



Waterways Ombudsman Job Role

To provide an impartial and independent dispute resolution service for unresolved complaints about the Members of the Waterways Ombudsman Scheme. The Scheme is a voluntary, private scheme and is **a certified ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) entity by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and a full voting member of the Ombudsman Association.**

The Waterways Ombudsman Committee oversees the work of the Ombudsman. It comprises two members appointed by the Canal & River Trust and up to 5 non-aligned members. The Rules of the Scheme, and other material including past Annual Reports, may be found at www.waterways-ombudsman.org

Waterways Ombudsman: Details and person specification

The current Waterways Ombudsman, Sarah Daniel, is retiring from office in Summer 2024 and the Waterways Ombudsman Committee now seeks to appoint her successor. Subject to negotiation, we would expect the new Ombudsman to commence at the end of June 2024 to enable 2-3 months overlap with the outgoing Ombudsman.

The Committee therefore seeks an individual that preferably has existing experience of working within public or private sector ombudsman schemes or other dispute resolution systems, who can work in an autonomous, self-directing way.

The number of complaints requiring investigation is not large by comparison to most other Ombudsman Schemes (about 10 annually). The post **is part-time** and fee paid at rate of £600 per day. Currently it requires round the equivalent of 4 days spread over a month, but this can vary.

The majority of the complaints relate to the Canal & River Trust and often concern boating (including arrangements for licencing, mooring and enforcement for residential, leisure and commercial boats). But complaints can arise from a wide range of issues: anything from property matters, or fishing to noise nuisance.

The Ombudsman will work part-time and may be based anywhere. The Ombudsman works alone and will be responsible for all aspects of the scheme, including:

- Providing advice and assistance to initial complaint enquiries by telephone, email and/or letter and considering early intervention if appropriate.
- Deciding whether complaints are in jurisdiction or signposting.
- Considering all complaints which are within jurisdiction and either resolving them informally or making a formal decision.

- Liaising with the Committee which oversees the work of the scheme. This will include preparation of reports and attending Committee meetings around 4 times per year, currently 3 virtually and 1 in person.
- Managing a positive relationship with Scheme members, other waterway organisations, and the media.
- Administration of the scheme and its website, including liaison with the Ombudsman Association and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, preparation of the annual report and summary reports for inclusion on the scheme's website.

Essential characteristics:

- A sound understanding of the distinctive features of good administration, and of an Ombudsman scheme. Knowledge of and adherence to the Nolan Principles of public life
- Extensive experience of complaint handling / investigations and dispute resolution
- Relevant senior experience in a legal environment, Ombudsman scheme, dispute resolution system or similar
- Excellent judgement, integrity and a strong sense of fairness
- Ability to analyse complex sets of written information, even in unfamiliar areas.
- Ability to identify matters falling outside the remit and being able to act accordingly.
- Good negotiating skills, including the ability to robustly defend well-evidenced conclusions.
- Ability to communicate clearly and succinctly in writing, on the telephone and face-to-face with a range of people and organisations, in a range of situations.
- As the Data controller you will have a sound knowledge of data protection principles and their application, ensuring the security of and appropriate destruction of documents in a timely manner.
- A sound knowledge of data protection principles and their application.
- Flexibility and a positive attitude to solving problems.
- Confidence to work alone and be self-directing.
- Good administrative and time-management skills.
- IT skills, including the ability to maintain the Waterway Ombudsman website.
- Excellent organisation skills and the ability to effectively manage competing priorities.

Desirable characteristic:

- Some awareness of boating and waterways issues
- Some awareness or experience of public law.