

Social media policy

The Furniture Ombudsman

Last updated: Feb 2018

The Furniture Ombudsman uses social media to reach online audiences and share information about our service, with consumers and other stakeholders.

Our Twitter account (@OmbudsmanTweets) is managed by the communications staff at the Ombudsman. We update and monitor our Twitter account on weekdays during regular office hours. We may monitor or respond from time to time outside office hours. We read all @replies and Direct Messages (DM) sent to us, and we will respond to as many as possible.

We will use social media platforms to:

- Talk about the work we do with our members to raise industry standards;
- reach a wider audience;
- promote events, news pieces and other similar literature;
- learn about consumers and their needs;
- pass on relevant information from third parties, such as Citizens Advice and Trading Standards.

Social Media complements the Ombudsman's website and, when possible, will direct users back to the website for in-depth information, forms, and other documents.

Our tweets feature information about our office, services levels, upcoming events and training, links to news releases, speeches, resources, and publications issued by the office and other stakeholders.

We may retweet relevant links and content that we find relevant to our work and of interest to our followers. Retweets do not imply endorsement by The Furniture Ombudsman.

Links to external sites are provided solely for the convenience and interest of the user. The Ombudsman is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained on those sites, nor does it endorse the sites or their content.

We follow twitter accounts that are relevant to our work. This could include the twitter accounts of individuals, as well as organisations, both public and private. Our decision to follow a particular Twitter user does not imply endorsement of any kind and does not mean that The Furniture Ombudsman supports that user, or his or her views.

We welcome and encourage all comments and expect conversations will be carried out in a respectful manner. Please avoid personal attacks and keep your comments relevant. The Furniture Ombudsman does not tolerate offensive, disrespectful, or abusive comments about an individual or our organisation. We will read all replies and direct messages sent to us and, when possible, will reply. We reserve the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable Law (such as the new General Data Protection Regulation 2018).

The following will not be allowed:

- Abusive, obscene, indecent, or offensive language;
- defamatory, harassing, hateful remarks or accusations against individuals or organisations;

- comments that are discriminatory based on race, national or ethnic origin, age, creed, gender, marital status, socio-economic status, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- sexual content or links to sexual content;
- comments containing solicitations, advertisements, announcements, or endorsements of any commercial, financial, labour, or political organisation;
- excessive links and code;
- posts revealing too much personal information;
- content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party;
- posts not topically related to the site or material being commented on;
- posts that are repetitive or are considered spam, such as the same comment being posted repeatedly.

In instances where consumer needs to first go through to one of our members' internal procedures before contacting us we will refer that contact to the relevant trader.

Those who choose to engage in conversation with The Furniture Ombudsman via social media should be aware that they do so within the public domain. To protect your privacy and that of others, we recommend that you do not include personal information in your posts.

Some of the staff here at The Furniture Ombudsman tweet under their own names, as private citizens. Despite their professional affiliation with the Ombudsman, their tweets or retweets do not represent the official position of the Ombudsman.

Personal information that you provide to the Ombudsman through social media is collected, used, and disclosed by our office for its mandated purpose and in accordance with our data retention policy.

Twitter accounts are hosted by a third party and are not on the Ombudsman's servers. You should read Twitter's terms of service and privacy policy before engaging in its use.

If you have any questions or comments about our use of social media, please contact our office by e-mail at info@thefurnitureombudsman.org