



Code of Practice

THE OMBUDSMAN SCHEME IS PROVIDED BY THE
FURNITURE AND HOME IMPROVEMENT OMBUDSMAN
IS MANDATORY FOR ALL AIM MEMBERS

AIM Code of Practice

Introduction

The Code of Practice is designed to ensure our members operate fairly and professionally. Compliance with this code is mandatory for all AIM members.

1) Service Standards

Members shall assess the work to be carried out and provide a detailed written quotation which describes the work to be undertaken and the cost to the customer. The customer must be made aware of any extra charges that may be incurred and the circumstances under which those extra charges would be applied.

Written quotations must include a copy of the Member's Terms & Conditions and Insurance Memorandum (where appropriate).

Work should only be carried out upon written acceptance of the quotation and the Terms & Conditions.

Members shall make every reasonable effort to protect customer goods and property. This includes using appropriate packaging materials, furniture protection, floor protection and protection to fixtures and fittings where appropriate.

The Member shall provide advice and information to the customer and keep the customer informed of any relevant changes regarding the service offered. This must be provided free of charge and kept up to date with legal requirements.

The Member's staff shall be made aware of the Code of Practice and their own obligations to adhere to the Code where relevant, including staff handbooks and records. Adherence to the Code should be considered part of their employment terms.

Members shall endeavour to provide the highest standard of service to their customers and aim to exceed their statutory obligations.

Members shall endeavour to treat their staff in such a way as to promote loyalty and as a minimum in accordance with UK employment law.

2) Advertising and Marketing

Member's advertising shall be honest and truthful, in compliance with UK legislation and rules. (See www.CAP.org.uk and www.ASA.org.uk)

The Member should not use any images or text, including testimonials, which may mislead the public. This includes stock photos of vehicles/premises and material copied from internet sources, for which the Member does not own Copyright (or have

permission from the copyright owner).

The Member shall retain copies of testimonials, including contact information, for verification purposes. In order to verify authenticity, this information shall be made available to AIM, upon request.

3) Contracts

Customer Contracts shall consist of the quotation, (which includes details of the work to be carried out) the written acceptance of the quotation and the written acceptance of the Member's Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) and Memorandum of Insurance. Where applicable, any information relating to extra charges.

Any concessions or extra-ordinary terms and/or agreements between the Member and the Customer must be clearly stated and accepted in writing.

Clauses in the Member's T&Cs that include the possibility of extra costs, time limits and/or changes to the service offered, should be clearly explained to the customer.

The Member shall ensure the customer is aware of the level of insurance/liability and the claim/complaint process.

4) Insurance and Customer Protection

The Member shall have adequate Public Liability Insurance.

The Member shall offer their customers either insurance against loss or damage of their goods, (up to a minimum of £25,000) or another suitable protection option, (i.e. where customer chooses not to buy insurance, a minimum liability of £40.00 per item, as per Terms & Conditions).

In either case, the customer must be made aware of the level of cover and shall not be subjected to more than £50.00 excess, (if any). If the member's insurance has an excess greater than £50.00, then that excess should be absorbed by the member.

5) Premises

Members shall operate from either a commercial premises or a space within their home put aside specifically for the running of their business. For clarity, this should be referred to as the office.

The office address should be made available to customers for correspondence and face to face visits.

If the member uses a different correspondence address, the customer must be made aware of the address at which they can visit the member. This must be done before financial transactions take place.

Where the member uses their home address as an office, the office should be in a designated area and fit for purpose. The member must take reasonable steps to ensure visiting customers are treated professionally and do not feel they are imposing on a domestic environment.

6) Vehicles and Storage

Members shall meet regulatory requirements for the operation of commercial vehicles. Vehicles shall be presentable, (internally and externally) and should carry suitable equipment to protect customers' goods.

In the case of a Member having their own storage premises, those facilities should be clean, tidy and accessible to customers, even if an appointment is usually required and should comply with all relevant legislation.

In the case of a Member using third party storage facilities, the address and contact details of those facilities should be made available to the customer, upon request.

Should the customer visit these premises, the member has a duty of care to ensure all relevant legislation applies.

7) Staff and Training

The member shall ensure that all staff agree to abide by the Code of Practice and a copy must be available to all staff.

All staff shall undergo an induction process which should include manual handling training and statutory health and safety instruction.

Staff shall take part in a continuing training programme, which shall be recorded by the Member and/or AIM.

Staff shall be presentable, polite, punctual and uniformed.

Staff shall be prohibited from actions and conduct that damage the company image, including (but not limited to) swearing, smoking, use of alcohol/drugs and littering on or near the customer's premises.

8) Packing, Packaging and Protection

Members shall use appropriate packing materials to protect customers' goods. Specialist protection and equipment, (i.e. sofa covers, tabletop protectors, piano trolley/shoe) should be used whenever appropriate.

Customers should be made aware of the range of packing materials available, (i.e. wardrobe boxes, book boxes, etc).

Reusable protection should be used when possible, to reduce environmental impact and costs.

9) Cancellation and Extra Charges

The Member shall not significantly change services that have been confirmed in writing, unless it is necessary to do so as a result of reasons beyond the Member's control.

Where changes are unavoidable, the Member shall inform the customer immediately in writing or, if this is not possible, by telephone.

Any extra charges brought about by circumstances beyond the Member's control, or at the request of the customer should be agreed by the customer in writing. Where restricted by time, this may be added to the job sheet, which should be signed by the customer before work commences.

If a Member cancels services which have previously been confirmed in writing, the Customer shall be informed without delay and refunded all monies paid to the Member.

10) Complaints Procedure

A Complaints Procedure shall be in place and all members shall make their staff aware of the initial stages of the procedure, which should include the contact details of the person to whom complaints should be addressed.

The complaints procedure must include written records which can be produced upon request by AIM.

The complaints procedure shall be fair to all parties in accordance with statutory rights under UK consumer law.

All complaints should receive a first written response within 7 days and the Member should aim to resolve the complaint within 30 days.

11) Disputes

AIM will have an internal investigation team for disputes. Members will be advised according to their individual case and should consider the resolution proposed by AIM. Complainants that disagree with the decision will be informed of their statutory rights and of the appropriate bodies to which they may take their complaint.

12) Code Enforcement

This Code is enforced by the Association of Independent Movers. The Code is mandatory for all members of AIM and breaches of the Code may result in sanctions or expulsion.