



Annual Report
The Carpet Foundation Consumer Code of Practice /
Alternative Dispute Resolution
March 2020 – March 2021



Background

The Carpet Foundation is a not for profit Trade Association representing the interests of, and promoting, independent carpet retailers. It has some 375 members (with over 400 branches) covering the UK. It is also supported by 19 carpet industry suppliers via their Patron member status.

The Carpet Foundation has been operating its Code of Practice since 2005. All retail members must sign up to the Code. In 2018 the Foundation was successful in gaining Government Approved Alternative Dispute Resolution Status.

Code Contents

The Code gives consumers the following benefits:

- Impartial Professional Advice – you buy what is right for your particular needs.
- Written Terms of Business
- Written Quotations
- Deposit Safeguards – deposits up to 50% are protected
- Free Extended Guarantees
- Free Installation Guarantees
- Conciliation and Arbitration - to resolve issues should they arise

Promotion of the Code

The Carpet Foundation recognises the benefit of promoting the code to carpet buyers. To this end we:

- a) Provide our retailers with free point of sale material to promote the Code to their customers. This includes window stickers, van vinyl's, consumer leaflets, hanging boards, stationery stickers, and membership certificates.
- b) Use the CF website to tell carpet buyers about the Code. The website features the Code (in full), information sheets and application forms.
- c) Feature the Code in public relations activity, and magazine advertorials.

Alternative Dispute Resolution – Performance

- a) **the number of domestic disputes and cross-border disputes the ADR entity has received;**
During the period we carried out 3 ADR domestic dispute procedures. There were no cross-border disputes. Because of the pandemic/lockdowns our members were closed for much of the period resulting in the small number of disputes. Most of the phone calls / emails we get asking for advice are resolved there and then without the need for a full ADR procedure.
- b) **the types of complaints to which the domestic disputes and cross-border disputes relate;**
Complaints received covered i) Flattening of the pile ii) Pile Reversal iii) Poor fitting iv) Poor wear v) Colour fade.
- c) **a description of any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which the ADR entity has become aware due to its operations as an ADR entity;**
The type of complaints received have not changed much since we gained ADR status and most are due to either the nature of the product rather than poor service or to consumer expectations exceeding what they are prepared to pay.

- d) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how the problems referred to in paragraph (c) could be avoided or resolved in future, in order to raise traders' standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices;**

Having said that we are of the view that retailers are now much better at handling complaints and are far more aware of consumer rights (and the legislation)

- e) the number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with, and percentage share of the grounds set out in paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 on which the ADR entity has declined to consider such disputes;**

No disputes from or about our members were refused during the period. (we do not handle disputes regarding non-members).

- f) the percentage of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons and, if known, the reasons for the discontinuation;**

No ADR disputes were discontinued for operational reasons.

- g) the average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes;**

Disputes take between 4 to 6 weeks to get resolved.

- h) the rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of the alternative dispute resolution procedures;**

As far as we know compliance with the recommended outcomes of disputes is 100%.