



NEW POLICY STATEMENT

CHANGES TO CIVEA COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE: ADVICE TO CLIENTS

We are pleased to report that a working group has conducted a review of the CIVEA complaints process. From 1 June, CIVEA will no longer process complaints related to Local Authority or Transport for London debts. Anyone wishing to escalate a complaint - after a final decision has been made - will be referred to the Local Authority Complaints procedure which operates under the independent jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The exercise was a response to some stakeholders that have been critical of the CIVEA complaints procedure for its lack of independence. The new procedure is entirely independent of the industry and presents a well-established route for anyone wishing to register a complaint. If accepted by the ombudsman, a complaint will be thoroughly investigated and CIVEA members will cooperate fully with the ombudsman service. The ombudsman decision will be binding on CIVEA members, which will ensure that standards of local authorities and enforcement agents are upheld.

The Ombudsman advised that legislation prevents him from formally adjudicating directly as part of the CIVEA process. The change that we are implementing does not require a change in the LGSCO statutory powers, which means we can implement the new process quickly. The new procedure is concise and does not add complexity.

There is no suggestion from the CIVEA Council that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the members' complaints processes. But we must respond to constructively to criticism.

All final decision correspondence sent to a complainant by members after the 1st June 2019, relating to Local Authority and Transport for London debts, will advise complainants of their right to adjudication via the Local Authority client or Transport for London.

CIVEA will continue to investigate complaints which relate to HM Courts & Tribunals Service, Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery and Highways England.

Complaints which have already been lodged with CIVEA before the 1st June 2019, and where the complainant is awaiting a response from the member or, where CIVEA is awaiting further documentation from the complainant, will continue to be investigated by CIVEA in accordance with current procedures.

Please direct inquiries to admin@civea.co.uk