

BHTA Code of Practice Annual Report 2015



The British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA) continues to expand, with 485 members at the end of 2015. Our Code of Practice (the only one in the healthcare and assistive technology sector approved under the Consumer Codes scheme) remains the principal reason for businesses choosing to join the Association, and to remain within it.

Our monitoring and feedback mechanisms show that overall 97% of customers are satisfied with the products and services our members provide. The different categories of feedback show the following levels of satisfaction:

The overall quality of the product/service you bought	99%
The staff's product knowledge	99%
How easy to understand any paperwork was	93%
How clearly any terms/conditions were explained to you	91%
The length of time taken to serve you/place your order	98%
The staff's general level of courtesy and helpfulness	99.9%
The overall quality of service you received	99.9%

During 2016 we had 29 complaints referred to us and some £31,000 of consumer detriment was averted. No particular trends emerged during the year, with complaints varying from disagreement over whether damage to a product was due to wear and tear through to dissatisfaction with the amount of money offered to buy back a stairlift which was no longer needed.

We are pleased that the evidence from our audits and mystery shopping exercises show that our members take the Code and their responsibilities to consumers seriously in an environment where more and more people are signposted by local authorities to trusted businesses, to buy equipment and source adaptations for themselves, to enable them to manage long-term conditions and remain safely independent in their own homes. 70 face-to-face audits were conducted by our team of auditors and 28 mystery shopping tests were organised for us by the research charity, Rica.

We value the oversight of our Code activity provided by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, who stated following their February 2015 audit:

It was clear to the audit team that the BHTA Consumer Code of Practice is a central feature of what they do. It permeates through all of their systems and procedures and it is one of the key attractions for current and prospective members of BHTA. The audit team made particular note of the organisational changes that are taking place at BHTA. The change in structure was discussed, with the BHTA aim of a more proactive engagement programme with members. BHTA are able now to provide more focus on terms and conditions, code work and support for members, which was welcomed by the audit team.