



Consumer Guide to the BSHAA Customer Care Scheme

Customer Care and the Consumer Code

The British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA) and hearing care businesses operate a Customer Care Scheme (CCS). BSHAA members of the scheme offer a user-friendly and independent procedure for resolving problems that you have been unable to resolve with the business.

The BSHAA Customer Care Scheme:

If, for any reason a customer of a business, which is a member of the scheme, is not satisfied with the outcome of a problem that they have raised with the business, they can call on us to help.

The scheme:

- is an easy way of resolving issues, which you have been unable to sort out with the business,
- uses good practice for resolving your problems,
- provides an independent conciliation service to try to find a solution which is acceptable to you and the business,
- provides that businesses (and their staff) are committed to dealing with your problems in a timely way about products or services,
- may offer independent arbitration to settle customer issues not sorted out by conciliation.

What businesses in the scheme must do

- Give you information explaining how to raise your concerns about the product or service at any time,
- Operate a user-friendly procedure for dealing with your problems, which will ensure staff are appropriately trained.
- Cooperate with you and/or your advisers or any other person or organisation you have asked to act on your behalf such as a Citizens Advice Bureau or Trading Standards,
- Deal with your concerns in a timely manner.

What you need to do if you have a problem

- Contact the business setting out your reasons for dissatisfaction (their business documentation will give you the contact details)

- The business will :

Acknowledge your correspondence/email within 5 working days of receipt and aim to resolve your concerns within 20 working days or advise you, with a reason if there will be a delay,

Log your issues and make this log available if required to BSHAA with all correspondence/documentation,

Inform you that you have the right to contact BSHAA if your problems have not been sorted out to your satisfaction.

What you should do if your problems are not sorted out to your satisfaction?

If after discussing your problems with the business it cannot be sorted out, write to BSHAA Customer Care Scheme, BSHAA Ltd, C/O Executive Business Support Ltd, City Wharf, Davidson Road, Lichfield, Staffs WS14 9DZ

Tell BSHAA your problems, the names and contact details of the dispenser and business and what you wish to achieve. Send in any relevant information (for example a copy of the order form). If you need help in writing this telephone BSHAA on 01371 876623 for help. Alternatively you may email us (customercare@bshaa.com) or use the "How to complain" section on the Society's website.

What BSHAA will do to try to find a solution to your problems

BSHAA will provide, at no cost, an independent conciliation service to try to find a solution to your problems that is acceptable to both parties.

BSHAA will:

- acknowledge your correspondence within 5 working days,
- ask you to complete a form which will authorise us to obtain information on your behalf,
- need to confirm that the business's resolution procedures have reached stalemate,
- if the business has not finished its process or has not had the matter referred to it, refer the matter back to the business so that they may try to sort out your problems,
- if necessary ask for additional information from you on the nature of your complaint,
- send your documentation to the business, including your documentation, ask for a report from the business and request access to any personnel or manufacturer as appropriate,
- on acceptance of your case allocate a trained conciliator (who is independent of the business) who will try to find a solution within 15 working days of receipt of your request for conciliation.

What is conciliation?

Conciliation aims to sort out customer's concerns in a way acceptable to the customer and the business without going to the courts or allocating any blame.

What happens if I am still not satisfied after conciliation?

If your problem is still not sorted out to your satisfaction you may be offered access to independent arbitration which is binding on the business although you can reject the findings of the arbitrator. It is worth noting that if you either decline arbitration or reject the findings of the arbitrator your only other route is probably through the courts. This has the risk that your failure to take up the offer of arbitration or accept the findings could seriously prejudice your chances of success.

If you choose arbitration, an Arbitrator will be appointed, by BSHAA at no cost to you - the business will meet these costs.

The objective of arbitration is to arrive at a conclusion that is fair and reasonable in the circumstances, looking at all the evidence presented by both you and the business. The Arbitrator is completely independent of BSHAA and the industry and will be from the Independent Consumer Arbitration Service approved by the Office of Fair Trading.

BSHAA will pass all the evidence gathered, including copies of all correspondence, between you, the business and BSHAA, to the Independent Arbitrator within five working days.

BSHAA Codes of Practice and HCPC Fitness to Practice

If BSHAA has concerns about professional standards or a breach of its Code of Practice it will contact the business and/or dispenser, as appropriate, setting out BSHAA's concerns and, when appropriate, refer any potential Fitness to Practice issues to the regulatory body (the Health and Care Professions Council).