

Bosch Car Service- Consumer Code of Practice

AUDIT DATE: 26 April 2021

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 Codes and continues to provide enhanced protection for consumers in the vehicle servicing and repairs market.

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

The Code is ADR compliant using the National Conciliation Service.

The audit was carried out during coronavirus restrictions. The limit on essential travel has meant that physical audits were not carried out, the programme is due to restarted shortly.

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 the responsibility of the Workshop Channel Marketing Manager

There is a detailed annual report for the Bosch group as a whole, the report for 2020 runs to 178 pages,

Member Application Process/New members

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 refers to current relevant legislation.

There is training system called Bosch Service Excellence which has been developed to cover all aspects of the Bosch requirements. There are 6 modules aimed at senior staff e.g. garage owners, workshop managers.

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

There is access for members to a 'Technical hot line' for any particular issues for which the member needs additional help.

Existing Member Inspections/Audit

The audit processes have been temporarily suspended but are starting to be rebooked as the country opens up.

There are at time of writing 296 members, which includes 20 new BCS members who signed up in 2020

All garages are visited quarterly by their WBD who carries out a number of quality checks in addition to supporting the business. This is carried out remotely in a limited way at the moment.

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 with some inspected twice a year. The SQA is divided into 10 sections which are scored and an average score 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) carried out by DEKRA 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 at target to carry out 60% SGTs each 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 also checked as part of the audit process.

Membership Withdrawal and Sanctions for Non-Compliant Member Businesses

The procedures for termination and withdrawal were examined. Websites and garages were checked by Bosch 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 stake holders informed. All information on the garage is kept on file.

21 BCS garages left the Bosch network during the preceding 12 months.

At date of report there are no members in the disciplinary process.

Marketing and Advertising by Member Businesses

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

Garages are supplied with a 'Media Inspiration Catalogue' that produces templates for creative content in a corporate style of websites, documentation and social media.

Consumers can use the 'My Bosch Car Service' which will enable consumers to directly book service and repairs via a Bosch web platform.

Point of sale material is checked as part of the Audit process.

Terms and Conditions and other Pre-Contractual Information

Bosch 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 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

All complaints are handled by NCS (National Conciliation Service) and their contact details are detailed 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.

Customer Satisfaction and Feedback

Customers are able to leave any feedback on their experience on an online portal.

Conclusion

This is an impressive and well controlled code, it has a particularly strong focus on audits to ensure compliance to the benefit of consumers, but due to the pandemic the audit programme has been severely limited but is in the process of being restarted. The Bosch code fully complies with the CTSI Consumer Codes Approval Scheme.