

● UK RIGHTS GUIDE · JUNE 2026

THE ESCALATION HUB

Monday, 8 June 2026

Broadband Complaints and *your rights.*

How to complain and win. The exact escalation ladder, the money you are owed automatically, and the free ombudsman route, updated for the new rules that took effect in April 2026.

6

WEEKS, THEN ESCALATE

Down from 8, since April 2026

£10.34

PER DAY, LATE REPAIRS

Paid automatically

£0

COST OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Free, and binding on them

Written by **Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith**

Reviewed by **Adrian James**

Next review within 90 days

INDEPENDENT · FREE · NO SIGNUP

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SECTION 01 · AT A GLANCE

Your rights at a glance

QUICK ANSWER

Complain to your **provider first**, in writing, and keep the date. If it is not resolved within **six weeks**, or they issue a deadlock letter sooner, you can take it to a **free, independent ombudsman scheme whose decision binds the provider**. Some failures also pay you compensation automatically, with no claim needed.

KEY FACTS · VERIFIED JUNE 2026

Six weeks, not eight. For complaints raised on or after 8 April 2026, you can escalate to dispute resolution after six weeks, down from eight (Ofcom).

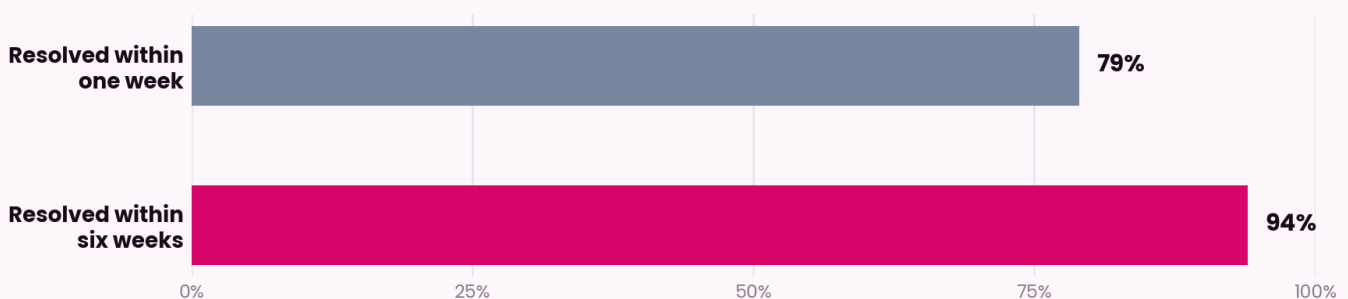
The deadlock shortcut. A deadlock letter from your provider lets you escalate immediately, without waiting.

Automatic compensation, from 1 April 2026: £10.34 per day for unrepaired total loss of service after two working days; £32.31 per missed engineer appointment; £6.46 per day for a delayed start (Ofcom scheme rates, uprated each April).

It is free and it binds them. The two Ofcom-approved schemes cost you nothing, and if you accept the decision, the provider must comply.

£63 million was paid out under the automatic compensation scheme in 2024 alone.

Most complaints are settled quickly, which is worth knowing before you start: a polite, well-documented complaint usually works. The escalation ladder on the next page is for the minority that drag on.



Share of complaints to major telecoms firms (Ofcom ADR review, 2022 to 2024 data)

How quickly complaints to the biggest telecoms firms get resolved. Ofcom's review found most are settled fast, which is why the escalation window was cut to six weeks.

SECTION 02 · THE LADDER

The escalation ladder

Four rungs, in order. Each one only opens if the one before it fails, and the clock starts the day you first complain, so always keep that date.

1 Complain to your provider, in writing.

Email or use their complaints form, say clearly what went wrong and what you want, and keep copies. Every provider must have a published complaints code.

2 Give them six weeks, or get deadlock.

For complaints raised on or after 8 April 2026, the provider has six weeks to put it right. If they conclude sooner that you cannot agree, ask for a deadlock letter, which unlocks the next rung immediately.

3 Go to the free ombudsman scheme.

Every provider belongs to one of two Ofcom-approved schemes, the Communications Ombudsman or CISAS. Your provider must tell you which. It is free, independent, and handled online.

4 Accept or decline the decision.

The scheme can order an apology, a fix, and a financial award, typically £50 to £100. If you accept, the provider is bound by it. If you decline, you keep your other legal routes.

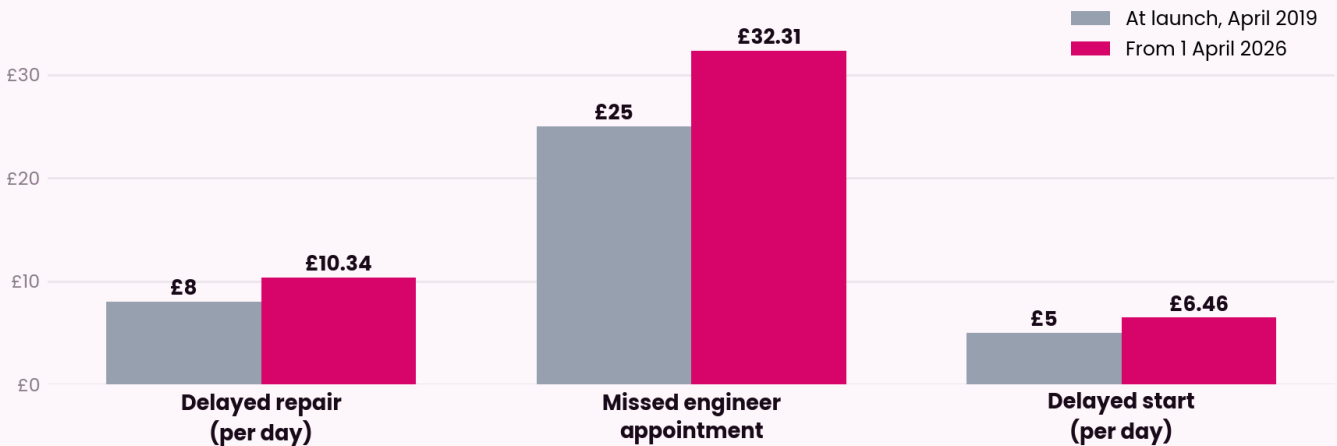
ONE THING OFCOM DOES NOT DO

Ofcom does not handle individual complaints, so writing to the regulator will not resolve yours. But registering your complaint with Ofcom still counts: the regulator logs every one, monitors patterns, and publishes the league tables that hold providers to account. Our companion report covers who tops those tables in 2026, and all our data reports live at broadbandswitch.uk/insights.html.

SECTION 03 · MONEY BACK

Compensation, paid automatically

For three specific failures you do not need to complain at all. Under Ofcom's automatic compensation scheme, the money is credited to your bill within 30 days, without you asking.



The three automatic compensation rates, at the scheme's 2019 launch and from 1 April 2026. Rates rise each April in line with inflation.

What triggers a payment

WHAT WENT WRONG	YOU GET
Total loss of service not fixed within 2 working days	£10.34 per day after that
Engineer misses an appointment, or cancels late	£32.31 per appointment
Service not started on the promised date	£6.46 per day late

The scheme is voluntary but covers the big names, including BT, EE, Plusnet, Sky, NOW, TalkTalk, Virgin Media, Vodafone, Utility Warehouse, Hyperoptic and Zen, together serving 91% of broadband customers. If the credit does not appear within 30 days, that itself is grounds for a complaint, and the ladder on page 3 applies. Worked examples and the fine print are in our full online guide at broadbandswitch.uk/broadband-compensation-and-service-failure.html.

SECTION 04 · THE OMBUDSMAN

Winning at the ombudsman

The two schemes work the same way from your side: free, online, independent, and binding on the provider if you accept the outcome. You will find them at commsombudsman.org and cedr.com/consumer/cisas, and your provider must tell you which one it belongs to. What decides cases is evidence, so build yours from day one.

- ✓ **Keep the paper trail.** Save emails, web chats and letters, and note the date, time and name for every phone call. The date you first complained sets the six-week clock.
- ✓ **Capture the problem.** Screenshots of speed tests, your minimum guaranteed speed from the order, photos of missed appointment slots, and your bills.
- ✓ **Say what you want.** A fix, an apology, money, or release from contract. Schemes respond best to a clear, reasonable ask.
- ✓ **Know the size of awards.** Typical financial awards run £50 to £100, plus putting the actual problem right, so calibrate expectations accordingly.

ALREADY COVERED ELSEWHERE ON BROADBANDSWITCH.UK

If your complaint is really about slow speeds, start with our speed guides at broadbandswitch.uk/broadband-speed-guide.html. If a mid-contract price rise is the grievance, see broadbandswitch.uk/in-contract-price-rises-2026.html. And if you are simply done with your provider, switching is one contact: broadbandswitch.uk/one-touch-switch-uk.html.

• THE STRONGEST COMPLAINT OF ALL

Sometimes the best escalation is leaving.

If your provider has burned through your goodwill, see who else reaches your address and what they charge.

[Compare live deals at your postcode →](#)

BROADBANDSWITCH.UK/COMPARE · 35+ PROVIDERS · 429 ISPS TRACKED

SECTION · REFERENCES

References and sources



Written by **Dr Alex J. Martin-Smith** (CMgr, MBA, LL.M, DBA), Lead Editor. Reviewed by **Adrian James**.
Published 8 June 2026, next review within 90 days. Every figure is sourced below and logged in our public corrections process at broadbandswitch.uk/corrections-log.html.

Every figure in this guide is backed by a publicly verifiable source, listed in APA 7th edition format. The six-week rule and the April 2026 compensation rates are the regulator's own published figures.

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REMEMBER

Complain in writing, keep the date, wait six weeks or get deadlock, then go to the free ombudsman. And if the relationship is beyond saving, compare your options at broadbandswitch.uk/compare.

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