



Biennial Report
The Carpet Foundation Consumer Code of Practice /
Alternative Dispute Resolution
March 2022 – March 2024



Background

The Carpet Foundation is a not for profit Trade Association representing the interests of, and promoting, independent carpet retailers. It has some 300 members (with over 325 branches) covering the UK. It is also supported by 20 carpet industry suppliers via their Patron member status, including all the major UK Manufacturers.

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, 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 our digital advertising campaigns.

Alternative Dispute Resolution – Performance

- a) **the number of disputes received by the ADR entity and the types of complaints to which the disputes related;**

During the period we handled 4 ADR domestic disputes. Complaints covered i) Flattening of pile ii) Pile reversal iii) Colour fade/wrong colour iv) De-lamination (of the backing) v) Tracking vi) poor fitting.

- b) **the percentage share of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued before an outcome was reached;**

No disputes were discontinued before an outcome was reached.

- c) **the average time taken to resolve the disputes which the ADR entity has received;**

Average time taken was 4 to 6 weeks.

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

As far as we are aware compliance with the recommended outcome is 100%.

- e) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders could be avoided or resolved in future;**

Most disputes are the result of either inherent manufacturing issues or consumers having high expectations for the performance of low priced products. As the carpet manufacturing process has not really changed in years, the same complaints arise.

- f) where the ADR entity is a member of any network of ADR entities which facilitates the resolution of cross-border disputes, an assessment of the effectiveness of its co-operation in that network;**

No cross-border disputes were undertaken.

- g) where the ADR entity provides training to its ADR officials, details of the training it provides;**

Our ADR officials attended a training session run by Stonley Training covering the Consumer Rights Act 2015. One of our officials also sits on the Committee for both UK and International Standards. No further training has taken place as our officials are very familiar with the usual complaints.

- h) an assessment of the effectiveness of an alternative dispute resolution procedure offered by the ADR entity and of possible ways of improving its performance.**

The current approach to ADR procedures and ADR communications with members appears to work well. Numbers of disputes going to ADR have been falling and members are getting better at resolving disputes without the need to go to ADR.

Many potential disputes are resolved via a phone call from us to the retailer or customer.