



**Furniture &  
Home Improvement**  
Ombudsman



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## Who is the Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman?

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The Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman (FHIO) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which provides a range of services including government approved Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), accredited training, advice and independent inspection services.

Businesses currently registered with the Ombudsman include retailers, service providers, manufacturers and trade associations.

Registering with FHIO helps your business to manage complaints effectively whilst controlling the cost and time impacts that can often be associated with dispute resolution.

Having this service in place is also key to providing customers with additional peace of mind pre-purchase, helping you to drive new sales and overall customer satisfaction.

# Features and Benefits for Registered Businesses



## Reduce the cost and time impacts of complaints whilst enhancing customer confidence

Our service is designed to help businesses and consumers handle disputes in the most effective and efficient way.

Ombudsmen are recognised for their independence and impartiality and will always seek to provide fair, proportionate outcomes for the parties involved.

Registering is a great way to demonstrate your commitment to customer service and consumer protection whilst keeping costs under control.



## Market Leading Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service

This specialist service, delivered by a legally trained team, is here to review disputes independently between the registered business and their customer in the rare event they cannot be resolved between the parties. Our work is approved by both the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and the Ombudsman Association.



## Telephone Advice Line

This is available to registered businesses and is there to help you resolve disputes before they escalate. Telephone advice can be provided in areas such as consumer law or more general complaint handling advice.



## Data and Insight

We believe that complaints should be seen as an opportunity to learn and improve. We are able to provide you with data and insight reporting so that you can learn not only from your own complaints, but also benefit from the data we hold about the sector as a whole.



## Ombudsman Logo

As a registered business you have access to the Ombudsman logo to use on your website and marketing material. Many businesses use our logo as a sign of confidence and peace of mind for their customers.



## Online Case Management

The Ombudsman has invested in bespoke technology to manage case information with access provided to all parties enabling swift and effective information exchange.



## Webinars and Guidance

Topics aimed to support you with common complaint issues and changes to legislation that may effect you.



## Accredited Training

We offer City & Guilds accredited training in areas such as Consumer Law, Customer Service, Complaint Management, Pricing and Advertising and GDPR.

All of these programmes are discounted for members and delegates who attend come away with a City and Guilds accreditation. Courses can be delivered face-to-face or online.



## Expert Inspection Service

You will have access to our expert witness inspection service (discounted to members).

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# Frequently Asked Questions



## How will the Ombudsman help our business?

The Ombudsman is there to support you and your customers. As a registered business you will have access to a range of benefits that include our specialist ADR service, independent advice, discounted training, expert witness services and valuable root cause complaint data.

## Is offering ADR to our customers compulsory?

Despite the confidence and protection that registering with FHIO gives to businesses and their customers, in many sectors, access to ADR is optional. However, it is strongly encouraged and businesses have a responsibility to signpost towards an approved ADR body in the event of an unresolved dispute whether they are willing to use the service or not. It's also worth noting that courts can impose sanctions against parties for unreasonably refusing to consider ADR.

## What training is available to businesses?

The Ombudsman offers a range of training courses that are accredited by City & Guilds. Full details of these courses can be found on our website.

If your business has a particular training need we are able to consult with you and build bespoke courses. In addition we organise regular webinars and annual member workshops aimed at sharing information and best practice.

## How much is it to become a registered business?

Our fees are typically paid via a registration and case fee. Fees are usually calculated relative to a businesses turnover. However, for group registration arrangements, (I.E Trade Associations) we have models that are designed to be proportionate.

## Will the number of complaints we receive increase?

In our experience, providing customers with the option of an Ombudsman does not increase the overall numbers of complaints. If one of your customers has a complaint, they must still exhaust your complaint process prior to raising their complaint with the Ombudsman.

## How does the Ombudsman help in reducing the cost of complaints?

Our experience does suggest that providing independent redress at the right time may reduce the time impact and financial cost of resolving complaints. The Ombudsman will always seek to provide some balance in their conciliation process and look for practical remedies. We will also not look to award more than any party is entitled to receive putting an stop to unsubstantiated compensation claims.



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## Just some of the businesses who have chosen to register with Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman

**AshleyAnn**  
KITCHENS, BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS



**diy**kitchens



**Dreams**



**Fenwick**

**FISHPOOLS**



**GLASSWELLS**  
MORE CHOICE, MORE STYLE, MORE YOU

**HAMMONDS**  
THE FITTED FURNITURE COMPANY

**HARVEY JONES**  
KITCHENS

**HOMEbase**



**KETTLE CO.**  
KITCHENS



**küchenhaus**  
The German Kitchen



**Magnet**

**MARKS & SPENCER**



**MOTION SPOT**

**nolte**  
KÜCHEN

**Plumbs**

**ScS**  
Sofas, flooring and furniture



## Testimonials

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Bensons for Beds places the customer at the heart of its service. It's therefore important that as a business who strives for excellence we give our customers the additional protection that the Furniture and Home Improvement Ombudsman provides. Its unrivalled independent ADR and advisory services give confidence and reassurance for both our colleagues and crucially our customers.



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Nolte Kitchens understands the importance of transparency, customer satisfaction and ethical business practices. Aligning ourselves with the Ombudsman provides a fair and impartial platform for our customers, giving them the assurance that we are committed to their satisfaction. Enrolling in the scheme, helps us to stay informed and connected with the industry, regulations and best practices, as well as receiving training and advice which highlights our dedication to excellence and staying ahead of the curve.



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At Tidy Bedrooms we're committed to offering the best customer experience we can and so we're keen to team up with independent organisations like FHIIO. Their mission to uphold key principles in fairness and transparency and raising standards within our industry is hugely important to us too and offers peace of mind to our customers.



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Get in touch with our Memberships,  
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