

# PRS Members' Code of practice



PLAY | PERFORM | REPRODUCE

Your performing and mechanical rights service



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# Introduction

Welcome to the PRS Members' Code of Practice which sets out what you can expect from our service to you. It also explains how we can help each other and what to do if things go wrong.

**We're here  
for music**

# What does PRS do for you?

PRS represents over 75,000 songwriters, composers and music publishers, realising and safeguarding the value of music and protecting and administering our members' works whenever they are played or performed.

We ensure music users get easy and affordable access to our members' works through engaging and negotiating with them and collecting the money efficiently to ensure our members are rightfully paid for the use of their musical works covering live performances, TV and radio broadcasts, download, streams and everything in between. We then process and distribute the royalties effectively and quickly so that members get paid for their works when they are played or performed.

Our aim is to distribute more money, more often and at less cost; PRS distributes to its members all of the money it collects, with just an administration charge taken to cover its costs - one of the lowest administration rates in the world. Through ensuring efficient and effective administration, we are proud that we pay to our members nearly 90% of the revenue we collect and are always looking for ways to increase that percentage.

PRS is constantly improving the accuracy of royalty payments to its members in line with their expectations and requirements - and to ensure the fairest possible distribution royalties to all members.

**As a member you're part of a  
75,000+ strong community**

This Code governs PRS for Music's dealings with members of the Performing Right Society Limited ("PRS"). References to PRS for Music indicate the collective term for PRS and the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Limited ("MCPS").

Throughout the document we make reference to the membership agreement which refers to the Assignment, the PRS Memorandum and Articles and the PRS Rules and Regulations and policies made pursuant to them.

# How we make decisions

The PRS Board is elected by the PRS membership and consists of a wide-ranging representation of genres. The Board has overall responsibility for the conduct of the company's business and operations, including its strategic direction and the formulation of policy on behalf of, and in the best interests of, the broader membership. In particular, the Board is responsible for such matters as the formulation of distribution and licensing policy, setting the terms of admission to membership and termination of membership; and establishing and managing fair and transparent procedures for investigating complaints and other disputes that may arise between the PRS and its members.

The day to day execution and implementation of policy is conducted by *PRS for Music's* management in accordance with powers delegated to them by the PRS Board. Directors retain and exercise a supervisory role, ensuring that appropriate systems and other mechanisms are in place for overseeing and monitoring management activity and ultimately, the company's compliance with the many statutory, regulatory and legal obligations imposed on and assumed by it in relation to its members.

Regular reviews of PRS policies are conducted by the Board as a matter of course to ensure they remain effective for members and appropriate to the market situation.

When setting policy, these steps are followed:

1. The PRS Board reviews and approves policy recommendations made by management or by a mandated sub-committee of the Board.
2. As part of this review and where relevant, the Board takes into consideration any financial implications through assessing the impact on the membership and will recommend implementation plans as appropriate.
3. A full communication plan informing the affected membership of the Board-approved policy is undertaken using the usual communication channels including **M** magazine and the *PRS for Music* website.

# Our services

**You may wish to contact us about our services. You can:**

- raise an enquiry on your royalty statement
  - update your personal bank or address details
  - request information on our procedures or policies
  - update the information on your songs on our database
  - make a claim on unidentified performances of your works
  - send us information on live events
  - request assistance with our online services
  - change the territorial extent of your assignment
  - make a complaint
- among other things.

For all enquiries you should contact our Member Services team (see **Contact Us** on page14).

You should give us as much information as you can in relation to your enquiry, including your membership CAE number, the nature of the request and, where relevant, details on:

- the work/song
- station/broadcast
- programme title
- digital service
- venue
- product
- date/time of event/performance

It is important that you register all of your works so that we can identify if and when they are played or performed. The best way to register your works is online. You should visit our website in order to sign up for an online account

**[www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode)**

# Our service standards

## Notifications will be processed according to the following service standards:

- Works submitted Online or by Common Works Registration (CWR)\* will be registered and visible online to members within 2 working days of submission. Exceptions to this may occur where incorrect or incomplete agreement information has been provided, which may take up to 5 working days to process.
- Agreements will be registered in a maximum of 5 working days after the date of submission
- When we receive information that your music has been used, we may in some circumstances refer back to you with any further questions we have about your works
- If a work is subject to a conflict (i.e. duplicate claim or sample), then the relevant Duplicate Claims and Disputes, Samples and Infringements policies apply ([www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode))

## Requests to Member Services

All members' service requests will be answered or acknowledged within 5 working days.

The member will then be updated as progress is made, or as required by any specific deadlines or timescales agreed with the member directly.

In all your dealings with *PRS for Music*, you can expect our staff to be courteous and professional.

From time to time we upgrade our systems - if we have to suspend a service standard, we will notify you in advance of when this will occur, its likely duration and the impact on our service to you.

Our service standards are routinely subject to review and any changes and improvements to our turnaround targets will be updated through the *PRS for Music* website and other member communication channels.

<sup>1</sup>CWR (Common Works Registration) is an internationally agreed standard for the electronic exchange of work information. A CWR file is an electronic file containing multiple data records relating to publishers' information about their works.

# If things go wrong

## If things go wrong

We know that from time to time, despite our best efforts, things can go wrong.

We aim to rectify errors and resolve confusion as soon as possible. If you think there has been an error or we have dealt with things incorrectly, you can contact us by post, phone or email (please see **Contact Us** on page 14).

Distribution errors will be, wherever possible, corrected straight away. Where not, *PRS for Music* will resolve the matter as quickly as possible and always in accordance with our service standards.

## Making a complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the response or service you have received from us, you should follow our published complaints procedure which is set out below and which is also available on our website, [www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode).

We take all complaints seriously and view them as a way to better understand your needs and improve our service to you.

Our complaints procedure can be used if you believe that PRS:

- a) has not complied with its stated service standards (see page 7-8)
- b) has not applied its stated policy (all applicable policies are available online [www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode))
- c) has not applied a provision of this Code and/or our Complaints Procedure set out in this code
- d) has not followed due process in setting a policy and this has adversely affected the administration of your rights (see page 5)
- e) has not complied with a provision of your membership agreement

## How to complain

You should complete the Complaints form ([www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode)), provide any supplementary documentation and address your complaint to:

### PRS Complaints

#### Member Services

29-33 Berners Street

London

W1T 3AB

Upon receipt of the complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent back to you within five working days.

**We aim to rectify errors as soon as possible.**

# What happens next?

## What happens next?

Within 15 working days from receipt of your complaint, a full response will be sent. In cases where compensatory payment is sought, this response will also confirm the payment of compensation or will detail the reasons why we feel payment should not be made.

Hopefully this will resolve the complaint. However, if you are unhappy with the response, you should write within 60 days of the date of the response to the Head of Member Services stating the reasons why you are unhappy.

The Head of Member Services will respond in writing to you within five working days from receipt of your letter and will either:

- Confirm or vary the earlier decision and advise you of your right of redress; or
- Advise you that a further response will be given once further advice has been obtained and provide an indication of the likely timescale to reach a final decision.

If we have completed our investigation and provided a written response, we may confirm there is nothing more we can do under our Complaints Procedure.

## If you are still unhappy

If you have followed the set complaints procedure and we have confirmed that there are no further actions we can take, you may within six months of receipt of this confirmation refer the matter to an Independent Complaints Reviewer (Ombudsman). You may also refer the matter to the Ombudsman if eight weeks have passed since you originally raised a formal complaint and have not received a satisfactory response in accordance with the Complaints Procedure, and we have failed formally to notify you that there is nothing further we can do.

**The Ombudsman, *PRS for Music***  
**The Brew House, Wilderspool Park**  
**Greenalls Avenue, Warrington WA4 6HL**  
**E-mail: [enquiries@prsformusic-ombudsman.org](mailto:enquiries@prsformusic-ombudsman.org)**  
**Tel: 0330 440 1601 or 01925 532 111**

The Ombudsman has the power to investigate matters arising from the complaint or the complaints procedure, including whether due process has been followed. Following its investigation, the Ombudsman will communicate its recommendation to all parties and *PRS for Music* will follow recommendations made as far as possible.

The Ombudsman will not review company business, operations and policy within the remit and responsibility of the PRS Board, but may invite the Board to consider certain facts and circumstances in any subsequent review of policy or procedure.

# Your obligations

It is your responsibility to ensure you act in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the membership agreement<sup>2</sup> and you agree not to do anything likely to damage operations of PRS including:

- providing false or misleading information in relation to your works
- behaving in a rude or unpleasant way with our staff
- making unreasonable demands upon PRS's time and resources
- acting in a way likely to limit or prejudice the success of PRS and the interests of its members
- not providing reasonable assistance to PRS and co-operating with our staff and management in relation to the administration of your membership

In the rare cases where members do not comply with these, management will make every attempt to resolve the matter with the member but may be forced to take the following steps in conjunction with the PRS Board:

1. Write to the member formally notifying of the alleged breach, providing a full account of the specific infringements or misconduct and setting out expectations of the member;
2. The member will be invited to respond in writing to the formal notice within 30 days;
3. In instances where the member disputes the statement of facts contained within the formal notice or unreasonably refuses to co-operate, PRS will prepare a case incorporating the formal notice and any member response and will place it before the PRS Board;

<sup>2</sup> the membership agreement refers to the Assignment, the PRS Memorandum and Articles and the PRS Rules and Regulations which can be found at [www.prsformusic.com/memberscode](http://www.prsformusic.com/memberscode)

# Contact us

4. The Board will consider the response received from the member and will take such action as it sees fit, which may include the following:
  - a. withdrawal of the formal notice
  - b. a caution, warning or admonition
  - c. termination of membership<sup>3</sup>
5. The Board must put in writing its decision to the member and give reasons for it.

If the member concerned believes that the process referred to in paragraphs 1-5 above has not been followed in relation to them, they may make a complaint under the complaints procedure (see p. 9), and if they are still unhappy refer the matter to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has the final decision on whether PRS has followed the process and can recommend that the Board review its decision to terminate your membership, although it has no power to overturn the decision itself.

*Please note that a member who wishes to refer an unresolved complaint in connection with the termination of his membership to the Ombudsman will only be entitled to have that complaint heard by the Ombudsman if he first notified PRS of his complaint before the expiry of three months after the date on which he receives notice of termination.*

## Getting more information

We have a comprehensive website which is designed to provide answers to most of the questions you may have with regard to our policies, procedures and the administration of your music rights.

[www.prsformusic.com](http://www.prsformusic.com)

The services available online include:

- register/amend your works
- search our database
- manage duplicate claims
- report live performances
- check unpaid performances
- search cue sheets
- search online licensees

To register for an online account simply visit [www.prsformusic.com/signup](http://www.prsformusic.com/signup). From here you can select to open an account through completing our online request form. We will endeavour to authorise your application within 24 hours.

## a. Phone us

You can phone our Member Services team on **020 7306 4801 (writers)** or **020 7306 4848 (publishers)**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Calls charged at your provider's Local Call rate. Calls from mobiles may cost more.

A Member Services representative will answer your call. Calls may be recorded to provide an accurate and consistent service and for training and security purposes.

## b. Write to us by post or email

You can write to us using the contact details provided on any correspondence you have received from us. Alternatively, please write to:

**Member Services**  
**PRS for Music**  
**29-33 Berners Street**  
**London W1T 3AB**

You can email us at:  
**[writerquery@prsformusic.com](mailto:writerquery@prsformusic.com)**  
**(writers)**  
**[publisherquery@prsformusic.com](mailto:publisherquery@prsformusic.com)**  
**(publishers)**

<sup>3</sup> For full details see the provisions laid down in PRS Rules and Regulations rules 3, 4, 5 and 6.

PRS for Music  
29-33 Berners Street  
London W1T 3AB

[www.prsformusic.com](http://www.prsformusic.com)

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