

Existing Member Inspections/Audit

In the year to date, there have been a total of 1812 audits of members who were registered for either sales, lettings or both.

The selection of which members to audit is made at random via a data pull, manually adding any agents that have been brought to the attention of the Compliance Department in relation to a suspected non-compliance issue.

Agents are sent a detailed questionnaire to be completed within 21 days and returned with all supporting documentation, including photographs of shop fronts and displays of required certificates.

Reminders issued: deadline approaching one week before deadline; deadline passed; two weeks after the deadline with the final letter two weeks after this. A spreadsheet is maintained of received audits to enable reports to be run and to highlight non-compliance issues and to provide statistics for the Board of Directors.

A detailed review of the questionnaire and documentation is carried out, non-conformities are graded, and colour coded and the agent is required to make corrective actions and provide evidence that corrective actions have been carried out within 28 days.

During the Covid-19 pandemic,

Marketing and Advertising by Member Businesses

TPO issues comprehensive branding guidelines to all their members, and all new members receive a pack of marketing and branding materials when they join the code. TPO and CTSI logos are supplied, with window stickers sent by post.

advertising is checked as part of the random compliance audit process, with shop front photographs checked for the correct use of logos.

Terms and Conditions and other Pre-Contractual Information

TPO no longer check this.

Customer Service Provisions

TPO complaints handling tool kits were developed after working with an industry working group, led by TPO, examining trends in complaint handling performance. The toolkits for Complaint Handling England, Wales & Northern Ireland, Complaint Handling Scotland and Complaint Handling Residential Leasehold are available to download on the TPO website.

TPO has a dashboard for bigger corporate members to review their complaints, which are listed according to complaint type and branch.

The TPO has introduced training on consumer vulnerability for its staff. It is considering launching the training for members.

Consumer Complaints Process

There is a two-stage process.

- 1) Initial enquiry and advice and/or evaluation to see if there has been a potential breach of the code
- 2) Passed to the early resolution team for settlement, and escalated where necessary for adjudication

The number of consumer enquires received has remained steady. Changes to the process are having a positive impact. At the start of the process, a greater emphasis is placed on ensuring that fully completed complaint forms are received. This has seen the number of disputes accepted for investigation drop by 30%. This self-service portal has become the most popular channel to seek advice and contact TPO since its launch in February 2020. However, over a quarter of consumers still needed to speak to a member of the Enquiries Team to talk through the complexities of the issues they are facing.

Customer Satisfaction and Feedback tradingstandards.uk