

CREDIT RATING

Many people have difficulty getting credit due to their past debt problems. Some companies claim to offer services that enable you to clean up your bad credit record. To take advantage of their service you have to pay them up front but it's usually the case that those who can least afford to lose money end up further out of pocket.

What claims do these companies usually make?

That they can restore your credit rating quickly by getting your defaults wiped from credit reference agency files. These agencies keep information about your financial status so that banks, shops etc. can decide whether they want to give you credit. Your credit rating is an indication of whether you are considered a good or bad risk for credit.

That they can set aside your County Court Judgements (CCJ's) and get them removed from the Register of Judgements whether you have paid them or not. A CCJ is a decision made by the Court usually because you have not paid a debt.

That they will be able to apply for credit successfully whilst you are waiting for the court to hear your case.

That they can provide you with a list of reasons you could use to challenge the original judgement. They may encourage you to say that these applied in your circumstances, even though this may not be true.

That if you write to the person who took you to court, they will agree to the default notices being wiped from the credit reference agency files so that the history of the debt does not show up when you apply for credit. (Default notices are official notices sent to you by creditors asking you to pay arrears due).

Credit repair companies will charge you a fee for their services. Typically this will be £50 but it can run into hundreds.

So what can I do?

There are a number of steps you could take to help yourself;

You have a right to know what information credit reference agencies hold on you. To obtain the information you need to write to them and ask for a copy of your file. It will cost you £2.00 and in the event any information is incorrect you can get it amended or removed.

If you believe there are valid grounds for applying to have your CCJ set aside then contact your local Trading Standards Service or Citizens Advice Bureau. They may give you free advice about your particular circumstances and procedures in the County Courts. They may even be able to negotiate with creditors on your behalf.

If you want to apply to have your judgement set aside you can approach the County Court for the correct forms. This procedure costs £10. If you can prove the debt has been paid in full you can ask the Court for a Certificate of Satisfaction at a cost of £3. This is a note added to the Register which proves that you have paid off the debt.

HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS

Register of County Court Judgements
173-175 Cleveland Street
London W1P 5PE
info@trustonline.org.uk
020 7380 0133

Registry Trust Limited
173-175 Cleveland Street
London
W1P 5PE

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK95AF

CIFAS
6th Floor
Lynton House
7-12 Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9LT

Enquiry/Information Line:
08456 306060

CREDIT AGENCIES

Experian
Consumer Help Service
PO Box 7710
Nottingham
NG80 7WE
0800 656 9000

Equifax, Plc.
Credit File Advice Centre
PO Box 1140
Bradford
BD1 5US

Call Credit Limited
One Park Lane
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS3 1EP
0113 244 1555

CREDIT COUNSELLING SERVICES

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

You will find the telephone number and address of your local bureau in the telephone directory or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk and search the CAB directory for your local bureau.

Consumer Credit Counselling Service
(Specialist Money Advice)

0800 138 1111
www.cccs.co.uk

National Debtline
0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk