

Bosch Car Service- Consumer Code of Practice

AUDIT DATE: February 2020

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 has been rewritten to incorporate ADR

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.

Observation:

Primary Authority has not been progressed. Contact details for PA through the home authority Buckinghamshire and Surrey were supplied by the previous auditor but this has not been taken up.

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 Apprentice 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

There are at time of writing 298 members, which includes 20 new BCS members who signed up in 2019

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 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 noncompliance 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 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.

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 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.

23 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.

In December 2018 'My Bosch Car Service' went live which will enables 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 templets 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

This is another area undergoing development. There was an online trial which has now been withdrawn to simplify and improve.

Observation:

The provision of a simple online customer satisfaction facility is supported

Conclusion

This is an impressive and well controlled code, that continues to improve. It has a particularly strong focus on audits to ensure compliance to the benefit of consumers. It fully complies with the CTSI Consumer Codes Approval Scheme and the provision of an online customer satisfaction facility will further strengthen the code.

