

## **Bosch Car Service- Consumer Code of Practice**

**October 2018**

### **Background information**

The Bosch Car Service code has been in place since about 2003 and was previously approved by the OFT (Office of Fair Trading). It migrated into the CTSI (Chartered Trading Standards Institute, CCAS (Consumer Code Approval Scheme)). The code is one of the most long established Consumer Code and continues to provide enhanced protection for consumers in the vehicle servicing and repairs market.

As Robert Bosch Ltd is not a trade association breaches of the code are dealt with as a breach of contract between the garage and Robert Bosch Ltd leading to quick action by Robert Bosch Ltd to rectify the code breach or remove a non-complaint garage from the scheme.

The Code has been rewritten to incorporate ADR.

The website has been re-launched to make it more user friendly.

### **Audit Process**

A qualified Chartered Trading Standards Practitioner from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) completed an audit.

The audit focused on the following areas:

Advice to members including general compliance and staff training.

Marketing and advertising by member businesses- Terms and conditions and contracts including cancellation rights, deposits delivery times, guarantees and warranties.

Customer service provisions.

Consumer complaints process including ADR

Customer satisfaction and how this information is used to develop and improve the code.

Sanctions against members for non-compliance with the code.

## Audit Summary

The Code is now the responsibility of the Workshop Channel Marketing Manager who has been in post for just over a year.

There has not been an annual report published neither has the potential for a Primary Authority Partnership (as reported in the last audit) been progressed.

### Member Application Process/New members

**Non-compliance:** There was no annual report published on the operation of the code.

**Observation:** Primary Authority has not been progressed. Contact details for PA through the home authority Buckinghamshire and Surrey were supplied by the auditor

All prospective members are visited after application by a WBD (Workshop Business Developer).

The written application is detailed and garages have to fulfil the minimum level of facilities to be considered e.g. number of trained Technicians, and number of ramps.

Financial checks are carried out by Credit Safe.

The new member welcome pack has been updated to refer to current relevant legislation.

There is a new training system called Bosch Service Excellence which will be developed over the next 3 to 4 years. There will be 6 modules aimed at senior staff e.g. garage owners, workshop managers. They will be two day courses of which the first will be free.

There is a LMS (Learner Management System) with up to 30 Technician courses available which also links in with the Government Apprenticeship scheme.

There is ability for members to access a 'Technical hotline' for any particular issues.

### Existing Member Inspections/Audit

There are at time of writing 309 members, this is down from the previously reported 491 due to the in depth review carried out of members since the last audit.

All garages are visited quarterly by their WBD who carries out a number of quality checks in addition to supporting the business.

All members are subject to an SQA (Service Quality Assessment) by a third party Company RMI. 60% of members are inspected each year, which means over a two year cycle all garages are inspected some twice a year. The SQA is divided into 10 sections which are scored and an average score is given. The results of all inspections are followed up in a timely manner by the WBD who closes off any areas on non-compliance with the code.

There is also an SQT (Service Quality Test) which is carried out by having a 'set up' car submitted for service against manufacturers service schedule. This is a difficult and complicated test to set up and is currently being reviewed with the Retail Motor Industry Federation as to how to make it an easier and efficient process. There is a target to carry out 50 SQTs by the end of the year.

WBDs also carry out an RPA (Repair Potential Analysis) where the WBD will look at a vehicle after a repair or service to ensure that other work that should be identified is brought to attention of the consumer.

Websites are checked as part of the audit process.

**Best Practice:** The independent audits of garages over a two year cycle and the unannounced Service Quality Test are good evidence of high levels of compliance with the code

### **Membership Withdrawal and Sanctions for Non-Compliant Member Businesses**

The procedures for termination and withdrawal were examined. Websites and garages were checked by Robert Bosch Ltd to ensure all signage and Bosch corporate items were removed.

The system for dealing with non-compliant members is quick and efficient. A development plan to deal with non-compliant issues is drawn up which may include compulsory training. If no improvement is noted an initial warning letter is sent. In the event a resolution is not reached (this could be non-payment of fees) an official termination letter is sent with a request for the garage to complete a declaration to 'cease and desist' using the Bosch Brand. On receipt of the declaration the garage is removed from all databases and all stakeholders informed. All information on the garage is kept on file.

### **Marketing and Advertising by Member Businesses**

There are detailed guides from Robert Bosch Ltd on marketing and advertising as there is a strong focus on maintaining a corporate brand image. The WBD is available for support and advice on marketing.

Garages have access to 'Bosch Car Service Creative' that produces templates in a corporate style of websites, documentation and social media.

It was reported that in December 2018 'My Bosch Car Service' will go live which will enable consumers to directly book service and repairs via a Bosch Car Service web platform

### **Terms and Conditions and other Pre-Contractual Information**

Robert Bosch Ltd provide a number of templates to ensure legal compliance and a maintaining the Bosch brand. There were no issues identified.

### **Customer Service Provisions**

See comments in other sections: The code is freely available on the Bosch Car Service website and the complaints process is clearly written.

### **Consumer Complaints Process**

The code requires that aggrieved consumers first seek to resolve their complaint with the garage, who undertake to resolve the complaint within 21 days. If not resolved then the consumer can refer to NCS (National Conciliation Service).

All complaints are handled by NCS and their contact details are given in the code. They also are an approved ADR provider for the automotive industry. Independent Engineers can be instructed if necessary.

NCS will maintain a database of complaints to highlight trends or particular garages, to date only 20 complaints have been escalated to NCS in 2018.

### **Customer Satisfaction and Feedback**

This is another area undergoing development. The intention is for consumers to provide feedback when they collect their vehicle to provide a comprehensive database of information on the Codes operation.

### **Conclusion**

This is an impressive and well controlled code, that is undergoing constant improvement. It has a particularly strong focus on audits to ensure compliance to the benefit of consumers. With the minor exception of an Annual Report it fully complies with the CTSI Consumer Codes Codes Approval Scheme.