



## APPROVED CODE SCHEME (ACS)

### Code Sponsor Quick Reference Guide

#### 1 What is ACS?

The Approved Code Scheme is a UK Government initiative that approves Codes of Practice designed to raise service standards and protect consumers.

It shows that businesses:

- Follow clear rules on customer service and conduct
- Are independently monitored
- Offer free dispute resolution if things go wrong

#### 2 Who runs it?

The scheme is run by the Approved Code Scheme Board (ACSB), an independent organisation and is operated by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI).

- Independent, trusted authority
- Approves and audits Codes of Practice
- Ensures ongoing compliance

#### 3 We are Code Sponsors, what does this mean?

Code Sponsors are trade bodies/ organisations that:

- Create and manage a sector-specific Code of Practice
- Recruit and support member businesses
- Monitor compliance
- Provide access to dispute resolution

Code sponsors connect CTSI to the businesses on the ground through the ACS.

#### 4 What does ACS mean for businesses?

Businesses signed up to an approved Code commit to:

- Higher service standards
- Transparent practices
- Fair complaint handling
- Independent dispute resolution (ADR)

Displaying the Approved Code logo is a signal of credibility and accountability.

## 5 How is ACS different from review platforms?

Platforms commonly used are based on customer reviews.

ACS is different:

- Not review-led → based on standards, not ratings
- Independently approved → via CTSI
- Enforceable rules → businesses must comply
- Includes ADR → formal route to resolve disputes

Simple distinction:

- Review platforms = opinions
- ACS = standards + accountability

## 6 What is ADR?

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a formal way to resolve complaints without going to court.

Why it matters:

- Protects consumers
- Builds trust
- Reduces risk for businesses
- Required for all approved Codes

## 7 What ACS does (and doesn't do)

### ACS DOES:

- Set clear service standards
- Provide independent oversight
- Offer consumer protection
- Ensure complaints can be resolved

### ACS DOES NOT:

- Guarantee perfect service
- Operate like a review site
- Act as a marketing badge only

## 6 Who can I contact at ACS for more support?

### MARKETING SUPPORT

- For support with anything marketing related, included requests to share your social content, please contact: [marketing@tsi.org.uk](mailto:marketing@tsi.org.uk)

### CODE SPONSOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES

- For anything non-urgent related to being a Code Sponsor, please contact: [acsfeedback@tsi.org.uk](mailto:acsfeedback@tsi.org.uk)
- For anything urgent, please contact:

**Phoebe Otukoya**, Approved Codes and ADR Coordinator: [phoebeo@tsi.org.uk](mailto:phoebeo@tsi.org.uk).

**Lorna Newton**, ACS & ADR Manager: [lornan@tsi.org.uk](mailto:lornan@tsi.org.uk)

**Lesley Crompton**, Head of Resolution Services: [lesleyc@tsi.org.uk](mailto:lesleyc@tsi.org.uk)

## In summary: Key messages

 "It's just a badge"

 **It represents a monitored, enforceable Code**

 "It's a customer review platform"

 **It's standards-based, not review-based**

 "It guarantees no issues"

 **It guarantees accountability and resolution**

 "It's only for consumers"

 **It helps good businesses stand out**