



**Annual Report**  
**The Carpet Foundation Consumer Code of Practice**  
**May 2017**



## **Background**

The Carpet Foundation is a not for profit Trade Association representing the interests of, and promoting, independent carpet retailers. It has some 375 members (with over 420 branches) covering the UK. It is also supported by 19 carpet manufacturers via their Patron member status.

The Carpet Foundation has been operating its Code of Practice since 2005. All retail members must sign up to the Code.

## **Code Contents**

**The Code gives consumers the following benefits:**

- Impartial Professional Advice – you buy what is right for your particular needs.
- Written Terms of Business
- Written Quotations
- Deposit Safeguards – deposits up to 50% are protected
- Free Extended Guarantees
- Free Installation Guarantees
- Conciliation and Arbitration - to resolve issues should they arise

## **Promotion of the Code**

The Carpet Foundation recognises the benefit of promoting the code to carpet buyers. To this end we:

- a) Provide our retailers with free point of sale material to promote the Code to their customers. This includes window stickers, van vinyl's, consumer leaflets, hanging boards, stationery stickers, and membership certificates.
- b) Use the CF website to tell carpet buyers about the Code.
- c) Feature the Code in public relations activity

## **Evaluation of the Code**

The Carpet Foundation measures the effectiveness of the Code and the levels of retailer compliance via the following methods:

### **a) Retailer Compliance Questionnaire**

Each year we contact a third of retail members to participate in our Code compliance questionnaire. Results for the 2016/2017 survey are as follows:

1. 100% give impartial advice to customers.
2. 92% have written terms of business that are given to customers.
3. 96% provide written quotations.
4. Only 3% take a deposit over 50%
5. 97% conform to the Code's complaints procedure and are conversant with the Conciliation and Arbitration scheme.
6. 99% train staff in Code features.
7. 56% give each customer a copy of the Key Benefits leaflet.  
("Why you should buy your carpet from a Carpet Foundation retail member")

8. 98% display the Code of Practice point of sale material provided free by the CF (e.g. van vinyl's, window stickers, hanging boards, stationery invoice stickers & membership certificates)
9. 85% were aware of the 2 year guarantee on carpet produced by CF member manufacturers.
10. 62% did not realise that there is no guarantee on pile reversal if the carpet is not produced by a CF member manufacturer.
11. 83% correctly stated the 1 year installation guarantee.

On receipt of the completed Compliance Questionnaires any retailer giving an incorrect answer is immediately contacted with the correct information.

Overall there were no major concerns as compliance levels are high. Any retailer showing concerns in more than 2 major areas is flagged up for a personal visit.

**b) Face to Face Compliance Visits**

We also carry out face to face compliance visits to check compliance. 44 visits were completed in 2016/2017 and visits covered South West, Wales, London & Home Counties.

Only 3 retailers were judged to be non-compliant and these will be re-visited in 2017 having had in-store training.

**c) My Local Services**

The Online Directory "My Local Services" grades consumer's complaints against our retailers. Any negative score (2 or below) results in an alert to the retailer to respond within 14 days and we are alerted of any negative responses at the CF so we can follow up. To date we have had no alerts.

**d) Conciliation & Arbitration (ADR)**

The CF Conciliation & Arbitration (ADR) service gives an indication of the level of consumer complaints that cannot be resolved between the retailer and consumer, and therefore general levels of customer satisfaction.

The results for the last three years are shown below.

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Total of Complaints received</b>	23	25	19
<b>Number of Complaints going to Arbitration</b>	7	10	6
<b>Number of Arbitration that found in favour of consumer</b>	1	3	3

**Membership**

During the last 12 months 13 retail members have been removed from CF membership (due to retirement / sale of business or lack of perceived membership value) and 14 new members have come on board.