

# Member Guide

February 2019



Premier House  
1-5 Argyle Way  
Stevenage  
SG1 2AD

Telephone: 0330 094 0365  
Website: [www.ccwe.co.uk](http://www.ccwe.co.uk)  
Email: [info@ccwe.co.uk](mailto:info@ccwe.co.uk)  
Twitter: @CCWEtweets



## About us

### Who are we?

The Consumer Code for Weddings and Events (CCWE) is delivered by the people at Dispute Resolution Ombudsman Limited – an independent, Government-approved not-for-profit organisation with a strong track record of helping industries to raise standards.

Truly independent, we are neither a consumer champion or trade body. We have been helping local, national and international businesses and their customers for over 25 years. Our service includes Alternative Dispute Resolution, advice, and accredited training, with the aim of raising standards and helping members understand their obligations to customers.

Created with input from industry professionals, the service has been shaped around a Code of Practice that venues and suppliers commit to, enabling them to demonstrate a clear and consistent approach to customer service and satisfaction.

### Industry knowledge and expertise

An independent standards board comprising industry professionals helps to keep us in touch with what's going on within the wedding and events landscape. Joined by consumer experts, these professionals help us to raise standards and inform our thinking.

## What does our Code of Practice mean for traders and consumers?

Customers look for assurance. Adhering to our Code of Practice inspires confidence and demonstrate a commitment to raising industry standards through:

- Adopting measures that reflect good practice regarding consumer law and the principles of fair trade
- Promoting good customer service
- Referring unresolved disputes to our independent Government-approved Alternative Dispute Resolution service if necessary.

When required, we offer a market-leading independent mediation and adjudication service that helps to bring parties back together, avoiding the need for costly and lengthy litigation.

For your customers, this means that we offer a free and expert service to settle unresolved complaints. Consumers can therefore buy with confidence from our members. Our goal is to empower both parties to reach a mutually agreeable resolution and provide a fair and reasonable decision if we need to.



## Understanding the Code of Practice

This Code of Practice forms part of the Rules of Full Membership and provides a set of principles which set out to promote high standards and good relations between Full Members, consumers and CCWE.

It is designed to help you recognise your obligations to consumers. By following the Code, you will be acting in a way that is consistent with consumer law.

As part of your membership declaration, Full Members abide by our Code of Practice, thereby supporting our overall aims and objectives.

Full Members will:

1. Provide consumers with goods that are as described, of satisfactory quality and fit for purpose having due regard to any relevant legislation;
2. Supply any services with reasonable care and skill having due regard to any relevant legislation;
3. Provide clear and accurate product information prior to a transaction which will assist consumers in making well informed decisions;
4. Provide consumers with information regarding the likely performance of a product and any maintenance regimes that may be required;
5. Provide consumers with clear, transparent and accurate information regarding product prices, guarantees, delivery costs and any cancellation rights having due regard to any relevant legislation and guidance;
6. Deliver products as agreed, on time and in good condition and advise the consumer of any issues that may compromise delivery as soon as is practicable;
7. Promote good customer service and professionalism amongst staff and encourage them to meet all service requests with courtesy and efficiency;
8. Avoid any commercial practice that could be adverse to the consumer and the principles of fair trade in general;
9. Listen to all complaints in a fair and reasoned manner and adopt an effective procedure when trying to resolve them. In the event of an unresolved dispute, accept the ruling of CCWE's Alternative Dispute Resolution Service and/or engage fully with its Mediation Process;
10. Listen to feedback from customers and CCWE and where appropriate use it as a tool to improve service and raise standards.



## CCWE membership package

Sitting alongside the Code of Practice is a range of services designed to optimise your capability.

### Advice Line

Membership includes unlimited access to our Advice Line. Members can contact our qualified staff to obtain consumer law or complaint-handling advice, helping you to understand your obligations and handle complaints. The aim of this is to help you to resolve issues before they escalate.

You can contact the Advice Line on 0330 094 0365.

### Training opportunities and knowledge base

We work to upskill our members, delivering a range of successful training packages that help our members to develop their knowledge, take control of complaint handling and achieve better outcomes.

Membership includes one place on our City & Guilds accredited Consumer Law, Customer Behavior and Complaint Management course.

CCWE also creates a knowledge base for its members, issuing news updates, tips and case studies via our regular newsletter.

### Terms and Conditions review

Our consumer law experts will review the Terms and Conditions you offer your customers, ensuring compliance with consumer legislation and helping you to avoid unfair terms with costly outcomes.

### Membership pack and marketing materials

Membership includes use of the CCWE member logo, demonstrating your commitment on plaques, websites, marketing material and business documentation; a logo to inspire confidence in your customers.

Members will benefit from a listing on our online member directory - with back links from the CCWE website to yours, enabling consumers anywhere to find out who you are and what your business can offer them.

The membership pack includes a membership certificate and point of sale material, including leaflets explaining what your commitment to CCWE means for you and your customers.



## Alternative Dispute Resolution service

Membership gives access to our Government-approved ADR service, delivered by professional experts.

This service leverages market-leading technology; our Case Management System is tailored to the specific needs of ADR and ensures all your documentation relating to a dispute is kept securely online and accessible 24/7. Data and reporting are readily available to you, and communications are made simple with email and SMS alerts and updates.

How you and your customers can engage with this service is described in the following sections of this guide. The Scheme Rules document sets out further detail, including fees, and is available at [www.ccwe.co.uk](http://www.ccwe.co.uk)

## When can your customer come to CCWE for ADR?

Your customer can contact us at any time, but we will always ensure that they engage with you and give you a fair opportunity to respond to their complaint. We allow 40 working days to elapse from the date of the consumer's first complaint to you, before the consumer can enter our process. This is to give our members the very best chance of satisfying their customer themselves first.

If you feel you have exhausted your options with the consumer sooner, you can issue a "deadlock letter" referring them to CCWE straightaway. The deadlock letter is your final written response to the consumer and should encourage them to raise their complaint with CCWE.

We can help with standard wording for deadlock letters.



## What will CCWE do?

### Checking eligibility and gathering information

Our initial checks will be to determine the consumer's eligibility for our scheme. The consumer must be:

- 16 or older
- Raising a dispute about a complaint they have raised with you – the trader – within the last 12 months

If the consumer isn't eligible, we'll tell them why and what they could do next. We will not accept disputes in the following circumstances:

- the dispute has not previously been referred to the trader
- the dispute is being or has been dealt with by a court or other redress scheme
- the dispute concerns alleged criminal activity or negligence claims
- the dispute requires a full legal decision and/or legal sanctions
- the dispute was referred to CCWE over 12 months from the trader's final response to the consumer
- the value of the compensation sought is over £10,000
- the dispute is reasonably determined to be frivolous or vexatious
- the claim relates to an outstanding insurance claim.

We will ask the consumer to fill out an application form that provides details about their complaint. We will process the application and request a response from you. As the trader, you have five working days to provide us with a response. We will ask the parties involved to sign an Agreement to Mediate. This document gives us the necessary legal basis to commence mediation.

### Proceeding to mediation

The case will then be assigned to a professional and highly skilled mediator, who will contact both parties within five working days to schedule a mediation. From the date it is scheduled, the mediation will take place within 10 working days. Our timescales can flex to account for exceptional circumstances.

### What is mediation?

The mediation will be a single one-hour session occurring on one day. The mediation will take place using a convenient, mutually agreeable method such as telephone or Skype, although we can make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

It will be facilitated by a professional and highly skilled mediator, who will engage with both parties, enabling a proactive discussion of the issues in dispute, and helping you to agree on a mutually acceptable way forward.



If you and the consumer agree on an outcome, the case will be settled and CCWE will draft a Settlement Agreement for both parties within two working days. In some cases, where several elements are being disputed, you may reach a partially settled outcome. In this case, CCWE will draft a Settlement Agreement concerning only those items.

Where only some elements of the dispute are settled – or no settlement is reached – we will produce a Case Summary, detailing all outstanding items in readiness for adjudication. This will be circulated to both parties for approval and signature.

### What is adjudication?

Once we have received a signed Case Summary from both parties (requested within five working days) we will proceed to adjudication.

The case will be assigned to a legally qualified adjudicator, who will make a decision that they believe to be fair and reasonable. They may:

- find in favour of the consumer – upholding their complaint and making an award
- find in your favour – rejecting the consumer's complaint
- reach a split decision – some elements may be in favour of the consumer, and others in your favour.

\* Any award that we may make in the consumer's favour is to compensate them for any loss they may have suffered and which we feel is appropriate in their particular case. In coming to this decision, we will look at your terms and conditions; your obligations under the Code of Practice and the applicable consumer law.

As a member, you are bound by the adjudicator's decision. The decision is not binding on the consumer.

### Evidence

For us to adjudicate, we require evidence from both parties. We will advise you on what you should be able to provide us with to support your case. Typically, evidence could include:

- Contracts between you and the consumer
- Receipts
- Photographs or videos
- Correspondence between you and the consumer, e.g. letters or emails.



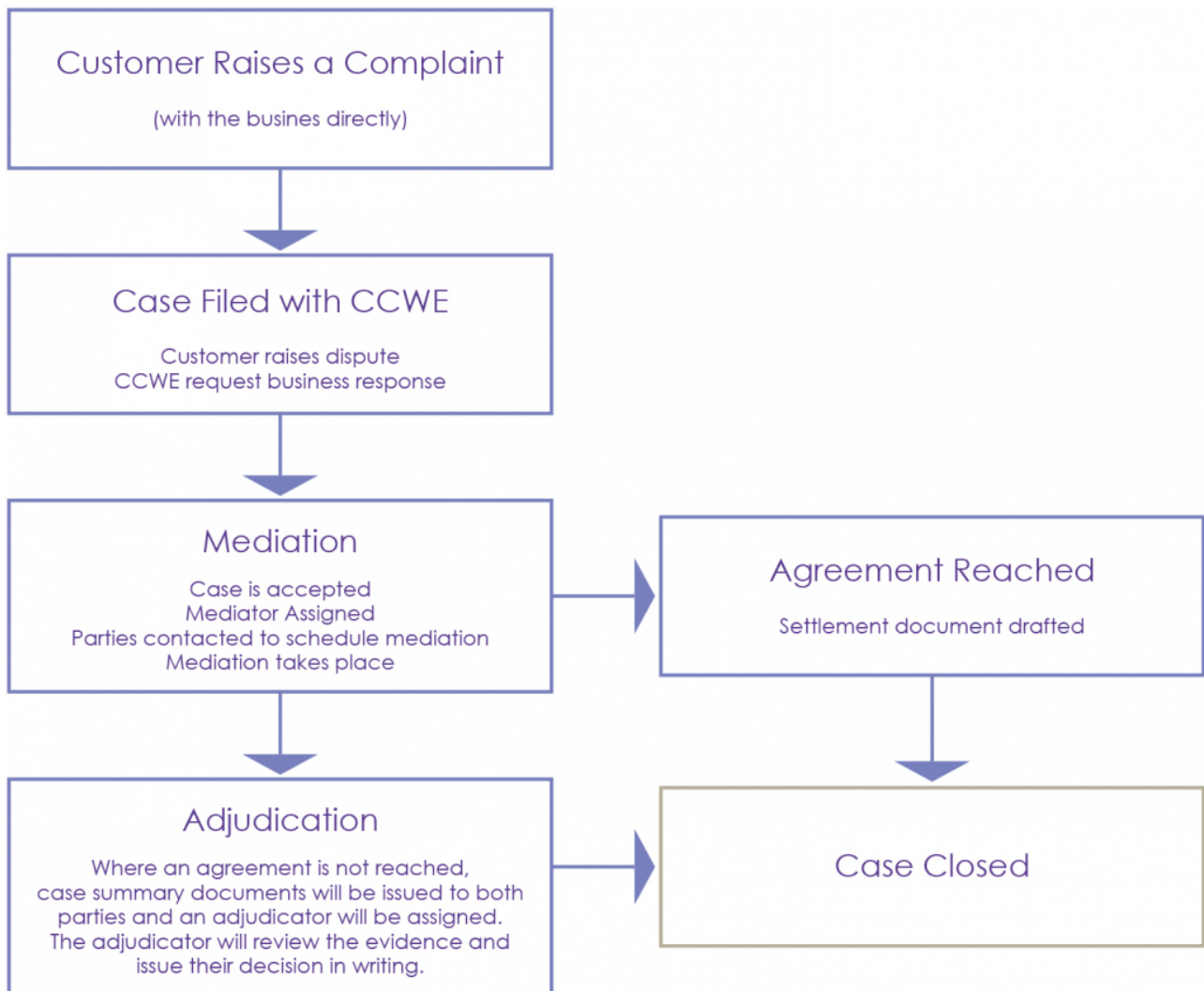


## How do we manage the process?

You will have access to an industry-leading Case Management System, which provides a secure portal for interaction between the parties involved and a highly efficient means of tracking cases and progress. You'll always know where you are in the process, and what you need to do next.

This system is delivering for high-profile businesses in several industries through:

- A trader view, enabling you to track and manage your cases and produce reports
- Configurable automated alerts and notifications – email and SMS – for you and the consumer, helping everyone to stay informed and avoid time wasted on chasing responses manually
- Reliable cloud-hosting, ensuring you always have access to the information you need.







## How should your customer contact CCWE?

You can signpost your customers to CCWE as follows:

- Telephone: 03300940365
- Email: [info@ccwe.co.uk](mailto:info@ccwe.co.uk)
- Online: [www.ccwe.co.uk](http://www.ccwe.co.uk)

We are contactable via Twitter, but we move interaction offline as soon as possible and will not discuss complaints @ccwetweets

You should include these details in a deadlock letter to your customer. By promoting membership of the CCWE scheme in marketing material, your customers will know that you offer a high level of assurance and would be able to contact us for information prior to a deadlock letter being issued should they wish. We can make the journey through a dispute as smooth as possible for them and you.

## Contact us

We are open Monday-Friday 09:00 – 17:00, excluding Bank Holidays.

Telephone: 03300940365

Email: [membership@ccwe.co.uk](mailto:membership@ccwe.co.uk)

Twitter: @ccwetweets

Post: CCWE  
Premier House  
1-5 Argyle Way  
Stevenage  
SG1 2AD