



# Home Renewables Ombudsman

## Dispute Resolution Process

Home Renewables  
Ombudsman  
York House  
23 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6UJ  
[disputes@hro.org.uk](mailto:disputes@hro.org.uk)  
0207 981 0850

## Contents

Definitions.....	3
Introduction.....	5
Defining a Complaint .....	5
Step 1 - Contact the HRO Accredited Business .....	5
Step 2 - Check if we can help you .....	6
Step 3 - Submit your Complaint.....	6
Step 4 - Early Resolution.....	7
Step 5 - Adjudication / Ombudsman .....	7
The Ombudsman .....	7
Step 6 - Delivering the remedy.....	8
Complaint handling feedback.....	8
Contact Us .....	8

## Definitions

### **Adjudicator**

This is the person employed or contracted by HRO to make a decision to resolve the Complaint.

### **ADR**

This means Alternative Dispute Resolution, a method for resolving Complaints without taking court action.

### **Case Handler**

This is the person employed or contracted by the HRO to manage the handling of a Complaint.

### **Companion**

A representative approved by the Consumer to act on their behalf.

### **Complaint**

An expression of dissatisfaction about an HRO Accredited Business submitted to the HRO by a Complainant

### **Complainant**

A Consumer or Companion who registers a Complaint with the HRO. This includes any references to “you” or “your”.

### **Consumer**

An individual or individuals acting for purposes that are wholly or mainly outside that individual’s trade, business, craft or profession.

### **Consumer Protection Scheme**

An HRO recognised scheme which sets out high standards of consumer protection that an HRO Accredited Business must abide by. (Currently RECC and EVCC).

### **CTSI**

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute, the Government appointed Competent Authority for approving and auditing ADR bodies.

### **Dispute**

A Complaint where there is disagreement over the issues raised between the parties.

### **EVCC**

The Electric Vehicle Consumer Code for Home Chargepoints administered by REAL. A consumer code for installers offering to domestic consumers.

### **Feedback**

A Complaint which is not a dispute and/or where the Complainant is not seeking a specific resolution.

### **Green Energy Technology**

The renewable energy technologies and electric vehicle chargepoints covered by the HRO.

**HRO**

The Home Renewables Ombudsman scheme administered by REAL. This includes any references to “We”, “Our” or “Us”.

**HRO Accredited Business**

A business that is part of the Home Renewables Ombudsman scheme by belonging to an HRO recognised Consumer Protection Scheme.

**Ombudsman**

An independent individual who investigates the facts and evidence of a case after an adjudication decision has been rejected by a consumer or HRO accredited business. After reviewing it, the Ombudsman will issue a final decision. If it is accepted by the Consumer, it is binding on both parties. If it's rejected, a consumer can pursue the Complaint through court action.

**REAL**

Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd, who administer the HRO.

**RECC**

The Renewable Energy Consumer Code administered by REAL. A consumer code for installers selling or leasing small scale renewable energy technologies to domestic consumers.

**Related Product**

Any product supplied which will be connected or linked to a Green Energy Technology in any way. For example, a battery storage unit, voltage optimiser, immersion boost, or remote monitoring device.

## Introduction

This document describes how the HRO works and lets you know what to expect when registering a Complaint. The expertise of HRO Accredited Businesses, together with the high standards of service set out in our Consumer Protection Schemes, should ensure that the products you buy have been advertised, sold, installed and maintained correctly. However, occasionally problems do occur.

The HRO is approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) body.

In handling your Complaint, the HRO will not only review the evidence you provide but will also help identify what is missing and gather any further evidence if necessary. This approach can be especially helpful for Consumers who may require additional support to use our process.

Our process, built on the principles of reasonableness and fairness, has been designed to provide ADR that is cheaper, faster, and more effective than court action. However, nothing in the process or in the Consumer Protection Schemes prevents you from seeking a legal remedy through the courts if you consider this to be the more appropriate action.

## Defining a Complaint

For the purposes of this process, a Complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about an HRO Accredited Business, submitted to the HRO by a Complainant.

(Matters brought to HRO's attention, but not as a Complaint, are recorded as 'feedback'. See our [FAQs](#))

## Step 1 - Contact the HRO Accredited Business

First you need to give the HRO Accredited Business an opportunity to consider your Complaint. You should set out your concerns to the business in writing and give them a reasonable opportunity to investigate and resolve any issues.

If possible, let them know how you would like things to be put right. All HRO Accredited Businesses should have a clear complaint handling process in place, including how they can adapt this process to take account of any additional needs. They must provide you with a copy of this process when requested.

You should give the business a reasonable opportunity to resolve your complaint. What is reasonable might depend on the issue you have raised but should be a minimum of 4 weeks. If you have given them this opportunity and you are still not happy, or the business has not responded to you, then you can bring your complaint to us. (We can only investigate a Complaint within this 4-week period if the business has not responded to you within 2 weeks or has issued a final response that you are not happy with).

## Step 2 - Check if we can help you

We can only consider Complaints about an HRO Accredited Business. You can find more information about the types of Complaints we can and can't investigate in our [FAQs](#).

We are unable to consider a Complaint if:

- the value of the award would exceed £50,000; or
- a legally-binding judgement has already been made on the issues (though we will still record details for monitoring purposes).

The HRO covers HRO Accredited Businesses registered in the UK, however you do not need to be a UK resident to use our scheme.

Our scheme is straightforward and user-friendly, designed to be used without the need for legal representation, however, you can seek legal advice if you wish. It is completely free of charge for the Consumer.

## Step 3 - Submit your Complaint

Here is a step-by-step guide on how your Complaints will be handled.

The best way to register your Complaint with the HRO is to complete our online [Complaint Form](#). This allows you to provide details of your Complaint and the resolution you are looking for (e.g. fixing a product that isn't working, a deposit refund, provision of missing documentation, or an apology).

If you need any assistance completing the form or would rather complete a 'hard-copy' form, please call our team on 0207 981 0850 or see '[Contact Us](#)' for other ways to reach us. We are only able to accept Complaints in English and we conduct our procedure in English.

A Companion may register a Complaint on your behalf. In some cases we may contact you directly to confirm you are happy for us to communicate with your Companion directly.

When we receive your Complaint, to confirm we can help we will check that:

- your Complaint is about an HRO Accredited Business;
- you have previously raised your Complaint with the HRO Accredited Business in writing and given them a reasonable opportunity to resolve it; and
- you have followed any other relevant complaints processes.

At the point of registering your Complaint, and throughout our process, we will do our best to make any reasonable adjustments to our process should you need us to. For more information please see our [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#) on our website.

If we can help, we will confirm this in writing within 3 working days of receiving your Complaint and provide you with a Complaint reference number. At this stage we will ask you to provide us with all relevant documentation and evidence.

At the same time, we will notify the HRO Accredited Business that we have received your Complaint and ask them for any relevant evidence. As part of our investigation, we may contact relevant third parties involved in your Complaint to gather further evidence.

If we do not think that we are able to handle your Complaint we will explain the reasons why in writing and provide you with as much guidance as possible to help you get your issues resolved through an alternative route.

## Step 4 - Early Resolution

Our Case Handler will gather information from you and the HRO Accredited Business so that they have a full picture of what has happened. The aim of Early Resolution is to find a quick, fair and acceptable resolution to the Complaint between you and HRO Accredited Business.

The Case Handler will gather additional evidence if necessary and then discuss the Complaint with you and the HRO Accredited Business through telephone calls and in writing, to try and bring the Complaint to a resolution informally.

If we successfully come to an agreement, we will write to you about the legal effect of the resolution and what happens next. See [Delivering the Remedy](#) below.

## Step 5 - Adjudication / Ombudsman

If your Complaint is not resolved through Early Resolution, an Adjudicator will review your Complaint file from a neutral point of view to understand what has happened.

1. Your Case Handler will contact you explaining the role of the Adjudicator and what to expect.
2. The Adjudicator will review the Complaint file within 5 working days and decide whether to make further enquiries for additional evidence from you, the HRO Accredited Business, or independently as part of the investigation.
3. Once the Adjudicator is happy that they have all the information and evidence needed, they will make a decision which will be sent to you by email (unless we have agreed to use an alternative means) within 20 working days.
4. We will explain what the decision means for you and the HRO Accredited Business and you will have 10 working days to decide whether to accept or reject this decision.
5. If you and the HRO Accredited Business both accept the decision, the HRO Accredited Business will have 15 working days to comply with it. See [Delivering the Remedy](#) below.
6. If you or the HRO Accredited Business reject the decision it will be escalated to an Ombudsman to review (see below).

## The Ombudsman

If you or the HRO Accredited Business reject the decision, the Ombudsman can make a final decision.

1. The Ombudsman will review all the details of the Complaint and may:
  - request information, evidence or a response from the parties;
  - obtain evidence independently of the parties; and
  - give the consumer or HRO Accredited Business a final opportunity to present new information or evidence.
2. Subject to a request for additional information, a final decision will be issued within 15 working days. The decision will be sent by email unless we have agreed to use alternative means.
3. You will have 10 working days to decide whether to accept the final decision. Only you can accept or reject the Ombudsman's decision.

4. If you accept the Ombudsman's decision, the HRO Accredited Business will have 15 working days to comply. See [Delivering the Remedy](#) below.
5. If you reject the Ombudsman's decision, the Complaint will be closed and you will be advised to pursue the Complaint further through court action.
6. If you do not inform us that you accept or reject the decision within 10 working days, this is taken to be a rejection of the decision. The case is therefore closed, and the business is under no obligation to comply.

## Step 6 - Delivering the remedy

When you accept a decision the HRO Accredited Business will have 15 working days to comply with it. If it does not comply, we will contact them in accordance with our procedures to monitor compliance, and keep you updated. If non-compliance with the decision continues, we will refer the matter to the relevant Consumer Protection Scheme for compliance action in accordance with the terms and conditions of membership.

## Complaint handling feedback

We will do our best to handle every Complaint received through our process in a fair and timely manner. However, if you are not satisfied with how a Complaint has been handled by us, please let us know. See '[Contact Us](#)' or check our [FAQs](#) for information about our escalation procedure.

## Contact Us



Home Renewables  
Ombudsman  
York House  
23 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6UJ



[complaints@hro.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hro.org.uk)



0207 981 0850