

Give your business the edge

The OFT Approved code
logo – it's what your
customers look for



Promote customer confidence and give your business a competitive edge by taking part in the Office of Fair Trading's Consumer Codes Approval Scheme (CCAS).

The OFT Approved code logo. It's what your customers look for.

What is the CCAS?

The CCAS is a government backed scheme that encourages effective self-regulation by giving official approval to voluntary consumer codes of practice which meet core criteria set by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Where a code of practice achieves approval, businesses operating to that code qualify to use and display the OFT Approved code logo – a benchmark for high quality customer service and a promoted brand that customers look for when buying goods and services.

Where customers see the logo they will feel confident they are in safe hands.

What is an OFT Approved code of practice?

An OFT Approved code must satisfy a number of core criteria and commits businesses to offering a higher level of customer service than is required by law.

These core criteria include:

- a commitment to provide customers with adequate information about goods and services
- the use of clear and fair contracts
- the protection of deposits or prepayments
- user friendly and speedy procedures for dealing with customer complaints
- low cost, independent redress if a complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily.

How do OFT Approved codes benefit business?

Participating in the CCAS may involve some time and resource, but businesses will be rewarded with a robust code and permission to use the OFT Approved Code logo which:

- helps customers identify trustworthy businesses to buy from
- provides a powerful marketing tool for participating businesses
- gives businesses a competitive edge by developing best practice and helping them to attract and retain customers.

How to get involved

Before a code can be submitted for approval, it must have a code sponsor. This is a body capable of administering a voluntary consumer code and of raising standards within its sector.

This body is likely to be a trade association, but other organisations can be considered. To find out if your organisation can be a code sponsor, please contact the OFT on **020 7211 8987**.

To get its code approved a sponsor must go through a two stage application process.

To complete Stage One, the code sponsor must submit the code and confirm that it will meet the OFT's core criteria.

The code and associated documentation must be accessible and written in plain English.

In Stage Two, the sponsor must demonstrate to the OFT that the code is working well and delivering on its Stage One promises.

Evidence of this may include complaints data, independent surveys on customer satisfaction or the results of mystery shopping exercises.

The responsibility to show that the code is working lies with the code sponsor, and the timeframe in which they collect evidence of the code in action will normally be over a period of at least six months.

Once the OFT is satisfied that a code is working, approval is granted and it is promoted to consumers.

The OFT requires code sponsors to review compliance with the code and assess customer satisfaction on a regular basis.

They are also required to update the code where necessary and publish statistics on how it is performing.

How do I find out more?

Further information about the OFT's Consumer Codes Approval Scheme can be found on **www.of.gov.uk/codes**

If you have a query or need further information please contact a member of the OFT codes team on **020 7211 8987**.

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