

Trading Standards

CONSUMER GUIDE TO THE FAIR PLAY CHARTER



What is the Fair Play Charter?

It is often difficult for consumers to know whether they are dealing with reputable traders who are trying to operate in a fair and honest way or whether they are dealing with one of the small proportion of rogue cowboy traders.

In an attempt to address this particular problem, the trading standards services in Greater Manchester have introduced the “Fair Play Charter,” a voluntary registration scheme for traders.

Trading standards authorities cannot approve or recommend the services offered by businesses but traders who are committed to trading fairly and honestly may apply to join the registration scheme and sign a pledge that they will comply with certain terms and conditions.

Businesses that can demonstrate their commitment to fair and honest trade will have their applications accepted and may display the Fair Play Charter Logo on their business premises, their documentation and in their advertising.

The first business sector to be introduced to the charter is the retail motor trade, incorporating not only retail sales but also repairs, servicing and the supply of parts and accessories.

The Trader’s Commitment

A motor business displaying the Fair Play Charter logo has agreed.

- To ensure that all vehicles and other goods are supplied with good title, are of satisfactory quality, fit for their intended purpose and as described to the customer.
- To provide, wherever possible, complete and accurate information to customers when diagnosing vehicle faults.
- To provide customers with at least an estimate, and wherever possible a quotation for repairs and servicing.
- Not to commence work on a vehicle without the customer’s prior agreement.
- To obtain customer’s permission to continue with work which is likely to exceed any agreed quotation / estimate by 10%.
- To ensure that all services are provided with reasonable care and skill and without unnecessary delay.
- To make parts which have been replaced during service or repair available for return to the customer (other than exchanged parts).

- To advise customers whether or not servicing will be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended service schedule and in each case explain what the service will consist of.
- To provide customers with an invoice detailing the work carried out and the parts / materials used.
- To fully honour a customer's statutory rights in the event of the supply of unsatisfactory goods or service.
- To comply with all relevant criminal legislation including:-
 - ensuring that all vehicles are roadworthy and correctly described,
 - ensuring that other goods and services are correctly described,
 - ensuring that all price indications and all credit information is complete, accurate and does not mislead, and
 - ensuring that the ownership particulars of the business are clearly displayed to customers.
- To ensure that staff can demonstrate a suitable working knowledge of both the criminal law and civil law relevant to their role in the business.
- To carry out an appropriate inspection of all vehicles prior to displaying them for sale and to show the results to the customer prior to the sale being agreed.
- To ensure mileometer readings are effectively disclaimed when they cannot be verified.
- To make documented histories of vehicles available for customers to view and to clearly indicate their availability.
- To provide customers with a completed car sales order form detailing any part exchange allowance given when an agreement is made for the purchase of any motor vehicle.
- To advise customers what the acceptable methods of payment would be for the supply of any goods and / or services before transactions are commenced.
- To provide a clear explanation to customers of:-
 - any credit agreement used to finance a sale, and
 - any guarantee / warranty provided with any vehicle or other goods.
- To operate a customer complaints procedure. To deal with customer complaints promptly, fairly and in a courteous manner and to follow the scheme's complaints / mediation policy.
- In all dealings with customers, to comply with the "spirit" as well as the "letter" of the scheme.
- To display on the business premises and make available copies of "the consumer's guide" to the scheme and to ensure a copy is given to every customer upon completion of any contract to purchase a vehicle.

The Trading Standards Commitment

In response to the trader's commitment, trading standards have made several commitments:

- To provide a fair and impartial service to both consumers and members of the scheme.
- To provide a prompt response to requests from members of the scheme for information and / or advice on trading standards law.
- To provide reasonable assistance with the training of staff in relation to trading standards law.
- To provide assistance in resolving customer complaints including mediation where the registering authority considers appropriate.

By working together, we aim to improve the standards of trade in Greater Manchester.

Although the Fair Play Charter is currently only aimed at the motor trade, we hope to introduce it to other areas of trade in the future.

Remember, if you want to be assured the business you are dealing with is "Committed to Fair Play", look out for the Fair Play Charter logo.

If you feel that a member business is not meeting any of its commitments, then contact your local trading standards, details below.

LIABILITY TO CUSTOMERS

In administering the scheme the Registering Authority accepts no liability for any loss or damage which is claimed to have arisen out of any alleged failure or negligence on the part of any business registered on the scheme.

It must be emphasised that should you feel dissatisfied with any goods or services supplied by a member of the scheme then any claim for damages will be against the trader concerned and not the Registering Authority.

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