

**Response to “Council too slow to act against errant agent”
– ST Forum, 30 Sep 2013**

5 Oct 2013

Dear Editor

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) handles about 1,000 complaint cases a year. In each case, there is a need to observe a proper and due process to ensure a fair and impartial investigation.

2 On receipt of a complaint of wrongdoing, the CEA will direct the estate agent to address the substance of the complaint against its salesperson, by stopping any observable misconduct or wrongdoing and accounting for and verifying the pertinent facts before submitting a formal report to us. On receipt of the report, the CEA, including its legal department, will evaluate it to see if there is any breach of the law.

3 Where necessary, we may conduct our own checks and investigations to gather more facts before assessing whether the case warrants further action. The CEA may then initiate appropriate disciplinary action against the salesperson if the complaint is serious and substantiated.

4 A full investigation and evaluation of a case may require between four and nine months to complete, depending on whether the facts are contested, for instance. For more straightforward complaints, the time taken to conclude a case is much shorter.

5 In the case of Ms Lee's complaint, our customer service officer had given her the timeline based on a full investigation of the case. Following inquiries into the case, we note that the estate agent has rectified the issue as the advertisement by the salesperson was removed after the complaint was lodged with the CEA.

6 Nevertheless, we are continuing our investigations to assess and establish if there was any misconduct committed on the part of the salesperson in breach of the rules or law.

7 The CEA will be getting in touch with Ms Lee to update her on her case as soon as we complete our investigation.

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Council for Estate Agencies