke to on each occasion, quotations contracts, emails, a guarantee or warranty.
3. Any supporting evidence of your complaint. This could include photographs or video footage of any damaged products

There are four main ways to complain:

- in person
 - by telephone
 - by letter
 - online or via email
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Complaining by Telephone

1. Have all of the information that you need to hand
 2. Speak to the person in charge; the manager or owner.
 3. Explain what the problem is calmly and firmly.
 4. Make notes of the date, time and who you speak to.
 5. Make notes of what was said during your telephone conversation
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Complaining in Writing

It may be easier to make your complaint in writing if you do not wish to speak to the company. Writing a letter or email can also help you to document your complaint in case you need to refer back to it in the future, or use it as evidence for a further complaint.

Writing a good complaint letter

1. Be concise and stick to the facts. The letter should be around 1 page of A4.
 2. Include essential information relating to the product or service that you bought. For example; the date/time of the issue, location, name of person on duty, name of product, what the problem was, your account number, model number, price, warranty information and reference number.
 3. Explain clearly what the problem is
 4. Be polite. Explain the negative effect the problem has had for you and how disappointed you are in the service, but avoid making any personal attacks on the company or staff.
 5. Explain what you would like to be done to fix the problem or issue. This could include an apology, a refund, a repair or a replacement product.
 6. Include a date by when you would like to receive a response by. This is usually around 14 days.
 7. If the goods or services did not meet the legal requirements you can also mention the **Supply of Goods & Services Act** and the **Sale of Goods Act**.
 8. Include the details of any additional expenses you have incurred as a result of the problem. Support this claim with receipts
 9. Include copies of any relevant evidence in your letter such as your receipt or bill; or photos. Keep the original documents in case you need them as evidence in the future.
 10. Include your contact details, name, address, telephone number and email address if you have one so they know how to contact you to resolve the problem.
 11. If sending your letter by post send it by recorded delivery so you have record of when your sent the letter
 12. If sending your complaint by email keep copies of all of the emails that you send and receive.
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Following your complaint

The organisation may offer to settle your complaint. This may be in the form of an apology, a refund, a repair or a replacement. You can either choose to accept this offer or continue to negotiate.

Please note if you accept this offer you will probably not be able to ask for more compensation later on. If you are uncertain whether or not to accept the offer, you should seek further advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint

If you are not happy with the response that you receive from the organisation there are other ways that you can complain.

Add the details to your complaint relating to your letter or phone calls which have not helped to resolve the problem. You could try to contact the complaint or customer service department again, or ask to speak to the manager.

Some organisations or professions are governed by an independent body who you can direct your complaint to. For example

- Television Service – [Ofcom](#)
 - Trades people – [Trading Standards Institute](#)
 - Legal services – [Legal Ombudsman](#)
 - Consumer Rights – [Trading Standards](#) or [Citizens Advice Newcastle](#)
 - Finance – [The Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\)](#)
 - Care – [Care Quality Commission](#)
 - NHS Health Services – [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#)
 - Energy Services – [Ombudsman Services: Energy](#)
 - Social Care – [Local Government Ombudsman](#) or [Complaints and Customer Relations](#)
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What happens if my complaint is still not resolved?

If your complaint is still not resolved, or the organisation does not reply to your complaints, you may consider taking legal advice and taking action in the small claims court.

- Contact your [local court](#) for information on how to start your claim. You can also start a claim online at Her Majesty's Courts Service's [Money Claim Online](#).
- [Seek independent legal advice.](#)
- If someone has been injured as a result of the work or if you believe a criminal offence may have been committed, you should contact [Citizens Advice](#) for further advice before allowing the trader to rectify the problem.

Court should be viewed as a last resort and even if your claim is successful there may be costs involved.

Other useful information

Resolver is a free website that helps you make complaints online. The website will take you through the complaints process step by step, explain your rights to you and help you write an email of complaint.

Which? Consumer Rights provide a comprehensive list of template letters of complaint that you can use free of charge.

Last updated: May 7, 2020

Useful Organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

Email: citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk

Website: <http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 229 2750

Address: 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)

Email: consumer.queries@fca.org.uk

Website: www.fca.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 111 6768

Address: 25 The North Colonnade, E14 5HS

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Website: www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1082.aspx?CategoryID=68&SubCategoryID=153

Telephone: 0800 032 0202

Address: Freepost PALS,

Complaints and Customer Relations – Newcastle Adult Social Care

Email: ComplaintsAdults@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/information-and-support-adults/contact-care-and-support-adults/make-a-complaint>

Telephone: 0191 277 7427

Address: Complaints and Customer Relations, Adult Care and Support, NE1 8PA

Trading Standards – Newcastle City Council

Email: tradingstandards@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/tradingstandards>

Telephone: 0191 277 7427

Address: Newcastle Civic Centre, NE1 8QH

Care Quality Commission

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Website: www.cqc.org.uk

Telephone: 03000 616 161

Address: CQC National Customer Service Centre, NE1 4PA

Ofcom

Website: www.ofcom.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 3333 or 020 7981 3040

Address: Riverside House, SE1 9HA

Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS)

Email: complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 023 4567

Address: South Quay Plaza, E14 9SR

Complaints Officer – Newcastle City Council

Email: complaints@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/contact-the-council/complaints/make-a-complaint>

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Complaints at Newcastle, NE99 2BN

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Address: PO Box 4771, CV4 0EH

Citizens Advice

Website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

Telephone: 03444 111 444

Address: Citizens Advice, EC1A 4HD

Trading Standards Institute

Website: <http://www.tradingstandards.uk/advice/index.cfm>

Telephone: 03444 111 444

Legal Ombudsman

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 03444 111 444

Address: PO Box 6806, WV1 9WJ

Money Claim Online

Email: ccbc@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.moneyclaim.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1057

Address: 4th Floor St Katharine's House, NN1 2LH

Ombudsman Association

Email: secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org

Website: www.ombudsmanassociation.org

Telephone: 0300 123 1057

Address: Leonard House, BR1 1RJ

Ombudsman Services: Energy and Communication

Email: enquiry@ombudsman-services.org

Website: <http://www.ombudsman-services.org>

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Address: PO Box 966, WA4 9DF

Resolver

Website: <http://www.resolver.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0330 440 1624

Which? Consumer Rights

Email: support@which.co.uk

Website: <http://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights>

Telephone: 01992 822800

Address: 2 Marylebone Road, NW1 4DF

Related Articles

[Complaining to Adult Services](#)

[Having your say about health services](#)

[Your Consumer Rights](#)

[Where to get legal advice](#)

[Fraud and scams](#)

[How to challenge a benefit decision](#)