The Motor Ombudsman expands coverage of its Service and Repair Code

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Mobile Mechanics, tyre fitters and smart repairers now come within the scope of The Motor Ombudsman’s Service and Repair Code.

They tell us:

• The Motor Ombudsman has marked the 15th anniversary of the launch of its Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair with the expansion of the Code’s coverage to mobile mechanics, tyre fitters, and smart repairers

• The comprehensive Code was introduced on 23 May 2008 to improve customer satisfaction and drive higher standards, beyond those required by law, in the service and repair sector

• Accreditation has previously been open to physical sites of independent garages, franchise dealer workshops, and body repair centres across the UK, but consumers will now enjoy the same level of protection as having their vehicle repaired at fixed premises

• Amongst other requirements, accredited mobile mechanics will need to signpost consumers to The Motor Ombudsman's free-to-use dispute resolution service in the event of an unresolved complaintLondon, 23 May 2023: The Motor Ombudsman, the Ombudsman dedicated to the automotive sector, has expanded the coverage of its Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair to include mobile mechanics, tyre fitters, and smart repairers. The comprehensive Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Code was unveiled 15 years ago on 23 May 2008 with the principal aims of driving up standards in the service and repair sector, and reducing the level of consumer detriment.

Accreditation has previously only been applicable to the physical sites of independent garages, franchise dealer workshops, and body repair centres across the UK. However, the Code now offers consumers the same level of protection when using a mobile mechanic as if they had taken their vehicle to the premises of a repairer.The widening and updating of the scope of the longest-standing Service and Repair Code of Practice in the motor industry, comes in response to both the growing usage of mobile mechanics for vehicle repairs, which was particularly notable during the pandemic when many motorists were isolating, as well as the increasing number of requests for Motor Ombudsman accreditation from off-premises repairers. Independent mobile mechanics, and those operating under a franchise arrangement, will now be able to apply to be a part of the Code, and will be subject, on application, to the same stringent assessment as businesses with a named location. This ensures that the high standards of work and service required by Motor Ombudsman accreditation are continually met.

Furthermore, mobile mechanics who commit to operating in accordance with the Service and Repair Code, will abide by the same guidelines as those followed by thousands of businesses across the country. These clauses include, the use of honest and accurate advertising, open and transparent pricing, staff that act in the customer's best interests, having a swift complaints handling process in place should something go wrong, and signposting a vehicle owner to The Motor Ombudsman's free-of-charge independent and impartial Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service to help reach a fair and swift outcome, should a dispute not be concluded between the two parties in the first instance. Motor Ombudsman accreditation offers service and repair businesses an extensive suite of benefits, which are namely, access to the body's Business Line for advice and guidance relating to best practice and the handling of disputes, the privilege of displaying The Motor Ombudsman's Service and Repair and Approved Code logos on websites and vehicles, the opportunity to generate leads through an eye- catching profile page on the popular Garage Finder (www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/Garage-Finder) and other marketing initiatives, the option to undertake exclusive training courses tailored to the automotive sector, as well as the ability to enter The Motor Ombudsman's annual Garage Star Awards for added exposure and recognition.

Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: “It is essential that our Codes of Practice evolve in line with the direction of the industry and vehicle ownership trends. Mobile mechanics and repairers provide an important and valuable service to consumers, and expanding our Service and Repair Code to encompass this area of the market gives motorists an even greater level of protection and recourse when getting their vehicle repaired. Conversely, mobile mechanics will have an automotive authority to consult for information and expertise on managing disputes swiftly and effectively.”

Bill added: “We look forward to welcoming mobile mechanics and repairers to our Code of Practice, and building the coverage of our UK-wide accredited network in this growing segment of the service and repair sector.”

To view the businesses that are accredited to The Motor Ombudsman’s Service and Repair Code, visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/Garage-Finder.

About The Motor Ombudsman

The Motor Ombudsman is the independent and impartial Ombudsman dedicated solely to the automotive sector, and self-regulates the UK’s motor industry through its comprehensive Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Codes of Practice. Thousands of businesses, including vehicle manufacturers, warranty product providers, franchised dealers and independent garages, are accredited to one or more of the Codes, which drive even higher standards of work and service, and give consumers added protection, peace of mind and trust during the vehicle purchase and ownership experience.

For more information on The Motor Ombudsman, visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org.