

**TRADING STANDARDS INSTITUTE
CONSUMER CODES APPROVAL BOARD CIC**

FIFTH MEETING OF CONSUMER CODES APPROVAL BOARD

Minutes of Meeting held on 13th May 2014
TSI London Office, 78 – 83 Walbrook Wharf, London, EC4R 3TD

Present: C. Crawley (Chair), A. Foster, B. Hughes, L. Livermore, S. Brooker,
T. Perchard, V. Olowe,

In attendance: S. Langley, M. Podeszwa

Apologies: C. Mason

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Comments/Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>
	The meeting commenced at 09:55	
CCAB01	Minutes of the last meeting CC corrected the spelling of Suzanne Kuyser's surname. Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 th February 2014 were agreed as a correct record.	
CCAB02	Matters arising CC informed the Board about a photo call hosted at the House of Lords following the Motor Codes Ltd gaining approval for the Vehicle Warranty Products Code. CCAS finance report and the annual report should be ready for the July meeting of the Board. Communications and marketing strategy is still in a draft form, due to the Comms team engagement in the Workforce Survey. S. Kuyser is currently working on finalising the plan. AF informed the Board that the contract with Yoshki has been renewed and signed for further three years.	AF/SL

CC noted that most of the actions from the last meeting were listed on the agenda.

CCAB03 Carpet Foundation Monitoring Proposals

At their last meeting the Board requested that the Carpet Foundation prepared changes to their monitoring programme, after failing the audit in January.

The Carpet Foundation had worked with the TSI CCAS team and sought advice from the statistician to bring their code back into compliance.

The Board heard that the proposed compliance monitoring arrangements were much improved and included a revised member questionnaire and an onsite inspection programme.

The Board discussed the proposals submitted by the Carpet Foundation. They wanted to know how the data collection would work for the customer satisfaction feedback survey and wanted to clarify if a question relating to overall satisfaction with the service provided was asked. The Board added that a cover note should be supplied to the Board explaining how and why the new measures are appropriate.

The Board asked for clarification on what further steps would be taken if members did not respond to the compliance survey. The Board resolved that the changes made by the Carpet Foundation have brought the code back into compliance but clarification is still needed on the points raised above.

SL

CCAB04 Home Insulation and Energy Contractors Scheme

CC advised the Board about a meeting she and AF had attended with the Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, Minister of State at the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) in relation to multiple codes operating within the micro generation sector.

The meeting with the Minister Gregory Barker and Paul Rochester, Senior Advisor at the Department of Energy & Climate Change was extremely constructive and it was agreed that:

- there should be an ongoing dialogue between CCAB and DECC
- that DECC supports healthy competition in the energy sector
- that a dilution of standards was not acceptable as a result of approving multiple codes in the sector
- that there should be a Memorandum of Understanding between the code sponsors based on intelligence sharing and ensuring that an applicant refused membership on one organisation would not be able to join another, as long as those organisations are member of CCAS

- that there be a level playing field for access to the microgeneration sector

It was suggested that P. Rochester, should be invited to the next meeting of the Board as part of discussions on how anticipate multiple codes in the micro generation sector.

SL

The Board heard that the changes made by HIES to their consumer code had been discussed by the Consumer Advisory Panel at their last meeting. The Panel had noted that the changes agreed to the code have been greatly improved, particularly with regards to the vulnerable consumers, although some issues remain.

AF and SL were asked to meet with RECC to update on HIES development and discuss the MoU.

AF/SL

CCAB05 **Business Plan 2014/15**

The Board considered the “CCAS Budget Forecast 2014/2015” with revised financial projections.

The Board heard that the paper represented a “mid-way” point between the best and worst case scenarios and reflected the new potential code sponsors, who are already in the approval process.

AF added that provisions are included for bringing in extra resources, as necessary.

It was agreed that the marketing and promotion budget should be as high as possible. The TSI Communications and Marketing team are currently working on press liaison and other marketing avenues.

There is also some contingency from the Business Education budget, if needed, which should be assessed at the end of quarter two of the financial year.

The Board noted that the income from the code sponsors is not sufficient to cover the costs of the scheme at present and most additional income is based on activities relating to the application process. Therefore a discussion around revised charges might be needed in autumn or the costs may have to be reduced.

A detailed financial forecast for the next three years should be ready by January 2015.

The Board agreed that the effects of the possible delays in the application process on the CCAS budget had been underestimated and advised that more realistic targets should be set for the next year with regards to the number of new approved code sponsors.

The Board agreed that an additional budget line should be added reflecting the additional resources provided by TSI, that are not currently

recharged to CCAB, including AF and LL time and resources from the Communications team.
The Board agreed that the challenge that CCAS is facing at present is to keep balancing the budget by increasing income through growing CCAS.

The Board resolved to sign off the financial part of the CCAS Business Plan.

CCAB07 ADR Directive

The Board received a briefing on the implementation and consultation on the ADR Directive in the UK.

The Board agreed that a letter from the Board will be submitted as a response to consultation.

SL was asked to work with LL on the response.

SL/LL

CCAB08 Finance, Audit, Risk & Performance Management

VO provided the Board with a short update on his work with R. Martin, TSI's Director of Finance.
VO stated that this is an evolving area of work, in terms of the approach.

The main work is currently concentrated on updating the CCAS risk register, which should be ready for the next Board meeting.

VO/RM

Additionally, the TSI Finance team are working on adding contextual information to the budget, which should provide information on what the numbers represent.

The Board thanked VO for his ongoing work in this area.

CCAB09 Performance Measurement and Statistical Analysis

SB updated the Board on his meetings with the Code Sponsors Panel and the Consumer Advisory Panel and advised that both Panels agreed with the proposed approach.

SB presented the final "Proposed indicators for CCAS performance measurement framework" and asked the Board to sign off the detailed framework.

In addition, SB asked the Board to consider the annual consumer survey idea.

The Board resolved: to sign off the proposed document and to support the idea of the annual consumer survey.

CCAB10 **Liaison with Code Sponsors Panel**

The Board received an update from BH on her meeting with the Code Sponsors Panel.

It was agreed that BH would act as an ongoing contact point between the code sponsors and the Board and would meet with them for regular updates after the Board meetings.

The code sponsors had stressed that they would want to be more included in the scheme activities. It was suggested that sub-groups could be created, which could explore utilising the code sponsors' members' resources and expertise to look at profile raising opportunities.

The Board agreed that the code sponsors must continue to receive adequate levels of support because they are such an important part of the scheme.

The Board discussed how to ensure code sponsors are receiving the scheme's benefits and allow them to show how they can support the brand.

It was suggested that CCAB could draw on the expertise of the code sponsors and their members, particularly in the communications and advertising area.

The Board agreed that the code sponsors could support the development of CCAS within the communications area. The Board were advised that a joint communications and marketing plan was currently being worked on by the TSI Communication and Marketing team.

The Board issued the following message to the code sponsors:

“An in-depth discussion was had regarding the Board's relationship with the code sponsors. The Board stressed that they wished to continue the positive relationship with the code sponsors and that they value BH's work with the Code Sponsors Panel. The Board also explored possible ways of involving the code sponsors more, particularly in the communications area.”

CC offered to meet with the code sponsors, if needed.

CC reminded the Board that C. Mason had been invited to the Board meeting but had been unable to attend because of other business. The invitation remains open.

BH was asked by the Board to explore how the code sponsors could use the expertise of their members to support the scheme's marketing and communications strategy.

BH

CCAB11 Liaison with Local, Regional and National Approved Trader Schemes

The Board received an update on approved trader schemes.

There are many various schemes in operation, some private, some endorsed by the Government and some working within the public sector.

TSI was asked by the Government to investigate how schemes could work together more effectively.

As a result of TSI meetings with trading standards approved scheme operators, a way forward has been identified which is based on forming an 'alliance' of approved schemes which would operate to minimum criteria.

The agreed five core criteria for any scheme would be:

- Robust vetting and checking
- Ongoing monitoring and audit
- Consumer feedback mechanism
- Complaints handling processes
- Independent alternative dispute resolution

The Board felt that a mechanism for bringing schemes together in this way would reduce consumer confusion, maximise the reach of such schemes and raise standards of schemes.

The Board engaged in a discussion on the possible effects of creating the alliance on CCAS. Key points raised during the discussions included that:

- the most important issue is not to lose the scheme's identity
- when the alliance is created, CCAS would want to be a part of it, but there is a lot of ground work to complete first
- TSI should take leadership, particularly in raising standards for other schemes
- the Board expressed their support for phased development
- the Board accepted that the various approval schemes were a long way away from having a single vision
- the first and most important thing to do should be reducing confusion for consumers

CCAB12 Potential New Code Sponsors

The Board heard that a priority matrix had been developed for the new applicants.

A "Panel summary template" is being prepared for the new codes presented to the Consumer Advisory Panel. This document would work as a summary, specifying what an organisation does and what their code of practice does to provide additional protection for consumers. This is being developed due to excessive paperwork being presented to the Panel, and the Panel having concerns that the key elements of the code to be considered would be missed due to sheer volume of information presented by the code sponsor.

The Board discussed whether additional resources are needed to speed up the application process and carry out research regarding the potential areas for new codes. It was agreed that a decision should be made before the July meeting.

SL

The Board thanked SL for her continuous work with the code sponsors and the potential code sponsors.

CCAB13 **Consumer Advisory Panel**

TP provided the Board with a brief verbal update about a meeting of the Consumer Advisory Panel which she attended on 1 May 2014.

TP had thanked the Panel on behalf of the Board for their hard work and excellent feedback on new applications, particularly for the HIES report.

TP informed the Board about "The NCF Trust Schemes Report" published by National Consumer Federation, which gives an independent evaluation of consumer trust schemes. A. Pindar offered to send copies of the report to the Board.

The Board noted that it would be advisable to invite sector specific bodies to the Panel meetings in order to support revision of particular codes.

The Board asked SL to invite financial sector representatives to the next meeting of the Consumer Advisory Panel to review the Simple Products and Checkmate codes.

SL

CCAB14 **Matters of concern about code sponsors referred to the Board**

The Board was informed that SafeBuy Ltd decided not to continue with their application and have withdrawn from the scheme.

CCAB15 **Dates of the next meetings**

The Board agreed to hold meetings on:

- Tuesday 15th July 2014
- Tuesday 14th October 2014
- Tuesday 3rd February 2015

The times and venues to be identified by the programme team.

The meeting closed at 12:50

Signed

Date