

Dealing with call centres

This fact sheet contains a number of tips on how to deal with call centres:

- Always get the name of the person you speak to. Call centre staff are supposed to keep a '**log**' of your call, but are sometimes busy and forget to do so. If you have been made a promise and don't have a name to back it up, then that promise may count for nothing later.
- Ask the person you speak to for a **direct line**. This will save you time and money if you have to make more than one call to sort out your problem.
- As soon as the phone starts ringing, take a note of the time, so that you will know exactly how long you have been on-hold.
- **Take notes** of all your calls. Lawyers call these 'contemporaneous notes' - true notes made at the time things are happening - which can be very useful if you have a dispute with a company over the level of service it has provided.
- If you don't want **junk mail** - say so. Call centres employed by some banks and insurance companies play a recorded message warning that they may use your personal details 'for marketing purposes'. This means they want to send you junk mail. The Data Protection Act says that if you tell the company you don't want to receive such mailshots, they shouldn't send you any.
- If the first person you speak to can't help, demand to **speak to a more senior person**. Although companies will rarely admit it, senior staff in call centres can have more scope for solving problems caused by red tape. But don't ask to speak to the manager if your problem can be solved by a more junior member of staff. If you are wasting a manager's time with a trivial problem, then you are taking them away from somebody who *really* needs the help.
- If you're fed up with **cold calls**, then you can make them stop. You can register with the Telephone Preference Service by calling 0845 0700707 (registration is free). It can take up to a month for your registration to take effect, but after this you should receive less cold calls.
- Always **be polite**. Call centre staff are not the ones who make up the rules, and are not usually the ones who are to blame for poor service by the company they work for. There is nothing wrong with being assertive. But swearing on the phone, or acting in a way that is offensive or threatening, can be a criminal offence.

- If you're still not happy, write a letter. If you ask the person you speak to for the proper trading address of a company, then they have to give you this information by law. Address the letter to someone in charge. They will find it harder to ignore a problem which is in front of them in writing.

Further help

For more information about how to deal with customer service complaints, see What you can do if you have a problem with services, on the Adviceguide page, Consumer problems: options for the customer.

This fact sheet is produced by [Citizens Advice](#), an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. It is intended to provide general information only and should not be taken as a full statement of the law on the subject. Please also note that the information only applies to England and Wales.

This fact sheet was last updated on 1 October 2004, and is reviewed regularly. If it is some time since you obtained this fact sheet, please contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau to check if it is still correct. Or visit our website - www.adviceguide.org.uk - where you can download an up-to-date copy.