



# **The Motor Ombudsman Annual Report**

2023

# Contents

<b>Foreword from the Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW</b>	
1.1 About us	5
1.2 Our Mission, Vision, Values and Purpose	5
1.3 Our core roles within the automotive sector	6
1.4 How we stay impartial as an Ombudsman	7
1.5 Our four Motor Industry Codes of Practice	8
1.6 Our five key strategic imperatives	9
<b>SECTION 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR</b>	
2.1 2023: Our year in numbers	11
2.2 2023: Our activity highlights by month	12
2.3 Overview of our key activities in 2023	13
<b>SECTION 3: CONSUMER CONTACT AND CASE VOLUMES</b>	
3.1 Consumer contact volumes (2021 – 2023)	14
3.2 Accepted adjudication case volumes by Code (2021 – 2023)	16
3.3 Ombudsman final decisions (2021 – 2023)	22
<b>SECTION 4: CONSUMER AND BUSINESS REDRESS</b>	
4.1 Consumer and business redress	24
<b>SECTION 5: CONSUMER AND BUSINESS INSIGHT</b>	
5.1 Annual consumer brand awareness survey highlights	26
5.2 Consumer complaints about The Motor Ombudsman	35
5.3 How complaints to The Motor Ombudsman are being addressed	40
5.4 Positive consumer testimonials about The Motor Ombudsman	41
5.5 Annual accredited business survey highlights	42
5.6 Accredited business compliance	43
<b>SECTION 6: OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS</b>	
6.1 Staff learning and development	47
6.2 Staff diversity and inclusion	48
6.3 Our key areas of focus for 2024	49
<b>SECTION 7: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b>	
7.1 The Motor Ombudsman Accounts: Finance Report	50
<b>SECTION 8: APPENDICES</b>	
8.1 The Motor Ombudsman's Alternative Dispute Resolution process	53
8.2 Benefits of The Motor Ombudsman for consumers and businesses	54
8.3 Code of Practice performance summary	55
8.4 Case studies - adjudication outcomes and final decisions	60
<b>Contact</b>	<b>61</b>

# Foreword from the Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director



**Bill Fennell**  
Managing Director

I am pleased to present the Annual Report and Accounts for The Motor Ombudsman, for the year ending 31st December 2023.

## ► The UK's automotive sector stayed on the road to recovery

The past twelve months have seen the automotive sector continue to stage a positive recovery following the subsidence of challenges posed by the pandemic. In 2023, UK car manufacturing recorded its best growth rate since 2010 at 17%. Similarly, new car registrations grew by 18%, with more battery electric vehicles taking to the roads, although demand was underpinned by the fleet sector, as consumer appetite for EVs struggled in the face of higher retail prices and government pushing back the ban of the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles to 2035. In addition, as used car supply constraints receded, and greater stock and choice was made available to motorists, transactions topped 7.2 million, equating to a growth of 5% versus the volumes seen in 2022.

## ► 2023 saw a record level of demand for our services

With heightened activity in the motor industry, coupled with greater awareness of our organisation, against a backdrop of households continuing to face sustained pressures on their finances, this year has seen a notable increase in both the complexity and the number of cases brought to our organisation by motorists, which reached a new record, highlighting the growing reliance on the valuable services we provide. During 2023, we received nearly 150,000 contacts (a circa 40% jump compared to the volume seen in 2022), whilst we accepted close to 9,000 new cases into our service for a decision – about 2,000 more than the previous 12 months.

As a greater volume of consumers sought help resolving their disputes, we took the opportunity to further streamline and enhance the services that we provide. Our focus on continuous improvement drives us to not only enhance the quality of what we do and in our in-house

processes, but also helps to anticipate future needs and challenges. On this point, we expanded our team by recruiting highly-experienced and qualified professionals, bringing our organisation's headcount to its highest ever level. In tandem with this, we continued to make additional investments in our back-office software and IT systems, once again reinforcing our commitment to delivering timely, fair, and effective outcomes.

## ► Our accredited business base expanded

Another positive takeaway from 2023 was that we also welcomed a number of new businesses to our accredited network, widening the availability of ADR to a broader consumer audience, which has been encouraging to see. As an Ombudsman, we also have a focus on promoting the exemplary levels of service provided by accredited businesses to customers up and down the country, with our end-of-year Star Awards being a formal recognition of this.

For our fourth annual competition, we saw the highest-ever number of consumer nominations at 3,200, and the crescendo of the 2023 contest was the in-person presentation of the National Garage Star Award in the prestigious surroundings of the Houses of Parliament in London, after we partnered with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)'s Hero Awards. The top prize was handed to [Luke Laurence](#), a Sales Executive at a Suzuki dealership in North London, who became the first ever individual to lift the National Garage Star Award trophy since the Star Awards debuted in 2020. Our aim is continue to grow the contest and reinforce its standing as one of the 'must-enter' accolades in the automotive sector.

## ► A year of evolution and innovation

During 2023, we also embarked on several key projects, including the development of a more comprehensive framework and staff training toolkit to better assist consumers who may be considered vulnerable, and to improve the handling of complaints according to individual

needs and circumstances. We also introduced peer-to-peer reviews, and implemented new management dashboards, giving staff the valuable opportunity for 360-degree feedback to identify key areas for personal growth.

In addition, to reinforce our position as an authority in the motor industry, we published three [thought leadership papers](#) throughout 2023, providing valuable industry insight into key trends that we witness across our Codes of Practice, and to serve as a source of key learning and best practice for implementation by businesses.

#### ► **Turning our attention to 2024**

In line with the current upward trend in the demands placed on our service, we expect our own organisation's records to be broken in terms of the number of cases and contacts that we are set to handle in 2024, which will call for further recruitment, as well as the evolution of existing processes to sustain the continued reduction in the case compilation-to-decision timeframe.

As part of this, we will be looking at driving further efficiencies in the way that we work, and exploring the potential integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions to speed up internal processes and to maximise what we are able to deliver as an organisation.

As we turn our attention to 2024, we will also be marking two more notable milestones – the first being in July where we will celebrate 15 years of our [Vehicle Warranty Products Code](#) serving the automotive sector. This will be followed by a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of our [New Car Code](#) gaining full approval from the former Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in September.

Lastly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the entire Motor Ombudsman team, our Board of Directors, and to our businesses, for their dedication and support, and we look forward to working together to make 2024 yet another successful year for our organisation.





## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### 1.1 About us

Established in 2016, 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.



### 1.2 Our Mission, Vision, Values and Purpose

Our Mission, Vision, Values and Purpose sit at the heart of our company culture, the work that we do, and the services that we provide to businesses and consumers. They also play a key role in helping us to support our objective of attracting and retaining employees that are of a high calibre.

#### Our Mission

To provide the best Ombudsman & dispute resolution service through passionate, engaged people driving excellence in customer service across the automotive sector.

◀ Our **Mission** is the driver behind how we will achieve our long-term Vision of being the leading Ombudsman and dispute resolution body. We will be doing this by providing the best dispute resolution service through passionate, engaged people driving excellence in customer service across the automotive sector.

#### Our Vision

To be the leading Ombudsman and dispute resolution body, by excelling in every aspect of our service, being recognised for the quality of our work, and inspiring total consumer confidence across the automotive industry.

◀ Our **Vision** provides greater clarity to our long-term goal and how we envisage our future, thereby helping our staff to feel driven and positive to achieve the destination that we are ultimately looking to reach as an organisation. Our Vision is to be the leading Ombudsman and dispute resolution body, by excelling in every aspect of our service, being recognised for the quality of our work, and inspiring total consumer confidence across the automotive industry.

#### Our Values

We take great **PRIDE** in everything we do, inspiring total trust and confidence in our staff, our customers, and our accredited businesses.

◀ Our **Values** have been redefined to resonate with what is important to our staff and the way they interact and connect with one another, our customers, our accredited businesses and our suppliers. We adopted the **PRIDE** abbreviation for our five Values to reflect the approach, behaviour and attitude of staff. i.e. they feel proud to be part of The Motor Ombudsman and have pride in the work that they do.



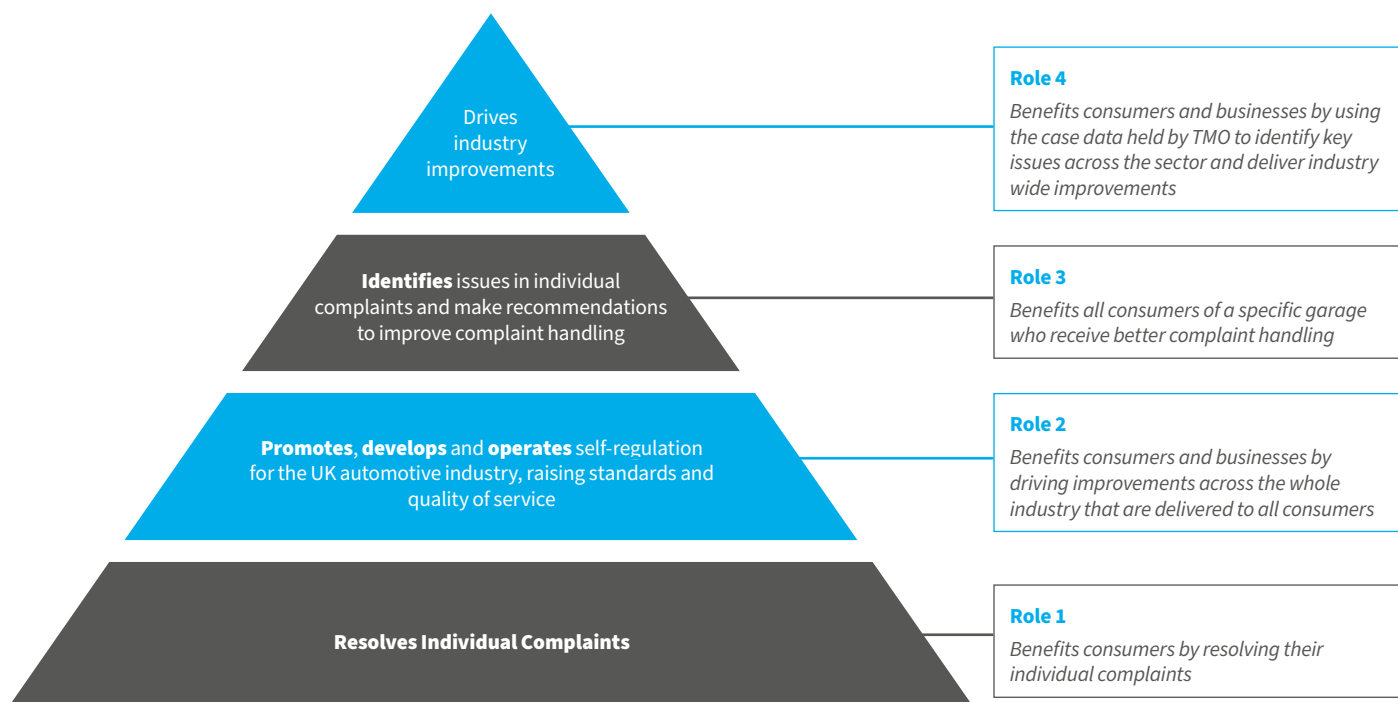
#### Our Purpose

To drive standards, promote integrity, and to build confidence and trust in a way that continually improves everyone's experience of the motor industry.

◀ Our **Purpose** has been designed to clearly explain what we are here to do as the Ombudsman for the automotive sector, which is namely to promote integrity, and to build confidence and trust in a way that continually improves everyone's experience of the motor industry.

## 1.3 Our core roles within the automotive sector

Whilst The Motor Ombudsman looks to resolve complaints between consumers and accredited businesses, this forms only part of our core responsibilities as an Ombudsman. We are tasked specifically with the self-regulation of the UK automotive industry, and to identify key issues to assist in driving even higher standards throughout the consumer purchase and ownership experience, at an independent garage, dealership, vehicle manufacturer and warranty level, and across the automotive industry as a whole.



## 1.4 How we stay impartial as an Ombudsman

**Impartiality** lies at the heart of what we do, which means that we treat consumers and businesses equally, and show no element of bias towards either party when coming to a decision.

To help maintain our impartiality, we are overseen by several independent entities to ensure that our work is fair at all times, and is based on all the facts presented to us.

The graphic below illustrates the core areas of governance that drive our [impartiality](#).



\*The Motor Ombudsman's Board of Directors includes an independent Chair and Non-Executive Directors from outside of the automotive sector. The role of the Chair is to ensure The Motor Ombudsman's compliance with OA and CTSI requirements, and that The Motor Ombudsman has a clear strategy for the delivery of service standards.

Non-Executive Directors are elected to offer independent and impartial insight and guidance to help The Motor Ombudsman achieve its short and long-term customer, commercial and financial objectives.

## 1.5 Our four Motor Industry Codes of Practice

The Motor Ombudsman's four comprehensive CTSI-approved [Motor Industry Codes of Practice](#) cover the entire customer purchase and vehicle ownership experience, and commit accredited businesses to higher operating standards than those required by law.



First launched in 1976, and endorsed by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in **2004**, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for New Cars** ensures that vehicle manufacturers supply new cars and warranties to consumers responsibly. The Code helps to safeguard new car buyers from misleading advertising, and ensures that documentation supplied to consumers is easy to understand, that the terms of a warranty will be respected, and that any complaints will be handled swiftly.



[Marking 15 years](#) of serving the automotive sector in 2023, **The Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair**, introduced in **2008**, ensures that consumers receive an honest and fair service when visiting an accredited business's premises for work or repairs on their vehicle. It covers the use of clear advertising, open and transparent pricing, completing extra work only with prior agreement, and the use of competent and qualified staff. All businesses accredited to the Service and Repair Code can be found on The Motor Ombudsman's online [Garage Finder](#).



Unveiled in **2009**, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for Vehicle Warranty Products** aims to provide guidelines for the supply of automotive warranties, including coverage of both insured and non-insured products. The Code currently represents about 75% of the industry's major providers that administer over two million products to consumers.



Launched in **2016**, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for Vehicle Sales** focuses on the sale of both new and used cars at an accredited garage, dealership or used car outlet, as well as the supply of finance and warranties. It covers areas, such as the use of transparent wording of advertising and pricing, clear and transparent invoicing, and that the sale of a used car is supported by a vehicle provenance check to ensure that it has not been stolen, written-off and is free of any outstanding finance payments. Businesses accredited to the Vehicle Sales Code can be found on The Motor Ombudsman's online [Garage Finder](#).

## 1.6 Our five key strategic imperatives

As well as our Mission, Vision, Values and Purpose, we also have a platform of five key imperatives that cover the core aspects of our business. They are as follows:

### 1. To raise awareness of The Motor Ombudsman amongst consumers in the UK

- Consumers and businesses recognise The Motor Ombudsman as the “*Industry Quality Mark*” and the “go-to” organisation for quality garages, dealerships and automotive-related businesses.
- The Motor Ombudsman is seen as the authority for resolving motoring-related disputes.
- The Motor Ombudsman is endorsed by all accredited businesses and key stakeholders.

#### We looked to achieve this by:

- ▶ Undertaking marketing, PR and social media initiatives to increase the volume of consumers that recognise The Motor Ombudsman as the automotive sector’s “Quality Mark” and the authority for resolving motoring-related disputes.

### 2. To demonstrate our effectiveness as an Ombudsman and communicate the value of what we offer to businesses and consumers

- The Motor Ombudsman will have a clear, compelling and tailored business case communicated effectively across all accredited businesses, with The Motor Ombudsman’s Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service embedded into their complaints process<sup>1</sup>.
- The Motor Ombudsman will provide consistent and regular engagement with accredited businesses, and supply market and individual insight, best practice as well as performance and activity reports.

#### We looked to achieve this by:

- ▶ Making our processes and working practices more streamlined and efficient to deliver faster case outcomes for consumers and businesses;
- ▶ Providing consistent and regular engagement with our accredited businesses;
- ▶ Supplying insight to the industry, best practice guidelines and marketing opportunities for businesses, as well as annual performance reports detailing our activities;
- ▶ Growing the scope of content on our popular online Knowledge Base on our website to provide consumers with helpful information and advice when they need it;
- ▶ Continuing to source and increase the volume of testimonials on our website to illustrate how our service has been effective for businesses and consumers; and
- ▶ Delivering events and online webinars to our accredited businesses to reinforce the value of the services provided by The Motor Ombudsman, and to provide insight into the experiences of consumers to raise service levels.

<sup>1</sup> Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is defined as a method of resolving a dispute fairly between consumers and businesses without having to go through the legal (court) process.



### 3. To deliver excellence as an organisation

- The Motor Ombudsman will provide an environment which attracts, develops and retains the best talent.
- The Motor Ombudsman will have clearly defined efficient processes and a continuous improvement culture.
- The Motor Ombudsman will be supported by effective IT systems to deliver the business objectives.
- The Motor Ombudsman will continually strive to provide and improve service levels to consumers and businesses, which are consistent across the organisation.
- The Motor Ombudsman will be fully compliant with the Codes of Practice, ADR Regulations and all governance requirements.
- The Motor Ombudsman will improve staff, customer and business satisfaction at every stage of the dispute resolution process.

#### We looked to achieve this by:

- ▶ Continuing to invest in our case management systems;
- ▶ Building on our training programmes, particularly for new starters, to ensure the quality of the work we deliver is of the highest standard; and
- ▶ Refreshing our quality assurance frameworks to ensure we have sufficient and robust oversight of our work across the organisation.

### 4. To grow the number of businesses accredited to us in order to provide increased market coverage for consumers across the UK

- The Motor Ombudsman is the dominant authority for ADR and setting and raising industry standards and performance across core, adjacent and future markets related to the automotive sector.
- The Motor Ombudsman's ADR services are available to the highest possible number of automotive consumers, and at no cost to them.
- The Motor Ombudsman will partner strategically with other automotive organisations to increase accredited business volume.

#### We looked to achieve this by:

- ▶ Adopting a specific focus on growing the number of independent garages and vehicle manufacturers accredited to us, thus providing consumers with an even wider choice of Motor Ombudsman-accredited businesses across the UK.

### 5. To ensure the financial security of The Motor Ombudsman

- As a not-for-profit organisation, accreditation and case fees will cover The Motor Ombudsman's base operating costs.

#### We looked to achieve this by:

- ▶ Managing our budget effectively in line with our long-term strategy. As an Ombudsman, this allows us to maintain a free-of-charge service for consumers, and to evolve our organisation in line with customer demand.

## SECTION 2: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

### 2.1 2023: Our year in numbers



**4.4**

out of 5 consumer satisfaction rating for The Motor Ombudsman's services



**24**

new cases studies added to the website



**47**

days from case file collation to an adjudication decision



**58%**

of vehicle owners who had a dispute were aware of The Motor Ombudsman according to the 2023 consumer survey



**83%**

satisfaction score from accredited garages and dealers



**3,186**

consumer nominations received for the Garage and Customer Service Star Awards



**8,892**

cases accepted for adjudication by the dispute resolution team



**14,619**

social media followers by year-end



**25,546**

cases created for consumers with a dispute



**74,385**

phone calls taken by the in-house dispute resolution team



**148,007**

contacts received from consumers and businesses during the year



**615,826**

searches on the online Garage Finder



**578,150**

article views on The Motor Ombudsman's Knowledge Base



**850,309**

unique website users



**158m**

people reached through The Motor Ombudsman's PR programme

## 2.2 2023: Our activity highlights by month

### January

- TMO released results of its [survey of service and repair businesses](#) revealing that operational costs were the main challenge in 2023.
- Jaguar Land Rover** made it mandatory for all dealers to be accredited to TMO.

### February

- TMO reported on the [EV disputes](#) seen in 2022.
- TMO passed its annual **Consumer Codes Approval Scheme** audit.
- [Centurion Warranties](#) joined TMO's Vehicle Warranty Products Code.

### March

- [MG Motor UK](#) and its dealer network gained TMO accreditation.
- TMO met with the **Department for Business & Trade** to discuss future ADR quality and service level standards.

### April

- TMO ran a **broadcast campaign** to highlight the risks of buying a [used car privately](#) during the cost of living crisis.
- TMO published a [paper](#) on the impact of the cost of living crisis on disputes.

### May

- TMO hosted its **Annual Business & Law Conference**.
- TMO's Service and Repair Code turned 15, and was extended to encompass [mobile mechanics](#).
- Members of **ICAP** met with TMO.

### June

- TMO exhibited at the **Automechanika** event in Birmingham.
- TMO published its [2022 ICAP Report](#).
- TMO attended the **CCAS Code Sponsors Forum**, and the OA Conference.

### July

- TMO published a **paper** on [EV disputes](#) in H1 2023.
- Members of **ICAP** met with TMO.
- TMO was appointed to the OA's Validation Committee.
- TMO partnered with [AA Approved Garages](#).

### August

- [Warranty First](#) joined TMO's Vehicle Warranty Products Code.
- TMO recorded its highest ever **Trustpilot** score of 3.3.
- TMO implemented a new **telephony system** to further enhance its service levels.

### September

- TMO published a story on manual and automatic **gearbox** preferences.
- TMO attended the [VSTAG](#) meeting on mileage tampering devices.
- TMO hosted a webinar on **EV** complaint trends.

### October

- Bill Fennell was re-elected to the **OA** Board.
- TMO presented the Customer Service trophy to [P & W Auto Services](#) at the **Servicesure Awards**.
- TMO marked **OmbudsDay** on **social media**.

### November

- Members of **ICAP** met with TMO.
- TMO presented the **National Garage Star trophy** formally in-person at CTSI's [Hero Awards](#).
- TMO hosted a **Business and Legal Review** webinar.

### December

- Smart UK Automotive Ltd** became accredited to the New Car Code.
- TMO handled more than **148,000** contacts and accepted nearly **8,900** cases for adjudication in 2023 – a new annual record.

## 2.3 Overview of our key activities in 2023



### ► We raised awareness of the risks of buying a used car from a private seller

In **April**, we ran a broadcast-driven PR campaign which highlighted the risks to consumers of purchasing a used car from a [private seller](#), amidst the cost of living crisis when consumers may be looking for avenues to save money, as rising household bills hit the headlines.

Similarly, the campaign reiterated the fact that, when buying a second hand model, consumers should purchase a vehicle from a Motor Ombudsman-accredited business for added peace of mind that the retailer is striving for high standards, and can signpost to or our organisation should the resolution of a dispute reach a state of deadlock via the seller's own internal processes.

### ► We marked the 15th anniversary of the launch of the Service and Repair Code

In **May**, we commemorated 15 years of our [Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair](#) serving the automotive sector. To mark the occasion, the coverage of the Code, which is the second busiest in terms of contacts and case volumes, was extended to encompass [mobile mechanics](#), tyre fitters, and smart repairers for the first time.



### ► We went back on show at Automechanika Birmingham

In **June**, following a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic, The Motor Ombudsman once again had a physical presence at the Automechanika Birmingham show – the most important trade event for the UK's garage and aftermarket sector. The stand provided an opportunity to promote the expansion of the Service and Repair Code to encompass mobile mechanics, as well our partnership with the payment solutions provider, Tyl by NatWest.





### ► Our partnership debuted with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)'s Hero Awards

In **November**, our partnership with the [Chartered Trading Standards Institute \(CTSI\)'s Hero Awards](#) debuted in the prestigious surroundings of the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. The top prize of our annual Star Awards – the National Garage Star trophy, was presented in-person to Luke Laurence, a Sales Executive at a Suzuki dealership in North London, becoming the first individual to achieve this feat. The special occasion was also attended by Dr Matthew Offord, who was serving as the Conservative MP for Hendon. We aim to build on this partnership going forward thanks to the success of this year's event in bringing valuable exposure, and helping to grow the profile of our Star Awards contest.



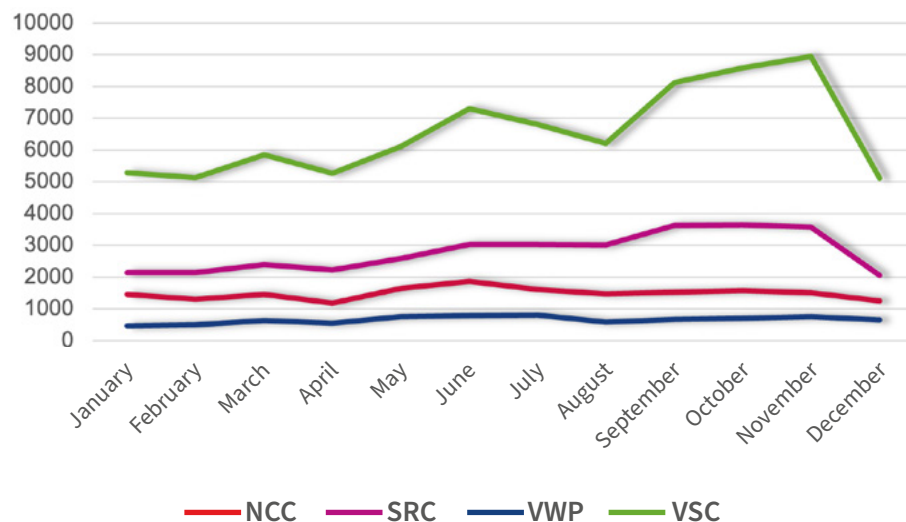
## SECTION 3: CONSUMER CONTACT AND CASE VOLUMES

### 3.1 Consumer contact volumes (2021 – 2023)

	2021	2022	2023	2023 v 2022	
Vehicle Sales Code	45,821	27,305	78,759	▲ 51,454 (+188%)	
Service and Repair Code	24,316	15,690	33,520	▲ 17,830 (+114%)	
New Car Code	15,453	12,551	17,922	▲ 5,371 (+43%)	
Vehicle Warranty Code	4,054	4,019	7,907	▲ 3,888 (+97%)	
Code Contacts	89,614	59,565	138,108	▲ 78,543 (+132%)	
Non-Code Contacts	6,917	45,000	9,899	▼ 35,101 (-78%)	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>96,561</b>	<b>104,565</b>	<b>148,007</b>	<b>▲ 43,442 (+42%)</b>	



## Consumer contact volumes by Code in 2023



**Vehicle Sales Code:**  
**188% increase** (+51,454) v 2022

**Service and Repair Code:**  
**114% increase** (+17,830) v 2022

**New Car Code:**  
**43% increase** (+5,371) v 2022





**Vehicle Warranty Products Code:**  
**97% increase** (+3,888) v 2022

### ► Consumer contact volume analysis

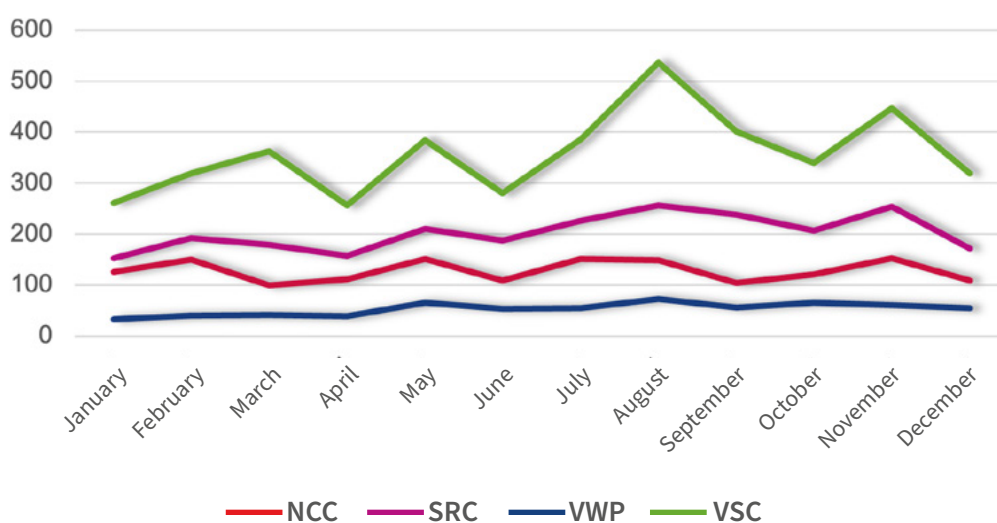
- The **Vehicle Sales Code** witnessed the biggest increase (**188%**) in contacts during 2023, which was likely due to consumers increasingly looking to recoup costs following the purchase of a used car, at a time when household finances were increasingly stretched during the cost of living crisis.
- In contrast, the **New Car Code** saw the lowest year-on-year rise in contacts (**at 43%**), highlighting the occurrence of fewer complaints in respect to claims made against a manufacturer's new car warranty following the purchase of a vehicle.
- The marked 78% year-on-year fall in the number of contacts **not related to a Code of Practice**, was due to changes in reporting methodology and system changes implemented by The Motor Ombudsman during 2023. This was so as to ensure greater accuracy in terms of how consumer enquiries are classified in relation to the subject matter raised by consumers.



## 3.2 Accepted adjudication case volumes by Code (2021 – 2023)

	2021	2022	2023	2023 v 2022	
Vehicle Sales Code	2,652	2,958	4,289	▲ 1,331 (+45%)	
Service and Repair Code	1,693	1,821	2,430	▲ 609 (+33%)	
New Car Code	1,164	1,226	1,533	▲ 327 (+25%)	
Vehicle Warranty Code	321	388	640	▲ 252 (+65%)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,830</b>	<b>6,393</b>	<b>8,892</b>	<b>▲ 2,499 (+39%)</b>	

### Adjudication case accepted by Code in 2023



**Vehicle Sales Code:**  
45% increase (+1,331) v 2022

**Service and Repair Code:**  
33% increase (+609) v 2022


**New Car Code:**  
25% increase (+327) v 2022

**Vehicle Warranty Products Code:**  
65% increase (+252) v 2022

## ► Accepted adjudication case volume analysis

- Overall, for all four Codes of Practice, the number of new cases accepted for an adjudicator's decision increased by 39% from 6,393 in 2022 to **8,892** in 2023 – its highest point in three years. This can be put down to more disputes falling within the remit of The Motor Ombudsman, coupled with an expanded accreditation network, and a greater number of consumers logging a case against the backdrop of a cost of living crisis to try to claw back detriment in possibly more 'minor' scenarios where they may not have attempted to receive an award previously.
- As reported in 2022, The **Vehicle Warranty Products Code** saw the largest relative year-on-year growth (65%) out of the four Codes in terms of the number of cases being passed to adjudicators, and was nearly double the volume seen the previous year. Reasons for this could be a greater a number of consumers disputing awards made or claims rejected with motorists subject to increased financial strains, coupled with a rising portfolio of businesses accredited under this Code.
- For the second consecutive year, the **New Car Code** saw the smallest annual rise in adjudication case volumes at 25%, suggesting greater satisfaction with the warranty administration and claims processes operated by vehicle manufacturers.

## ► Total adjudication cases by Code as a percentage of UK new car registrations, used car transactions, and total UK car parc (where applicable)

	Total adjudication cases accepted in 2023	Cases as a percentage of new car registrations and used car transactions in 2023*	Cases as a percentage of new car registrations in 2023**	Cases as a percentage of total vehicle parc in 2023***
Vehicle Sales Code	4,289	0.047% (0.035% in 2022)	-	-
Service and Repair Code	2,430	-	-	0.006% (0.005% in 2022)
New Car Code	1,533	-	0.08% (0.08% in 2022)	-
Vehicle Warranty Code	640	0.007% (0.005% in 2022)	-	-

\* Total new car registrations (**1,903,054**) and used car transactions (**7,242,692**) in the UK in 2023 (source: SMMT): **9,145,746**

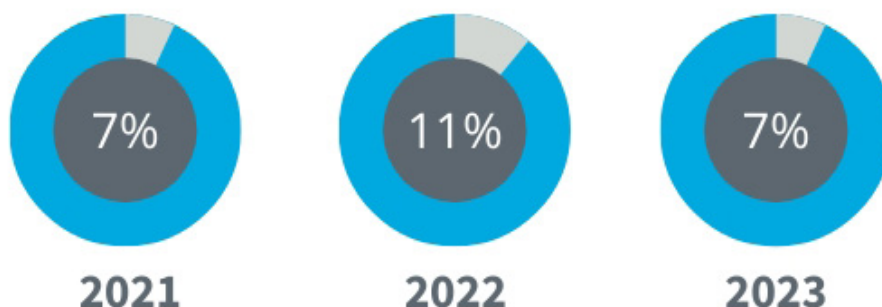
\*\* Total new car registrations in the UK in 2023 (source: SMMT): **1,903,054**

\*\*\* Total car parc in the UK in 2023 (source: SMMT): **35,649,845**

- ▶ **Vehicle Sales Code** cases represented a small proportion of total new car registrations and used car transactions in 2023, at just **0.047%**, up from 0.035% in 2022, and 0.028% in 2021.
- ▶ **Service and Repair Code** cases accounted for **0.006%** of the total UK car parc in 2023, which is slightly more than the figure of 0.005% in 2022.
- ▶ **New Car Code** cases accounted for **0.08%** of all UK new car registrations in 2023, the same as the figure reported a year earlier.
- ▶ Cases in relation to the **Vehicle Warranty Products Code** equated to **0.007%** of total new car registrations and used car transactions in 2023, a minimal increase from 0.005% in 2022.

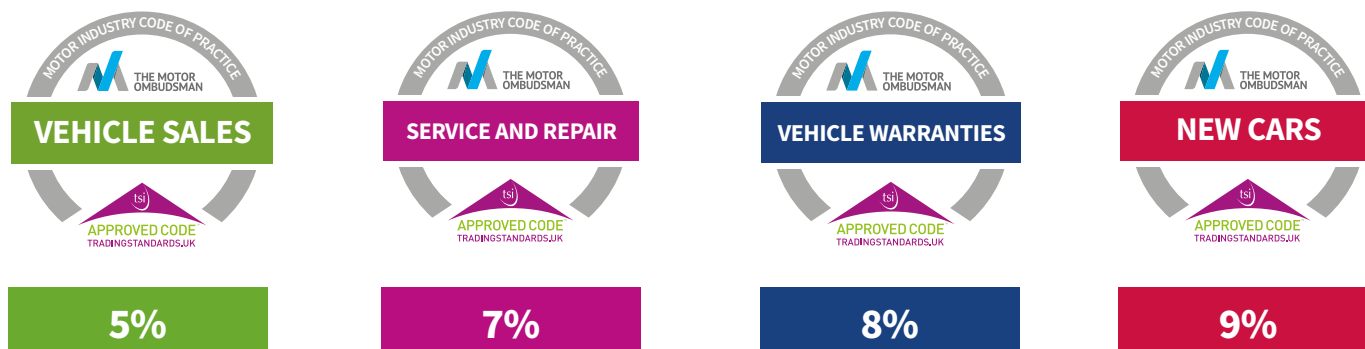
#### ▶ Contact to case escalation (2021 – 2023)

- ▶ In 2023, the average escalation ratio from a contact to a case across the four Codes of Practice decreased to **7%**, from 11% - a figure last witnessed in 2021.



#### ▶ Contact to case escalation rates by Code of Practice in 2023:

This year, the New Car Code saw the highest contact to case escalation rate out of the four Codes of Practice, reversing the trend seen in 2022, even though the rate for this Code was higher at 10%. The contact to case rate for the Vehicle Sales Code also saw a drop from 11% to 5%, which may be explained due to the relative volume of contacts increasing significantly in 2023 compared to that seen in 2022.



## ► Percentage of cases handled by Code breach

The following tables outline the percentage of cases that were generated by the respective breaches of The Motor Ombudsman's four Codes of Practice between 2021 and 2023.

### ► Vehicle Sales Code

Source of breach	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
1.0 Advertising	5%	5%	7%	▲
2.0 Presentation of used cars for sale	9%	8%	7%	▼
3.0 Presentation of new cars for sale	1%	1%	1%	-
4.0 The vehicle sales process	6%	5%	8%	▲
5.0 Provision of warranty products	2%	2%	1%	▼
6.0 Provision of finance products	0%	0%	0%	-
7.0 Quality of a vehicle at the point of purchase	34%	32%	33%	▲
8.0 Aftersales support	36%	44%	38%	▼
9.0 Complaints handling	7%	3%	5%	▲

- At **38%** of total Vehicle Sales Code breaches recorded in 2023, aftersales support (8.0) once again made up the largest proportion, and encouragingly fell from the figure of 44% reported in 2022.
- For the third consecutive year, the quality of a vehicle at the point of purchase (7.0) represented the second biggest breach of the Vehicle Sales Code during 2023 (**33%**), but saw a small, but encouraging one percentage point fall versus 2022 (32%).
- Similarly, breaches relating to the presentation of used cars (2.0), and the provision of warranty products (5.0), also reported slight year-on-year **decreases**.



### ► New Car Code

Source of breach	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
1.0 Advertising	8%	5%	7%	▲
2.0 New car provisions	2%	0%	0%	-
3.0 Manufacturers' new car warranties	72%	84%	72%	▼
4.0 Availability of replacement parts and accessories	8%	7%	7%	-
5.0 Complaints handling	10%	5%	14%	▲

- Even though manufacturer new car warranties (3.0) posted a decline in the percentage of breaches to **72%** in 2023 (to the same level seen in 2021), versus 84% in 2022, they still represented the largest proportion of New Car Code breaches for the third consecutive year in the table highlighted above.
- Following a positive three percentage point decrease in 2022 compared to 2021, new car advertising breaches (1.0) increased slightly from 5% in 2022, to **7%** in 2023.
- Breaches pertaining to the handling of customer complaints by a vehicle manufacturer (5.0) saw the largest relative year-on-year increase in breaches, rising to a three-year high of **14%** compared to 5% the previous year. This highlights that there is still work to be done in this area to make the customer journey more streamlined when disputes are handled by carmakers.
- For the second time in three years, there were **no** new car provisions breaches (2.0) – a positive development, considering they were up at 7% back in 2020.
- New Car Code breaches in relation to the availability of replacement parts and accessories (4.0) remained static at **7%**.

### ► Service and Repair Code

Source of breach	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
1.0 Advertising	3%	1%	3%	▲
2.0 Booking in of a vehicle	11%	9%	19%	▲
3.0 Standard of work	68%	76%	66%	▼
4.0 Billing	4%	4%	3%	▼
5.0 Approach of staff	4%	6%	3%	▼
6.0 Complaint handling	10%	4%	6%	▲

- Breaches pertaining to the standard of work carried out on a customer's vehicle (3.0) remained the leading source of breaches at **66%**, thanks to a positive 10 percentage drop compared to the figure recorded in 2022 (76%). This suggests that the quality of ad hoc and routine maintenance undertaken by businesses has seen an improvement, thanks to fewer disputes being logged in relation to this area.
- Similarly, breaches in relation to billing of customers (4.0) and the approach adopted by workshop staff (5.0) also witnessed a small fall, both to **3%**.
- After posting an encouraging drop between 2021 and 2022, issues in relation to the booking in of a vehicle (2.0) posted the largest rise (10%) in the proportion of breaches recorded during the past year, totalling **19%** - the second biggest source of disputes under this Code.
- The handling of complaints (6.0) also recorded a small rise from 4% to **6%** between 2022 and 2023, after previously falling from 10% of all the Service and Repair Code breaches recorded by The Motor Ombudsman in 2021.





### ► Vehicle Warranty Products Code

Source of breach	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
1.0 Advertising	4%	2%	3%	▲
2.0 Point of sale	10%	8%	13%	▲
3.0 Clarity of information	36%	70%	59%	▼
4.0 Claims handling	40%	13%	16%	▲
5.0 Service Contracts, Guarantees and Non-insured Products	2%	1%	0%	▼
6.0 Insured Products	0%	0%	0%	–
7.0 Complaints handling	8%	6%	9%	▲

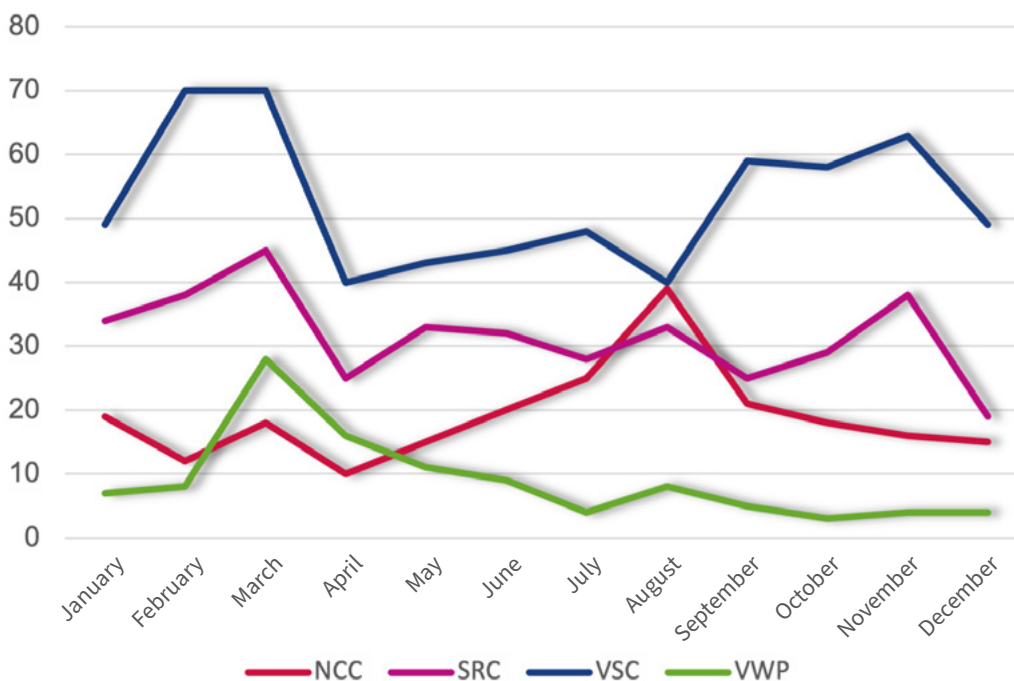
- Reflecting the trend seen in the two preceding years, businesses not providing accurate advice and information to customers at the time of purchase of a policy (3.0), accounted for the highest proportion of breaches of this Code in 2023 at **59%**. Even though this is still higher than the percentage recorded in 2021 (**36%**), breaches in relation to this area did fall year-on-year by 11% - suggesting positive signs of improvement in this area.
- In contrast to the decline seen between 2021 and 2022, breaches in respect to the handling of claims (4.0) rose from 13% to **16%**, which is still significantly lower than the much higher figure of 40% recorded in 2021.
- Similarly, point of sale breaches (2.0) rose from 8% to **13%** - the highest figure in three years, but still below a peak of 33% reached in 2020, thereby showing fluctuating progress in this area by businesses.
- For a third consecutive year, there were no breaches regarding Insured Products (6.0).



### 3.3 Ombudsman final decisions (2021 – 2023)

	2021	2022	2023	2023 v 2022	
Vehicle Sales Code	228	316	634	▲ 318 (+101%)	
Service and Repair Code	99	207	379	▲ 172 (+83%)	
New Car Code	141	129	228	▲ 99 (+178%)	
Vehicle Warranty Code	32	46	107	▲ 61 (+133%)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>▲ 650 (+93%)</b>	

#### Final decisions by Code in 2023



**Vehicle Sales Code:**  
101% increase (+318) v 2022

**Service and Repair Code:**  
83% increase (+172) v 2022

**New Car Code:**  
178% increase (+99) v 2022

**Vehicle Warranty Products Code:** 133% increase (+61) v 2022



### ► Ombudsman final decisions analysis

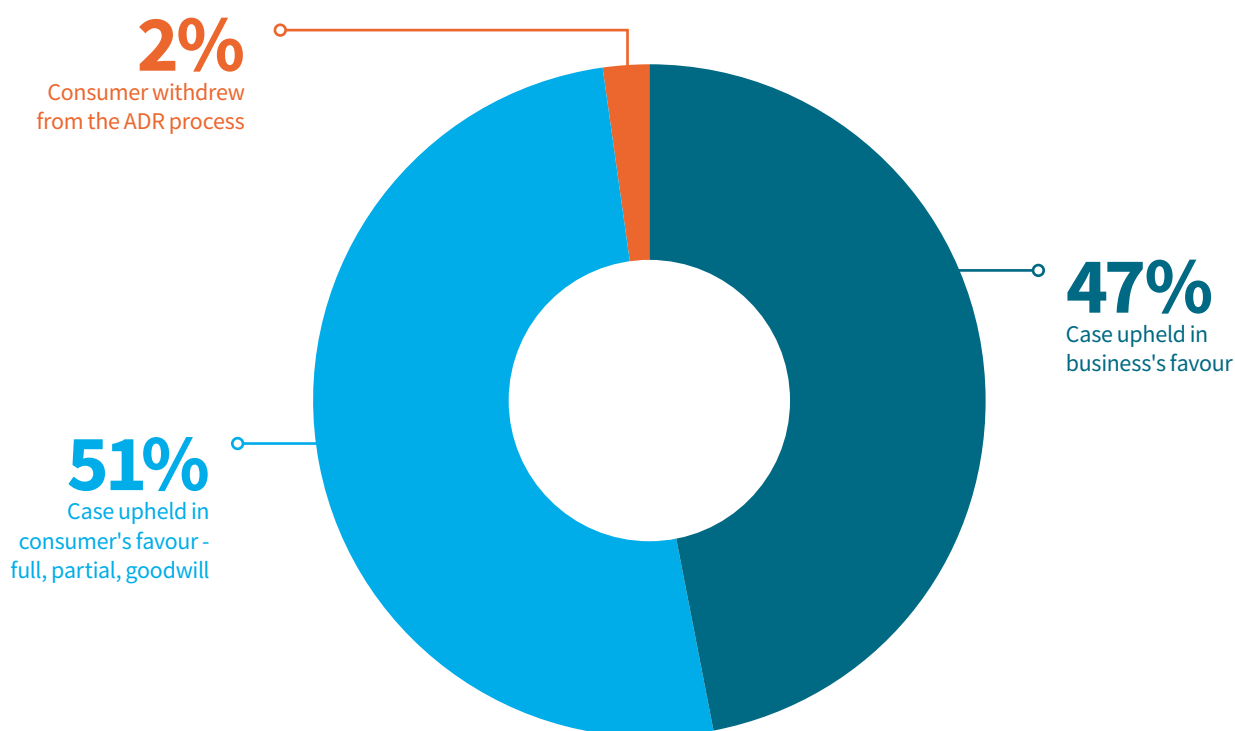
- ▶ In 2023, all four Codes of Practice saw an increase in the volume of final decisions delivered to consumers and businesses versus the previous year – reflecting a continued positive impact of process changes implemented by The Motor Ombudsman in 2022, alongside having greater resource in this part of the dispute resolution team.
- ▶ The number of final decisions made across The Motor Ombudsman's four Codes of Practice also saw a notable **93%** rise in the volume delivered to businesses and consumers in 2023 compared to 2022, increasing from 698 to **1,348** – a three-year high.
- ▶ The **Vehicle Sales Code** was subject to the highest volume of final decisions delivered over the course of the year at 634, up 101% versus 316 in 2022. Similarly, the **New Car Code** witnessed the largest year-on-year increase at 178%, as final decisions rose from 129 to **228**.



## SECTION 4: CONSUMER AND BUSINESS REDRESS

### 4.1 Consumer and business redress

#### ► The proportion of case outcomes awarded / cases withdrawals for all Codes



In 2023, it was a contrasting picture versus the breakdown seen in 2022, from the point of view that the majority (**51%**) of cases were upheld in the consumer's favour, increasing from 37% the previous year. Cases upheld in the business's favour therefore fell on an annual basis from 62% in 2022 to **47%** in 2023, based on the evidence presented.

Furthermore, the percentage of withdrawn cases increased very slightly year-on-year (from 1% to 2%), which may be put down to delays in consumers receiving an outcome to their dispute, especially when at the final decision stage, thereby prompting them to pursue the resolution of their dispute via alternative avenues, such as the court system.



### ► Case outcome summary:

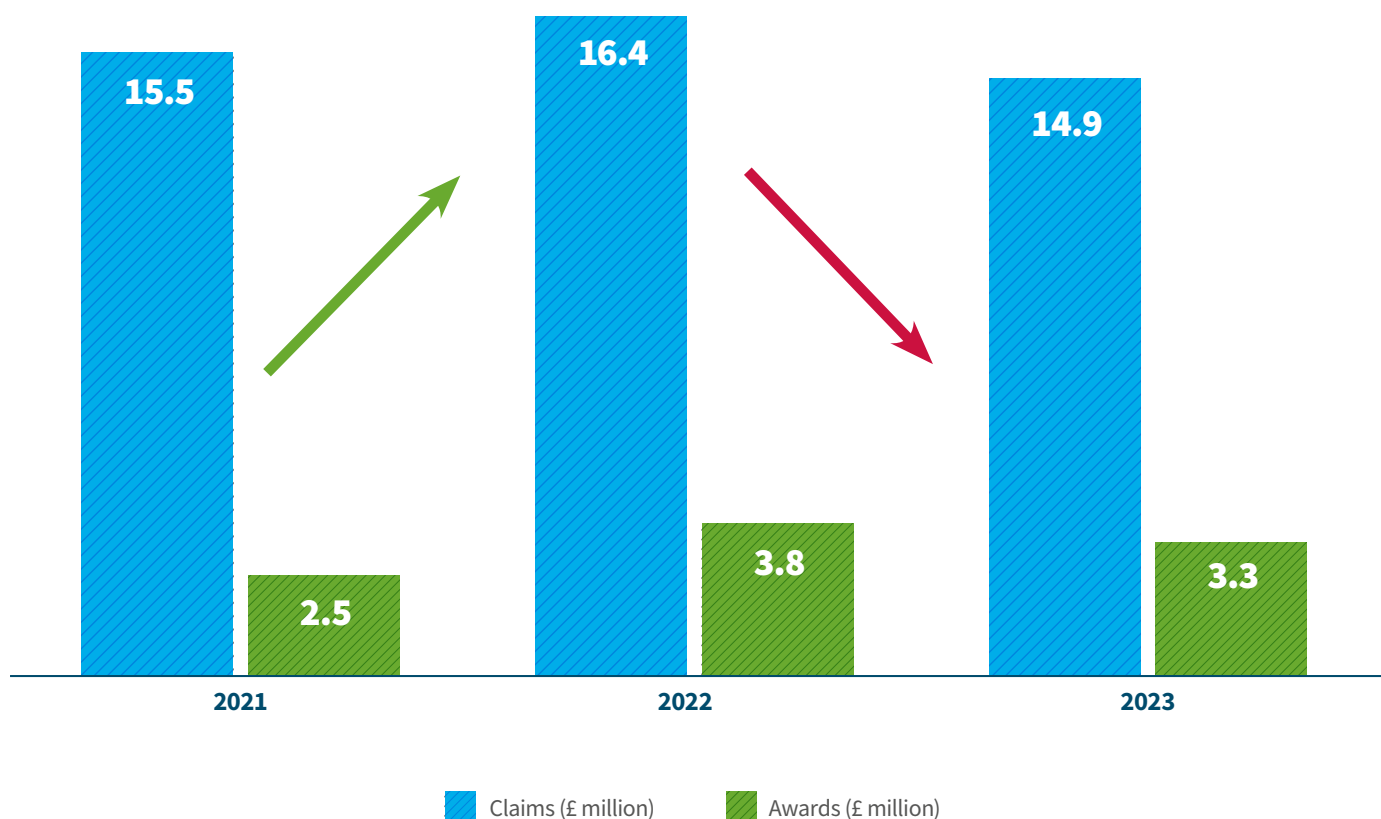
In 2023, the total value of the preferred awards claimed by consumers as a resolution to their dispute equated to £14.9 million, which was less than the figures of £16.4 million and £15.5 million seen in the two preceding years.

However, as seen in the table and graph below, the actual awards made to consumers tend to be lower. The difference, which has been, on average, around £12 million each year, is the result of consumers often over-claiming to maximise what they feel they are entitled to, on encountering an issue with their vehicle. This may lead to the request of a higher remedy of rejection, a full refund, or a replacement vehicle.

However, in many cases, there is insufficient evidence, particularly technical, supporting the consumer's complaint, meaning a lesser remedy, such as a repair, will be awarded to rectify the problem, hence the wide disparity between the claim and award values, when a case is upheld in the consumer's favour.

### ▼ Total value of claims of consumer claims and awards (2021 – 2023)

Year	Total value of claims made by consumers when submitting a case	Total value of awards made to consumers when a complaint is upheld in their favour	Difference per year between consumer claim values and awards
2023	£14.9 million	£3.3 million	£11.6 million / -127%
2022	£16.4 million	£3.8 million	£12.6 million / -124%
2021	£15.5 million	£2.5 million	£13 million / -144%



## SECTION 5: CONSUMER AND BUSINESS INSIGHT

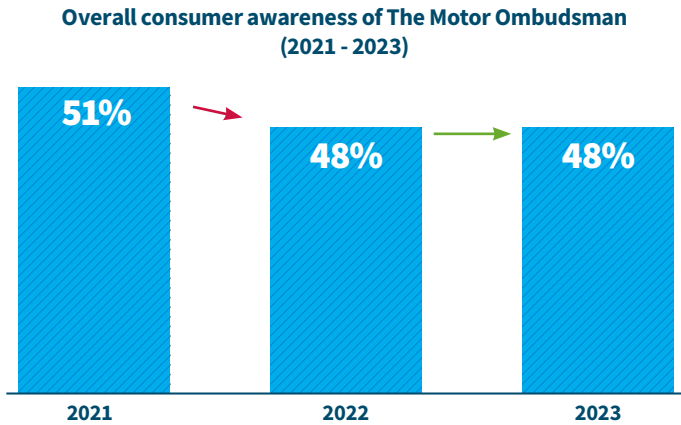
### 5.1 Annual consumer brand awareness survey highlights

► **Background**

2023 was the seventh consecutive year that The Motor Ombudsman has carried out a consumer awareness study. A total of **2,009** individuals from across a representative sample of UK driving licence holders were surveyed for the study between September and November 2023.

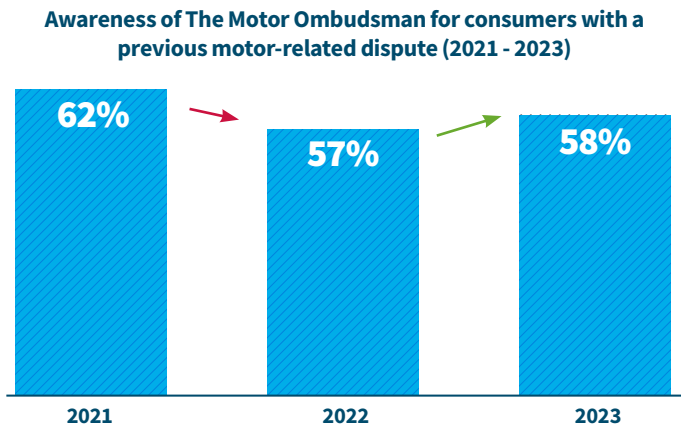
**Key research findings**

- **Overall consumer awareness of The Motor Ombudsman in 2023 has remained in line with the awareness score achieved in 2022**



In 2023, nearly half of individuals surveyed (**48%**) said that they were aware of The Motor Ombudsman, which is in line with the figure recorded the year before.

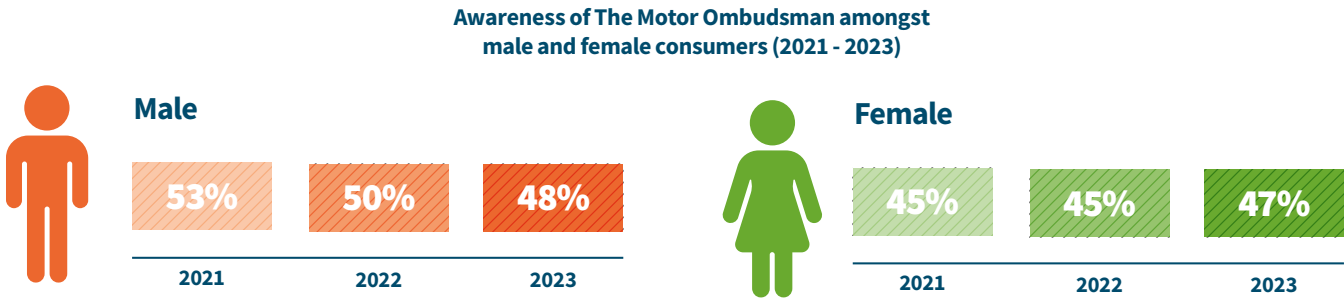
- **Awareness of The Motor Ombudsman for consumers who previously had a motor-related dispute has increased by one percentage point to 58% in 2023**



For those consumers who had previously had a motor-related dispute, awareness of The Motor Ombudsman increased by one percentage point from last year to 58%. However, it was expected that awareness would be higher based on the increase in the number of enquiries and cases being accepted into The Motor Ombudsman’s dispute resolution service, and the volume of website traffic increasing in 2023 versus the previous year.

For those who had not had a dispute relating to a vehicle, consumer awareness of The Motor Ombudsman decreased slightly from 39% in 2022 to 37% in 2023, which was still above the figure of 33% seen in 2020.

► Consumer awareness of The Motor Ombudsman amongst male and female consumers saw little change in 2023 versus the year before



Gender is an important measurement within the survey metrics to gauge the level of awareness and engagement across the consumer landscape. This is because The Motor Ombudsman may sometimes see certain consumers under-represented in the cases brought to them. As such, information on gender breakdown may help steer awareness and activities where this may be lower.

Familiarity with The Motor Ombudsman decreased slightly amongst men in 2023, with awareness falling by just two percentage points to 48% from 50% the previous year. In contrast, awareness of the organisation amongst female respondents increased by two points to 47% in 2023, up from 45% in 2022 and 2021.

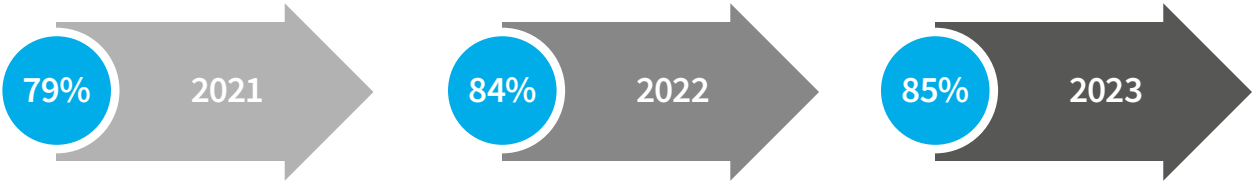
► Echoing the trend seen in previous years, 18 to 24-year-olds were the most likely to have heard of The Motor Ombudsman in 2023 when compared to individuals in other age groups

Awareness of The Motor Ombudsman by age group (2023 v 2022)			
Age group	Percentage of age group who were aware of The Motor Ombudsman		
	2022	2023	2023 v 2022
18 to 24	64%	58%	▼
25 to 34	58%	52%	▼
35 to 44	52%	57%	▲
45 to 54	38%	41%	▲
55+	40%	40%	—

Continuing the trend witnessed in previous years, the research revealed that awareness of The Motor Ombudsman was once again highest in the 18 to 24 age group during 2023, although familiarity amongst these individuals dropped to 58% from 64% the previous year.

Similarly, the survey showed that 35 to 44-year-olds were the next most conversant with the organisation, shown by 57% amongst this age group – an increase of five percentage points versus the statistic recorded in 2022. According to the findings of the study, consumers who are in the 55+ category are the least likely to know about the Ombudsman for the automotive sector – at just 40% of people within this age group – the same level of familiarity recorded in the 2022 research.

► In 2023, 85% of consumers said that they would feel more confident using a Motor Ombudsman-accredited business for a vehicle purchase or repair – the highest score during the last three years

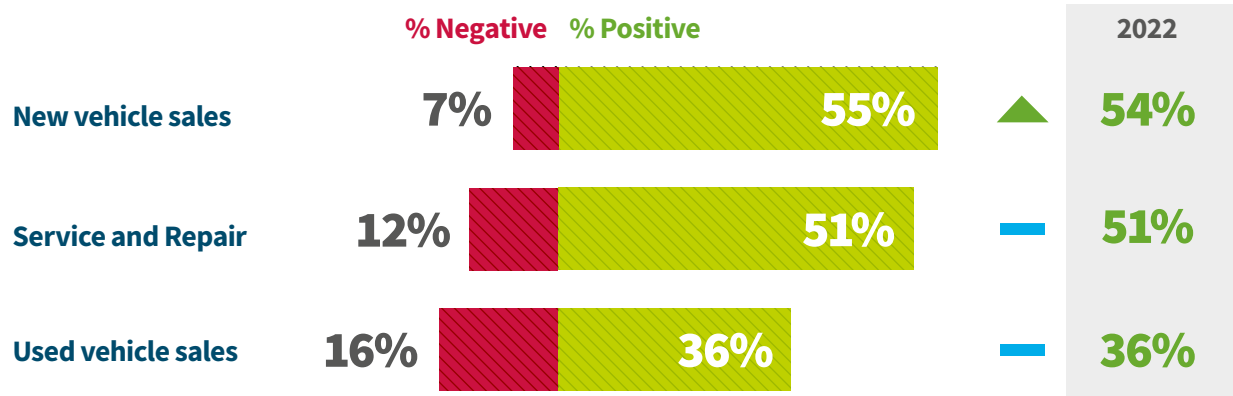


The 2023 study revealed that over eight in 10 consumers (85%) would feel more confident using a business that is accredited to The Motor Ombudsman for their vehicle purchase, service or repair. This is an encouraging increase on the figures of 84% in 2022 and 79% in 2021, and is the highest ever score achieved in the annual research, and during the past three years.

► For the fifth consecutive year, the new vehicle sales sector was seen by consumers as the most positive area of the automotive industry

Reflecting the trend seen since 2019, the new vehicle sales sector once again emerged as the most positively viewed area of the automotive sector in 2023, with 55% of the consumers surveyed having a favourable opinion. This surpassed the proportion of positive responses received for both the service and repair (51%) and used car sectors (36%) in 2023.

View of the automotive industry by sector in 2023  
(Percentage of consumers who answered negatively and positively)



## ► Analysis of survey results by sector

### The new vehicle sales sector in 2023

According to the 2023 study, a near-similar proportion of consumers viewed the new vehicle sales sector in a positive light compared to the previous year. The metric recorded a one percentage point rise from 55% to 54%, and was up from 53% in 2021. When looking at the perception of the new vehicle sales sector by gender, male and female respondents shared a more varied view, with 48% of females holding a positive view (up from 52% in 2022 and 48% in 2021) versus 57% of males (56% in 2022).

When viewing sentiment by age group, 25 to 34-year-olds emerged as the most positive about the new vehicle sector (at 58% of respondents in this category), in contrast to those in the 18 to 24 and 45-54 age groups, where only 51% of the respondents held this part of the automotive sector in high esteem, down from 62% last year for 18 to 24 year-olds, and up from 50% last year for 45-54 year-olds.

For new vehicle sales, in line with the previous year, just 7% of respondents held a negative view overall. Reasons for the adverse sentiment related to the perceived high price of new cars, new vehicles being slow to arrive, depreciation after making a purchase, and pressured sales techniques.

### The used vehicle sales sector in 2023

Positive sentiment in relation to the used vehicle sector remained level and relatively low with just over a third (36%) of respondents saying they have a positive view, which mirrors the results seen in previous years i.e. 36% in 2022 and 33% in 2021.

In terms of the perception held by each of the sexes, males (38%) and females (41%) were more encouraged by the used vehicle sector in 2022 than in the previous year (35% and 38% respectively), which was positive to see.

18 to 24-year-olds emerged as being the most upbeat about the used vehicle sector at 56%, compared with 59% in 2022. At the other end of the scale, it was the 55+ (26%) and 45-54 (31%) categories that were the most negative of all the age groups surveyed.

Overall, respondents were more likely to have a neutral view of the sector, (48% rated it as neutral) and when looking at the proportion of respondents discouraged by used vehicle sales, 16% of respondents held a negative view of this part of the automotive sector (down from 18% in 2022 and 16% for the same metric in 2021).

Reasons for the negative ratings related to people having a lack of trust, cars being expensive and having to haggle to get a good price, having a negative perception of used car salespeople, and receiving low part exchange values when buying another vehicle.

### The service and repair sector in 2023

A mainly positive perception of the service and repair sector remained in 2023 with overall 51% rating it as positive, (51% in 2022), and was significantly up from 44% recorded in 2019.

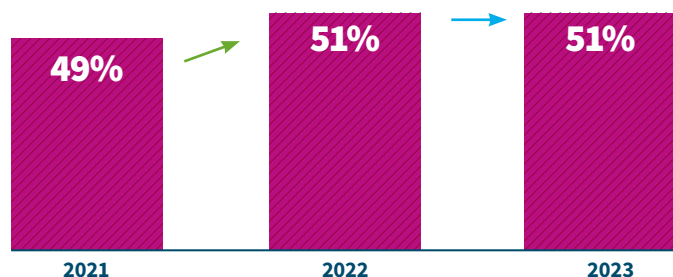
When looking at the breakdown of sentiment about the service and repair sector by gender in 2023, male respondents were once again more upbeat about this area of the automotive industry when compared to their female counterparts (53% versus 49%). For males this is a 2% decrease on the year before, however for females this is a 2% increase which is positive to see.

When looking at how individuals feel by age group, in relation to the service and repair area of the industry, 60% of 18 to 24-year-olds felt optimistic about the sector, the highest proportion of any age group surveyed in 2023. However, this was down from 67% the previous year. They were followed by the 25 to 34 age group, where 59% of individuals in this category shared this buoyant view, the same figure as 2022. In contrast, the survey showed that two-fifths (40%) of 45 to 54-year-olds shared a positive view about the service and repair sector, up from 36% last year.

Overall, just 12% had a negative view of the service and repair sector in 2023 (13% in 2022) and 37% overall rated it as neutral. The research equally revealed 13% of males (a 2% increase on 2022) and 11% of females (the same as 2022) expressed a negative view of the sector.

Reasons for the negative view of the industry related to respondents feeling as though they were being taken advantage of, high prices, being overcharged, being told that unnecessary work was needed, as well as not knowing whether they could trust the business.

#### ► Percentage of respondents holding a positive view of the service and repair sector (2021 – 2023)



## ► Vehicle complaints made by survey respondents in 2023

For those that had a motoring-related complaint during 2023 (49% of the survey sample), the study revealed that:

- Almost a quarter (**24%**) were about a service or repair (down from 25% in 2022, and up from 22% in 2021, and 21% in 2020);
- **14%** were in relation to a new car warranty (staying static compared to 2022, 2021, and 2020);
- **16%** were about a used car purchase (up from 15% in 2022, 12% in 2021, and 13% in 2020); and
- **5%** were in conjunction with a new car purchase (down from 6% in 2022, and in line with the figure of 5% seen in 2021 and 2020).

## ► Almost three-quarters of people with a complaint about their vehicle, resolved it directly with a garage, service centre or dealership in 2023

How a respondent's motoring complaint was resolved	Percentage resolved		
	2021	2022	2023
By the garage / service centre / dealership	67%	72%	73%
By the vehicle manufacturer	16%	13%	13%
Via a third party	5%	4%	4%
The complaint was not resolved	10%	11%	10%

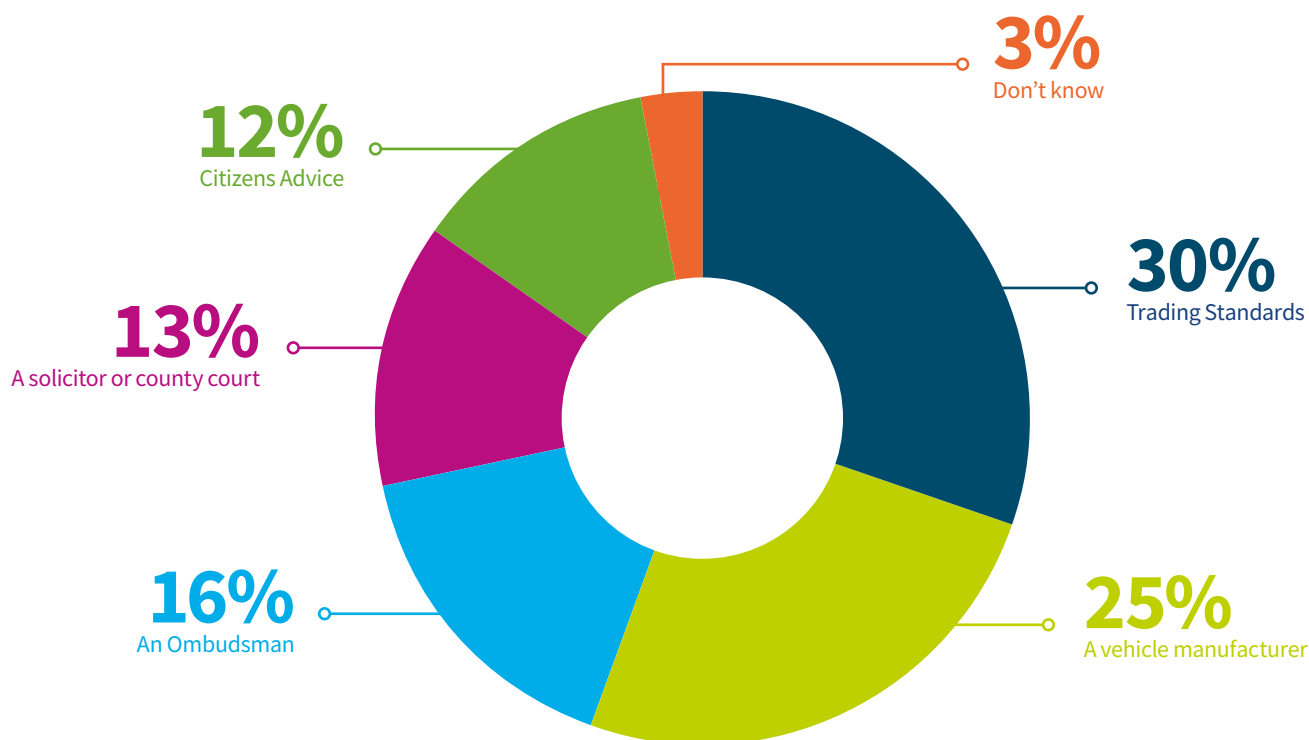
For survey respondents that had a motoring complaint in 2023, nearly three-quarters (73%) had their issue resolved directly by the garage, service centre or dealership, a slightly higher proportion to that seen during the last two years.

In contrast, there was a very small (1%) decrease in the volume of unresolved complaints seen in comparison with 2022, and reverted back to the level recorded in 2021 (10%).



- ▶ In 2023, individuals were more likely to escalate an unresolved issue with a garage or car dealership to Trading Standards or a vehicle manufacturer than to any other organisation

### Where consumers were most likely to take their unresolved dispute with a garage or car dealership in 2023



In the event that a complaint with a garage or car dealership remained unresolved, the 2023 study revealed that almost a third (30%) of consumers would refer their complaint to Trading Standards (up from 29% in 2022), whilst 25% would consult a vehicle manufacturer as the next point of call (25% in 2022).

The research also showed that 16% of respondents would take their unresolved dispute to an Ombudsman (up from 14% in 2022), whilst 13% would resort to legal action i.e. consulting a solicitor, the county court or a legal representative to help bring their complaint to a close (13% in 2022). The findings equally showed that 12% would take their dispute to Citizens Advice, down from 14% in 2022.

- ▶ In 2023, **72%** of consumers deemed it to be important for the motor industry to have an Ombudsman, because it provides someone to turn to if they can't resolve their issue directly with a garage or dealership;
- ▶ Over half (**56%**) of respondents deemed it important for the motor industry to have an Ombudsman to help drive up standards;
- ▶ **30%** felt it was important to be able to find out who the rated and recommended garages are their local area when they want to buy or service their car; and
- ▶ **26%** of survey participants explained that it is important for the motor industry to have an Ombudsman, as it is not regulated.

### Key conclusions that may be drawn from the 2023 consumer awareness survey data, are as follows:

- ▶ Overall awareness of The Motor Ombudsman remained consistent at **48%** of consumers, down from 51% in 2021;
- ▶ Awareness of The Motor Ombudsman amongst consumers who had a dispute was up slightly by one percentage point to **58%**. However in contrast, 2023 has been a much busier year in terms of the website traffic we have seen, as well as the number of enquiries and cases into our service, so we would have expected to have recorded an even higher level of awareness amongst consumers;
- ▶ Consumers in the **18 to 24** age bracket, and **male** respondents, emerged as being the most aware of The Motor Ombudsman, mirroring the result seen the year before;
- ▶ Individuals were most likely to contact **Trading Standards** or a **vehicle manufacturer** if they had an unresolved dispute with a garage or car dealership;
- ▶ Slightly fewer consumers had their complaint **unresolved** in 2023 (10%) compared with 11% in 2022 and 10% in 2021;
- ▶ Nearly three-quarters of consumers (**73%**) said that they were able to conclude their complaint directly with a garage service centre or dealership – an increase from the figure of 72% recorded in 2022;
- ▶ Consumers felt the most important reason for having an Ombudsman was because it provides someone to turn to if they can't resolve their issue directly with a garage or dealership, followed by raising standards within the motor industry.

### ▶ Consumer satisfaction survey highlights

Every year, The Motor Ombudsman conducts an analysis of the customer satisfaction data it receives about its accredited businesses. This information provides an effective annual barometer to understand the sentiment of motorists in relation to their experience of the service and repair sector.

Satisfaction data is collected from The Motor Ombudsman's website-based survey tool, which asks customers that have used an

accredited business to rate independent garages and franchised dealers on various aspects, such as the quality of the work received, as well as the vehicle booking process. The Motor Ombudsman also receives data from surveys that vehicle manufacturers and independent garage groups conduct with their customers in relation to their satisfaction of the work and service provided, and the likelihood of them recommending the business.

The feedback received is available for all to see on the business profile pages on The Motor Ombudsman's [Garage Finder](#). This is a valuable tool for businesses to demonstrate their credibility and high standards, as well as offering the customer the opportunity to select one that best suits their needs.



### ► Summary of overall customer satisfaction and likelihood to recommend

The results from the questions about a consumer's overall satisfaction with the business, and their likelihood to recommend it, come from surveys conducted by vehicle manufacturers, independent groups, as well as from surveys which are left on The Motor Ombudsman's online survey on the Garage Finder.

Category	Satisfaction levels			
	2021	2022	2023	Diff (2023 v 2022)
Overall satisfaction of the work and service provided by an accredited business	90%	92%	90%	▼
Likelihood to recommend an accredited business	93%	92%	90%	▼
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEYS SUBMITTED</b>	<b>36,888</b>	<b>67,325</b>	<b>57,005</b>	▼

Between 2022 and 2023, there has been a drop in the number of surveys received from vehicle manufacturers and garage networks (down 15% from 67,325 to 57,005). This is principally due to changes with how car manufacturers measure customer satisfaction and obtain reviews about their networks, moving away from Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology, and employing alternative benchmarks.

The latest study showed that overall satisfaction with accredited businesses remained high, with a score of 90%, which is down slightly on 2022 (92%), and in line with the figure seen in 2021.

The likelihood of recommending a garage to friends and family that serviced and / or repaired their vehicle, dropped by two points from the 92% achieved in 2022. This demonstrates that there is still work to be done by businesses in the service and repair sector to continue to both meet and exceed customer expectations.

### ► Summary of results from surveys completed on The Motor Ombudsman website

The Motor Ombudsman asks a wide range of questions about the experience and the service received by consumers. They cover areas, such as the booking process, the quality of work, as well as the information and level of customer service provided.

During 2023, The Motor Ombudsman received 1,034 survey submissions through its website, up on the 320 it recorded the previous year. In 2023, there was equally a greater emphasis on collecting customer feedback about businesses through the wider promotion of the Star Awards, which has resulted in an increase in survey returns.

Category	Satisfaction levels			
	2021	2022	2023	Diff (2023 v 2022)
Overall quality of work carried out	82%	99%	99%	—
Level of customer service	91%	99%	99%	—
Booking process	87%	99%	99%	—
Information provided	81%	98%	99%	▲
<b>TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>1,034</b>	▲

Other findings revealed by the 2023 study are as follows:

- ▶ Satisfaction with customer service was scored at 99% in 2023, which was the same high rating as the previous year (99%), and was up from 91% achieved in 2021;
- ▶ The vast majority of customers have continued to score the process used by a garage to book in their vehicle for routine maintenance and ad hoc repair work highly. This is illustrated by a figure of 99%, in line with the score achieved in 2022 and up from the statistic achieved in 2021 (87%);
- ▶ The overall satisfaction with the quality of work carried out by the businesses was put at 99%, which is also in line with 2022, and up from 2021 (82%); and
- ▶ 98% of respondents were satisfied with the level of information that the business provided them with, which was also 99%, up by one point from 98% in 2022 and 81% in 2021.

***“In 2023, 99% of consumers surveyed were happy with the overall quality of work provided by Motor Ombudsman-accredited businesses.”***

#### ▶ Snapshot of positive customer reviews on The Motor Ombudsman’s Garage Finder

As well as being able to rate a garage or dealership that is accredited to the Service and Repair and/or the Vehicle Sales Code, customers are also invited to leave a written review about their experience, which is published on the online [Garage Finder](#) profile of the business if they have provided consent to do so.

The following is a snapshot of the positive consumer reviews that have been left for Motor Ombudsman-accredited businesses during 2023:

***“Excellent service, great staff, very professional, well organised and clean workshop. Prices are very good rates. Always greeted me with a smile.”***

*Customer of*  
[A J Fleetcare](#)

***“Even when needing expensive repair work, the garage were reassuring and professional.”***

*Customer of*  
[Crown Honda Bushey Heath](#)

***“The only garage I know that are truly honest, helpful and accommodating.”***

*Customer of*  
[NRP Autocentre](#)

## 5.2 Consumer complaints about The Motor Ombudsman

Since 2021, The Motor Ombudsman's service complaints process has been divided into two distinct tiers to make the handling of service complaints clearer and more effective.

- ▶ **Tier 1 – Informal complaints (introduced from 2021 onwards)** are described as informal expressions of consumer dissatisfaction, and are handled by team leaders. The Motor Ombudsman finds that the vast majority of issues can be resolved at this stage.
- ▶ **Tier 2 – Formal complaints** are those that then escalate to the senior ombudsman or the head of customer service and dispute resolution, and require a formal response.

### Informal and Formal consumer complaints as a proportion of total contacts and cases (2021 – 2023)

	Total complaints as a percentage of total contacts received	Total complaints as a percentage of total adjudication cases accepted
2023	0.32*	5.3%*
2022	0.28**	4.7%**
2021	0.25%***	4%***

- ▶ In 2023, The Motor Ombudsman handled **148,007** contacts and accepted **8,892** cases.

\*2023: Based on **Tier 1 Informal (441)** and **Tier 2 Formal (32)** complaints - a total of **473**.

\*\*2022: Based on **Tier 1 Informal (262)** and **Tier 2 Formal (41)** complaints - a total of **303**.

\*\*\*2021: Based on **Tier 1 Informal (217)** and **Tier 2 Formal (29)** complaints - a total of **246**.



## ► Informal and Formal consumer complaints by reason and stage

Complaint Tier	Case stage	Process	Delay	Outcome	Staff	Communication	Total
Tier 1 Informal complaints (2021 - 2023)	Enquiry (also known as Initial Assessment)						
	2023	9	1	7	5	9	31
	2022	8	0	2	4	3	17
	2021	2	4	1	11	3	21
	Early resolution						
	2023	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	1	1	2
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mediation						
	2023	1	0	0	0	2	3
	2022	0	1	0	1	0	2
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Administration (formerly known as Investigation)						
	2023	9	85	19	9	23	145
	2022	4	29	2	7	11	53
	2021	4	29	4	8	14	59
	Adjudication						
	2023	14	22	25	21	22	104
	2022	4	25	25	10	20	84
	2021	4	37	5	11	22	79
	Final decision						
	2023	21	78	21	7	31	158
	2022	7	60	22	8	7	103
	2021	7	31	10	4	6	58

Complaint Tier	Case stage	Process	Delay	Outcome	Staff	Communication	Total
Tier 2 Formal complaints (2021 - 2023)	Enquiry (also known as Initial Assessment)						
	2023	0	0	1	0	0	1
	2022	0	0	0	3	0	3
	2021	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Administration (formerly known as Investigation)						
	2023	3	4	2	0	6	15
	2022	0	1	0	2	1	4
	2021	1	2	0	1	1	5
	Adjudication						
	2023	0	2	3	1	3	9
	2022	1	3	2	2	1	9
	2021	2	6	2	2	2	14
	Final decision						
	2023	1	0	4	1	1	7
	2022	3	6	10	4	2	25
	2021	2	2	3	1	1	9



When looking at the reasons behind the **441 Tier 1 Informal** complaints received from consumers during 2023:

- ▶ **20%** resulted from the level communication provided to consumers, an increase versus 16% in 2022, but lower than the 21% figure seen in 2021;
  - ▶ **24%** arose during the adjudication stage, down from 32% in 2022, and 27% in 2021;
  - ▶ **33%** occurred at the case administration stage (formerly known as investigation), up from 20% in 2022, but lower than 36% in 2021;
  - ▶ **36%** of complaints occurred at the final decision stage, down from 39% in 2022, but up from 27% in 2021; and
  - ▶ **42%** resulted from a delay in responding to consumers during the dispute resolution process, down from 44% in 2022, and 47% in 2021.
- 

When looking at the key drivers behind the **32 Tier 2 Formal** complaints received from consumers during 2023:

- ▶ **6%** related to the approach of staff, a significant improvement compared to 27% in 2022, and 14% in 2021;
- ▶ **19%** resulted from a delay in responding to consumers, up from 12% in 2022, but lower than the 35% figure seen in 2021;
- ▶ **22%** of complaints occurred at the final decision stage, down from the figures of 61% in 2022, and 31% in 2021;
- ▶ **28%** of complaints arose at the adjudication stage, an increase versus 22% in 2022, but down from 48% in 2021;
- ▶ **31%** resulted from the level of communication provided to consumers, up from 10% in 2022, and 14% in 2021;
- ▶ **31%** were caused by the outcome delivered to consumers, a slight rise from 29% in 2022, and 17% in 2021; and
- ▶ **47%** of complaints occurred at the case administration stage (formerly known as investigation), significantly up from 10% in 2022, and 17% in 2021. This was mainly driven in 2023 by a sub-standard level of communication in the eyes of consumers during this part of the process, coupled with delays.



### ► Negative consumer testimonials about The Motor Ombudsman

The following is a sample of negative testimonials from consumers who used The Motor Ombudsman's ADR service during the course of 2023, and logged a complaint about the handling of their case on [Trustpilot](#). The table below also highlights the cause of the consumer's comments, as well as the response by The Motor Ombudsman in relation to their concerns.

Consumer / Month review left on Trustpilot	Extract of complaint made by the consumer on Trustpilot	Reasons for the consumer's complaint about The Motor Ombudsman's service	Response by The Motor Ombudsman
<b>Mr. M</b> February 2023	<i>"Never got a resolution after about three and a half years since originally raised. What a rubbish service. Close down this useless service draining tax payers funds!"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. M's case was submitted prior to the pandemic, which was followed by the business closing in line with COVID-19 restrictions, meaning a delay to their response. This was followed by an extended delay with The Motor Ombudsman providing an adjudication decision (upheld in the consumer's favour), where the proposed remedy of a refund for the vehicle minus usage deductions was then appealed by the business. This added to further frustration to Mr. M.</li> <li>Due to the rise in values of used cars during the period between the case was raised, and an adjudicator decision being made, Mr. M explained that he could no longer afford a replacement vehicle, even in the event of a full refund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the business requested a final decision based on the adjudication outcome, the ombudsman reached out to the business to get an updated view of the case from both parties due to the time that had lapsed since the case was submitted.</li> <li>As part of this, Mr. M responded to explain that, due to the fact that a full refund would not cover his costs for a car in the used market at that time, he withdrew his case, rather than choosing to receive the refund proposed by the adjudicator.</li> <li>The case was then closed.</li> </ul>
<b>Mr. M</b> March 2023	<i>"Absolutely a time-wasting service. Highly unlikely to rule in your favour. Lazy investigators. Lengthy time to resolve issues."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was another case submitted before the pandemic, and delays were experienced to the case being reviewed due to the business closing down in line with COVID-19 restrictions, and staff being put on furlough and being made redundant, thereby making it more difficult to get a response for the adjudication decision.</li> <li>Due to The Motor Ombudsman's subsequent backlog in cases needing to be reviewed for an adjudication outcome, the length of time that passed caused further frustration to Mr. M.</li> <li>In addition, no breach of the Service and Repair Case was found, despite Mr. M's claim that the repairer had failed to give the warranty provider correct information, thereby causing disappointment in The Motor Ombudsman's service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Motor Ombudsman acknowledged the delays and apologised for this. However, in addition to the time that had passed, it explained that this was a complex case due to having to review a significant amount of evidence which were primarily made up of large audio files between the dealership and the warranty provider, which were difficult for The Motor Ombudsman to receive due to their file size, thereby further drawing out the case until these technological issues had been resolved.</li> <li>In addition, there was no technical evidence submitted by the consumer, which meant that the adjudication decision was based on paperwork provided, as well as the aforementioned audio files.</li> </ul>

<b>Ms. V</b> May 2023	<p><i>“Failed to grasp the purpose or reason of the complaint. This was a tick box exercise with no personal involvement or understanding. Our concerns were not addressed at all throughout the process.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. V felt that there was a lack of reasoning behind the adjudication outcome that was not upheld in her favour, despite the decision addressing the consumer’s concerns.</li> <li>• Ms. V was primarily unhappy with the fact that repairs did not solve the issue despite paying for it, whilst also questioning the diagnosis or the business’s professional opinion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Motor Ombudsman noted that evidence was requested on numerous occasions from the consumer to reinforce her claim that the business acted incorrectly (i.e. it was not what another business in the same situation would have done), but no professional evidence was submitted to show any wrongdoing, and what was sent was the same information multiple times rather than supplying any new documentation. Therefore, the decision to not uphold Ms. V’s case remained.</li> <li>• Based on this course of events, Ms. V was then invited to request a final decision with new evidence, and submit a service complaint based on her experience of The Motor Ombudsman’s service, but neither option was taken up, leading to her voicing her disappointment on Trustpilot, and the case being closed.</li> </ul>
<b>Mr. D</b> July 2023	<p><i>“The very people they adjudicate over are the businesses that fund the service, and this is obvious with the way they deal with complaints. No sense of fairness in their decisions and the dealerships use the service as way of side stepping real true mis justices.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the fact that Mr. D’s case about engine failure on his low mileage, six-year-old car, was not upheld in his favour, he expressed that all the facts were not considered by the adjudicator based on the evidence he provided, which supported his view that there were manufacturing defects.</li> <li>• Mr. D. also expressed his concern that The Motor Ombudsman was not an impartial organisation based on the fact the decision had gone against him despite there being no evidence to underline this claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Motor Ombudsman explained that the evidence provided by Mr. D, which included references on the internet, did not demonstrate that the fault with the engine was due to a build issue.</li> <li>• The adjudicator also highlighted that, as a fully independent and impartial body, they had taken into account the arguments and evidence submitted by both parties.</li> <li>• The consumer was offered the opportunity to submit his case for a final decision, but due to Mr. D’s view that The Motor Ombudsman was not impartial, he decided not to proceed with this, and the case was closed.</li> </ul>
<b>Mr. W</b> October 2023	<p><i>“Do not use this service. Just proceed to court. TMO will take months to process your case. In my case, they were not impartial and conducted conversations with and advised the garage on their responses without my knowledge.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. W was frustrated that he was unable to recover any award via The Motor Ombudsman’s service following his vehicle being mis-diagnosed and subcontracted to a third party where the car was damaged, when he achieved this via the legal system.</li> <li>• Mr. W also alleged that there was an element of bias, as The Motor Ombudsman was talking to the vehicle repairer without the consumer’s knowledge, which was not the case, as The Motor Ombudsman was simply gathering evidence as part of the ADR process.</li> <li>• Despite taking 35 days from case submission to an adjudication outcome, the Mr. W was unhappy with how long this process took.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. W received an adjudication outcome, but then chose to pursue his case via the legal system two years later, to have his car returned to reinforce the evidence behind his claim. A negative Trustpilot review was then submitted two years after this court case, but there were no further submissions to The Motor Ombudsman. The case therefore remained closed, with no further action taken.</li> </ul>

<b>Ms. B</b> December 2023	<i>“Staff are rude and cut me off each time. Refused to help answer valid questions. Failure to log service failings. To help others - perhaps contact CTSI who apparently regulate TMO.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. B was disappointed with the final decision, and was concerned that she did not receive an award from the business.</li> <li>The consumer was also concerned that she did not receive the response she was looking for, and claimed that the service no longer responded to her multiple case submissions, and other corresponding communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Motor Ombudsman explained that all correspondence from Ms. B was responded to.</li> <li>The final decision was partially upheld in the consumer's favour, mirroring the adjudication outcome. However, Ms. B confirmed that she did not agree with the final decision, thereby making her ineligible for the award made.</li> <li>This prompted the consumer to make multiple contacts with The Motor Ombudsman, which advised that, in line with its unacceptable actions policy, it could no longer assist the consumer, due to her having submitted several cases, subject access requests, and service complaints about the same problem reported.</li> <li>The consumer also contacted the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) to express her disappointment about the service received. The Motor Ombudsman responded to CTSI with an overview of the process followed, and CTSI was happy with the steps taken since case submission, with no breach of the ADR Regulations. No further action was taken by CTSI.</li> </ul>
-------------------------------	---	---	---

## 5.3 How complaints to The Motor Ombudsman are being addressed

The total number of complaints brought by consumers to The Motor Ombudsman about its level of service, increased from 303 in 2022 to 473 in 2023. This was once again predominantly due to the delays and cases awaiting an ombudsman's final decision.

As has been seen already, not only has the cost of living crisis increased the volume of cases being accepted, but The Motor Ombudsman has equally seen an increase in the number of service complaints from consumers who are unhappy with the outcome of their adjudication, and have subsequently requested a final decision from an ombudsman.

Whilst these are not strictly complaints about our service in general. Often the accusation of consumers, who have lost their case, is that the work undertaken by the adjudicator, has not taken into consideration all relevant evidence, or are not content with the tone of the decision itself. This can lead to overall dissatisfaction with their case outcome, and influence negative reviews posted on Trustpilot.

Service complaints can also arise due to the volume of adjudications being appealed, and needing to go to an ombudsman for a final decision. As well as the work being undertaken with regards to shortening the final decision queue, and based on the service complaints received in 2023, a core focus for the senior management team in 2024 will be to continue to enhance The Motor Ombudsman's dispute resolution service, by improving service delivery timescales across each stage of the process.

In summary, and looking ahead to 2024, The Motor Ombudsman will continue to monitor and track service complaints and respond in a timely manner to consumers. In addition, it will use the feedback and learnings gained from each complaint to make necessary changes that will enhance the consumer's experience of using The Motor Ombudsman's service as their case progresses through to its conclusion.

## 5.4 Positive consumer testimonials about The Motor Ombudsman

The following is a sample of positive Trustpilot testimonials from consumers who used The Motor Ombudsman during 2023.

***“It was effortless and very easy to speak to the agents, who were knowledgeable, and they were all very helpful.”***

*(Ms.J, January)*

***“The company I wanted to escalate my complaint with wasn’t registered with The Motor Ombudsman, but the lady still listened to the issue, and explained and advised me on what my next steps could be.”***

*(Ms.S, March)*

***“Answered my call very quickly, and gave me full reassurance. Excellent service, and I would recommend to friends and family if they ever needed help.”***

*(Ms. H, June)*

***“Helpful and independent. A very useful third party service for those unfortunate times when an issue isn't getting resolved properly by a company.”***

*(Mr. D, August)*

***“A wonderful service that has helped to ease my stress by providing free assistance after being mis-sold a car. Always polite and transparent and acting within my best interests.”***

*(Ms. M, November)*



## 5.5 Annual accredited business survey highlights

Every year, a survey is sent to The Motor Ombudsman's network of accredited businesses to understand their views and level of satisfaction regarding various aspects of its service, and what is important to them.

The research was conducted via an e-mail survey, which was sent to Motor Ombudsman-accredited franchised car dealers and independent garages<sup>1</sup> between August and October 2023. Highlights of the findings are as follows.

### ► How businesses would describe The Motor Ombudsman in one word:

Following a similar trend to last year, **professional**, **"trustworthy"**, **"fair"**, **"impartial"**, **"reassurance"**, and **"supportive"**, were the most common words used to describe The Motor Ombudsman in 2023.



Overall, of the words used by respondents, **93%** were positive, up from 86% last year.

### ► The main benefits of accreditation stated by businesses were:

1. Being able to demonstrate that they are committed to the standards of an approved Code of Practice (stated by 90% of participants overall);
2. The credibility and reassurance provided for customers (87%);
3. Consistent and fair adjudication outcomes (86%);
4. Having access to The Motor Ombudsman's Information Line and dispute resolution service (83%); and
5. Being able to use the CTSI-approved Code logo (80%).

### ► Motor Ombudsman accreditation is valuable for businesses:

Out of the businesses surveyed, **87%** of respondents agreed that The Motor Ombudsman is valuable for businesses, which is up on last year's score of **80%**, and 83% were proud of their accreditation (85% in 2022). This year, 75% of respondents were satisfied with the overall value of their Motor Ombudsman accreditation, the same as last year, although this represented a drop compared to 83% in 2021. The 2022 survey results also revealed that **68%** of businesses stated that Motor Ombudsman accreditation gave them the edge over the competition – an increase on last year's figure of 66%, although it is down on the 2021 figure of 77%.

### ► Satisfaction with the dispute resolution service is good:

Overall, 83% of respondents were satisfied with their Motor Ombudsman accreditation. For businesses that had used The Motor Ombudsman's dispute resolution service in 2022, there has been a drop in satisfaction with the service. **65%** agreed that the process was easy to follow, versus 79% last year. Furthermore, 69% felt as though the case outcome was fair and reasonable, down from 75% in 2022. The research also revealed that 46% of businesses were satisfied with the time taken to resolve the dispute, which was less than the 53% figure seen in 2022.

### ► Key areas identified for improvement in 2024:

The main areas identified for improvement by The Motor Ombudsman, and that need to continue be addressed in 2024 are:



Quicker timescales to resolve disputes, and faster responses to business enquiries;



More information about the reasons for adjudication and ombudsman decisions, to ensure businesses better understand why a case has not been upheld in their favour; and



A better understanding of the value and benefits that Motor Ombudsman accreditation brings to businesses, as well as improved communication of the wide range benefits for businesses that do not have disputes.



Greater awareness of The Motor Ombudsman amongst consumers through ongoing marketing and PR initiatives.

Action plans will be developed by The Motor Ombudsman to ensure that the enhancements listed above are implemented during the coming 12 months.

<sup>1</sup>Sample size of 347 respondents (independent garages and franchise dealers).



## 5.6 Accredited business compliance

Business compliance monitoring remained a core focus in 2023. During the year, The Motor Ombudsman increased engagement with customers, businesses and regulatory bodies, such as the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI), to address and resolve non-compliance issues as and when they arose.

### 5.6.1 Online self-assessments and physical audits

#### 5.6.1.1 Online self-assessments

Once an independent garage or franchise car dealership has expressed interest in joining The Motor Ombudsman, the completion of an online self-assessment is required when applying for accreditation to the Service and Repair, and / or Vehicle Sales Codes to demonstrate that they are compliant with the requirements of the Code(s). The section below excludes any assessments in relation to Vehicle Warranty and New Car Code-accredited businesses.

The assessment asks businesses to complete information on subjects, amongst others, such as their staff training programme, their internal complaints process, as well as the advertising and sale of vehicles. The same self-assessment applies upon the renewal of the annual Code accreditation, and all businesses are asked to complete the assessment within 30 days of it being sent to them.

During 2023:

- ▶ **643** online self-assessments were completed for Service and Repair Code-accredited businesses.
- ▶ **271** online self-assessments for Vehicle Sales Code-accredited businesses were undertaken.

In the event of incomplete self-assessments, further guidance is provided by The Motor Ombudsman to resolve any outstanding requirements and queries, in order for the evaluation to be completed by businesses.

#### 5.6.1.2 Physical on-site audits

Every year, physical on-site audits are carried out on a random sample of businesses within The Motor Ombudsman's nationwide accredited business network to ensure that they continue to meet the necessary high standards for accreditation. In agreement with CTSI, no physical on-site audits were carried out during 2023.



### 5.6.2 Managing non-compliance

Penalty points are given to businesses for non-compliance and non-response with regards to a case at either the adjudication or final decision stage. In line with the terms and conditions of becoming accredited to a Code of Practice, it is a requirement that The Motor Ombudsman receives a satisfactory response from a business to any correspondence within five working days. Failure to respond means that the case is escalated as per the body's defined processes. Penalty points are issued and accumulated as per the flowchart below, and a business can also be suspended at any point in the process for continued non-response or compliance.

Action taken by The Motor Ombudsman	Number of working days with no business response	Penalty points awarded to the business
	5	0
The adjudication team validates all contact details and communicates with the business. The Motor Ombudsman maintains contact with the business requesting a response	↓	↓
	11	6
↓	↓	↓
Case notes are updated by the adjudication team on actions taken to date. The Motor Ombudsman maintains contact with the business requesting a response	16	18
↓	↓	↓
The first written warning is issued to the business once 30 points have been accumulated		30
The adjudication team updates the consumer on the case, and points are logged against the business. A referral is made by the adjudication team to the compliance team if a response has still not been received or the business is not voluntarily responding or complying with an adjudication outcome or final decision	↓	↓
The compliance team contacts the business with the aim of resolving outstanding issues	21	42
↓	↓	↓
A second written warning letter is sent to the business and the compliance team updates the adjudication team accordingly		60
↓	↓	↓
The business is placed under Closer Scrutiny for continued monitoring**	Continued non-response / compliance*	70
↓	↓	↓
A formal referral is made to ICAP, and appropriate sanctions / further actions are reviewed by panel members at the scheduled meetings		80

### \*Continued non-response and non-compliance

The adjudicator and the compliance team will take further action as appropriate, such as suspension or a referral made to ICAP, if a response has still not been received from the business and issues remains outstanding.

In the event of non-response or compliance with a case, businesses will be supplied with a guidance response factsheet as necessary by the adjudicator. Once the case has been referred to the compliance team, they will attempt to contact the business through the following means:

**By phone:** If contact is reached with the business, the compliance team will notify the contact of compliance procedures and e-mail information confirming the phone call.

**By e-mail:** The contact at the business is emailed with a deadline, if appropriate, along with any further relevant information in regards to the case or non-compliance issue.

For continued non-response or non-compliance, the adjudicator will also update any penalty points that need to be logged, but can equally remove them from the record of a business if compliance is achieved.

### \*\*Closer scrutiny

Closer scrutiny has been devised to ensure each compliance area has the ability to highlight matters for improvement to accredited businesses. This means focusing on performance enhancements without necessarily issuing penalty points or taking further action. Matters can include:

1. Repeat complaints / breaches reported to the adjudication team;
2. Areas of concern highlighted on online self-assessments or the physical audits; and
3. Operational or customer service issues identified by TMO staff through internal or external sources.

Before an accredited business is added to the closer scrutiny register, all business activities are reviewed, including consumer concerns, call / case volumes, compliance checks and customer satisfaction performance scores to ascertain the extent of any overarching performance issues.

Once placed on the register at the discretion of The Motor Ombudsman, a business will be informed of any corrective action and the evidence required to remove them from it. If the concern is not resolved, suspension and / or a referral to ICAP may be required.

---

### 5.6.3 Accredited business suspensions in 2023

Following a review of cases by the Independent Compliance Assessment Panel (ICAP), there were **no business suspensions** in 2023.

---

### 5.6.4 Accredited business expulsions in 2023

Following a review of cases by the Independent Compliance Assessment Panel (ICAP), there were **no business expulsions** in 2023.

---

### 5.6.5 The enhanced compliance process

Following an internal assessment of The Motor Ombudsman's compliance programmes in 2022, it was determined they continued to provide the required levels of oversight and intelligence. However, in an attempt to make these processes simpler to administer internally, and clearer for accredited business to follow, a cross-departmental working group was established in 2022, and its work continued in 2023.

The overall objective of this initiative was to reduce the number of 'touchpoints' throughout the compliance process, and to cut the average time to resolve compliance escalations.

Whilst only resulting in slight changes to the way these escalations are managed, the greater use of The Motor Ombudsman's specialised contact team earlier in the process, has continued to see positive results. This has equally helped prevent the need for referrals to The Motor Ombudsman's compliance department, and resulted in a clear increase in accredited business engagement throughout the ADR process.

In addition, disputes can be closed sooner, thereby allowing the compliance department to focus greater resource on a fewer number of escalations, and to turn their efforts to further improving The Motor Ombudsman's reporting and closer scrutiny protocols. This work will remain ongoing in 2024.

### 5.6.6 CTSI compliance



CTSI requires that all Motor Ombudsman-accredited businesses display the Approved Code logo on their website.

To significantly increase the volume of subscribers showing the Approved Code logo and that of The Motor Ombudsman, an electronic Smart Badge was developed, which allows consumers to immediately verify that businesses are signed up to The Motor Ombudsman. In addition, they are also able to navigate to the trader's profile page on the Garage Finder directly from the Badge.

Emphasising the importance of featuring the Smart Badge to both new and existing accredited businesses, principally through targeted marketing communications, will be an ongoing focus during 2024.

### 5.6.7 Compliance with the Ombudsman Association's Service Standards Framework

The OA's Service Standards Framework came into effect in May 2017. It provides a 'roadmap' that members of the OA, such as The Motor Ombudsman, can use to raise their own performance, to embed good practice in their organisation, and demonstrate the quality of the service they offer. In meeting these standards, they can be more effective in supplying both individual redress and improving the service of organisations being complained about.

The Framework provides five key measures for members that specifically relate to the service supplied to both the complainants and to the organisations that are the source of the dispute. The individual metrics are as follows:

- 1 Accessibility;
- 2 Communication;
- 3 Professionalism;
- 4 Fairness; and
- 5 Transparency.



## SECTION 6: OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS

### 6.1 Staff learning and development

Staff engagement, learning and development continued to be a major focus in 2023, and training was undertaken throughout the year on a number of subjects, including:

- ▶ Mental health awareness;
- ▶ Microsoft Teams and Office software;
- ▶ Diversity and Inclusion;
- ▶ Insights Discovery;
- ▶ Leadership; and
- ▶ Mental health first aid.

The training programme for 2024 will be tailored and geared towards ensuring continued employee progression, including the development of IT skills and mechanical knowledge via practical and face-to-face classroom-based learning.





## 6.2 Staff diversity and inclusion

An inclusive and diverse workplace, and one which promotes equality, has always played an important role in how we operate as an organisation. In addition to providing benefits to employees, a diverse workforce also enables The Motor Ombudsman to better represent the consumers that use our service, as well as to businesses that are accredited.

In 2023, we conducted our fourth annual Diversity and Inclusion staff survey to obtain the views of staff and how they view different aspects of our organisation. This included their opinion of diversity in the workplace, their sense of belonging, the importance that they and their peers place on diversity, and the degree of equality when it comes to development and learning opportunities within the business.

From the staff who took part on the study, they responded with the following answers to these three questions:

**What is your age?**



- 18 to 24: **12%**
- 25 to 34: **39%**
- 35 to 44: **33%**
- 45 to 54: **8%**
- 55 to 64: **8%**

**What is your racial or ethnic identity?**



- Any other ethnic group: **1%**
- Arab: **1%**
- Asian – any Asian background: **2%**
- Asian – Chinese: **2%**
- Asian – Pakistani: **3%**
- Black – African: **2%**
- Black – British: **3%**
- Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups: **4%**
- White – any other White background: **2%**
- White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern/Irish/British: **10%**

**Do you identify with or practice any religions?**



- Atheism: **8%**
- Buddhism: **4%**
- Christianity: **22%**
- Islam: **14%**
- Do not practice any religion: **2%**
- Other: **2%**
- Sikhism: **2%**
- Spirituality: **2%**

From the staff who responded in the study:

- ▶ **94%** explained that they feel they belong at The Motor Ombudsman (75% in 2022),
- ▶ **88%** said that diversity was important to them (79% in 2022);
- ▶ **100%** believed that we hire people from diverse backgrounds (91% in 2022); and
- ▶ **88%** were in agreement that they feel respected and valued by their teammates (91% in 2022); and
- ▶ **94%** said they feel respected by their line manager (96% in 2022).

The Motor Ombudsman's Diversity and Inclusion staff survey will be repeated in 2024, and highlights of the findings will be presented in next year's Annual Report.

Reflecting our organisation's commitment to equality, our senior management team has a **50-50** representation of males and females.

At The Motor Ombudsman, **33%** of staff members are female and **67%** of employees are male as at 31st December 2023.

## 6.3 Our 10 key areas of focus for 2024



Looking ahead to 2024, the **10** key areas of focus for our organisation are as follows:

- 1** To continue to reinforce The Motor Ombudsman's **position** as the automotive dispute resolution provider, and the ADR body of choice for businesses across the motor industry;
- 2** To remain **compliant** with ADR and governance requirements and timescales stipulated by The Motor Ombudsman's "supervisory" bodies, such as the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) and the Ombudsman Association (OA), and to maintain The Motor Ombudsman's ISO 27001 accreditation;
- 3** To **reduce** end-to-end case timings; and improve the identification of vulnerable customers earlier in the case process through the utilisation of new technologies;
- 4** To improve the quality of decisions through **improved** case file collation and team **competence**;
- 5** To monitor case trends and compliance to promote automotive sector improvements;
- 6** To have consistent and regular business engagement and **satisfaction** with The Motor Ombudsman's service;
- 7** To proactively manage The Motor Ombudsman's new **case invoicing methodology** and to continue to improve debt collection;
- 8** To **increase** the number of automotive businesses that are signed up to the body's Codes of Practice;
- 9** To **focus** a greater level of marketing spend on initiatives which raise awareness of The Motor Ombudsman amongst consumers and automotive businesses; and
- 10** To ensure that The Motor Ombudsman continues to remain **profitable**.

## SECTION 7: FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

### 7.1 The Motor Ombudsman Accounts: Finance Report

Extract from the Accounts for The Motor Ombudsman Limited

Profit and Loss account for the year ended 31 December 2023			
	Note	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
<b>Turnover</b>	4	<b>3,030</b>	2,696
Operating costs:			
Other external expenses		<b>(72)</b>	(82)
Staff costs	5	<b>(2,189)</b>	(1,870)
Amortisation and other amounts written off fixed assets	6	<b>(34)</b>	(71)
Other operating expenses		<b>(626)</b>	(567)
<b>Profit before interest and taxation</b>		<b>109</b>	106
<b>Profit before taxation</b>	7	<b>109</b>	106
Tax on profit	7	<b>(29)</b>	(16)
<b>Profit for the financial year</b>		<b>80</b>	90

All amounts relate to continuing operations.

There are no recognised gains and losses for the financial years other than those included above. Accordingly, no separate statement of comprehensive income is presented.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023			
	Note	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	8	63	79
Tangible assets	9	10	23
		73	102
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	10	844	924
Cash at bank and in hand		234	(120)
		1,078	906
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	(1,633)	(1,469)
<b>Net current liabilities</b>		(555)	(665)
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		(482)	(563)
Deferred taxation	12	21	21
<b>Net liabilities</b>		(461)	(542)
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Called up share capital	13	-	-
Profit and loss account		(461)	(542)
<b>Total shareholders' deficit</b>		(461)	(542)

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors and authorised for issue on 11 September 2024.

**Company Registration No. 06517394**

## SECTION 8: APPENDICES

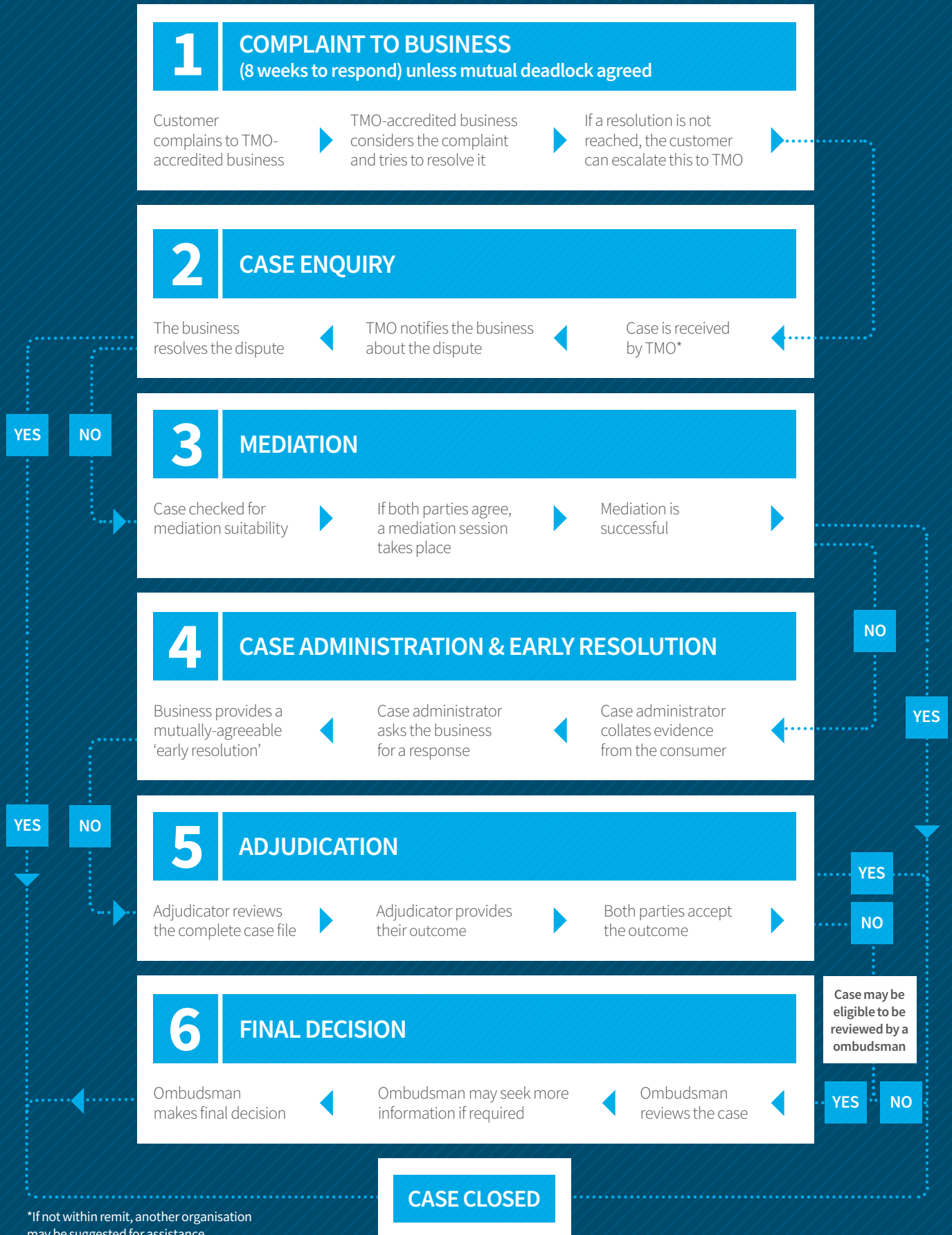


These appendices are extracts from the full Motor Ombudsman's Independent Compliance Assessment Panel (ICAP) Annual Compliance Report 2023 which is available to view and download on [TheMotorOmbudsman.org](https://www.themotorombudsman.org).



## 8.1 The Motor Ombudsman's Alternative Dispute Resolution process

The Motor Ombudsman's dispute resolution process is entirely in-house and free of charge for consumers, including the ombudsman's final decision, which is legally binding on the accredited business if the consumer chooses to accept it.



## 8.2 Benefits of The Motor Ombudsman for consumers and businesses

### 8.2.1 Benefits of The Motor Ombudsman for consumers

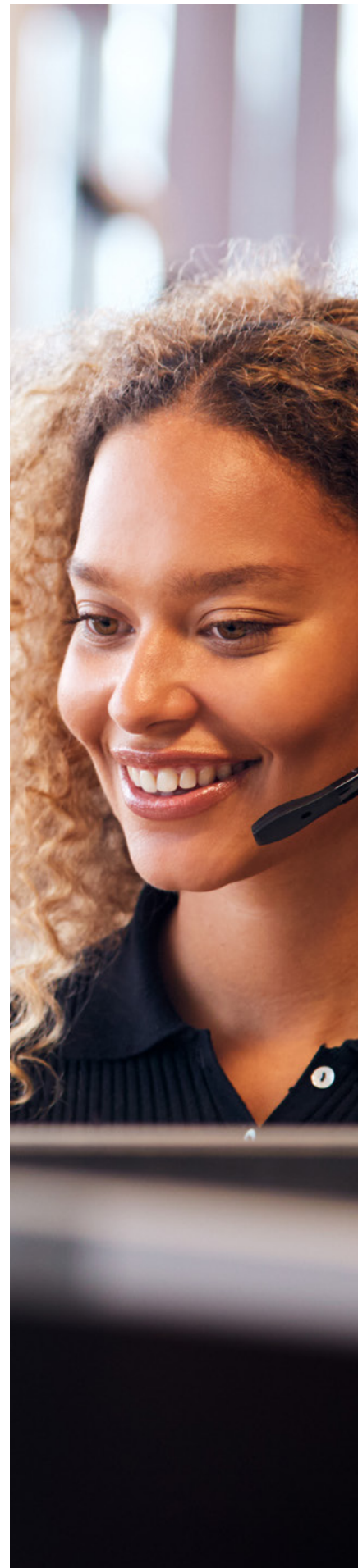
The Motor Ombudsman offers consumers the following key benefits:

- ✓ A clear channel and single point of contact for all motoring-related disputes
- ✓ Free access to the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and ombudsman service, which is in-house from start to finish
- ✓ Guidance through the entire dispute resolution process to get a fair and impartial outcome
- ✓ Avoids the need for increased detriment through costly legal and court appearance fees
- ✓ Increased confidence and peace of mind when buying or servicing a new or used car that the accredited business is meeting high standards of service and workmanship
- ✓ A [Code of Practice portfolio](#) that covers the entire customer purchase and vehicle ownership experience
- ✓ The ability to search for a local garage / dealership or bodyshop that is accredited to the Service and Repair and / or Vehicle Sales Codes
- ✓ First-hand customer reviews and ratings on the online [Garage Finder](#) to make an educated decision when choosing a garage
- ✓ The Motor Ombudsman website provides a valuable resource for motoring-related information on topics, such as vehicle maintenance and [electric vehicles](#)
- ✓ Access to an [online recalls database](#) on The Motor Ombudsman website to check whether a specific vehicle (by VIN) has been recalled
- ✓ Access to a library of online [case studies](#) to view previous adjudication outcomes and final decisions taken by The Motor Ombudsman
- ✓ The ability to consult over 200 informative articles across 11 different categories on The Motor Ombudsman's [Knowledge Base](#), which look at subjects such as, car ownership, distance sales, dispute resolution, mediation, and electric vehicles prior to submitting a case

### 8.2.2 Benefits of accreditation to The Motor Ombudsman for businesses

Accreditation to The Motor Ombudsman offers businesses the following key [benefits](#).

- ✓ Allows them to demonstrate their commitment to the highest levels of care and workmanship and an open and transparent way of undertaking business
- ✓ Unlimited and tailored information from a team of legally experienced and trained adjudicators, who are all in-house
- ✓ Guidance through the entire dispute resolution process to get a fair and impartial outcome
- ✓ The ability to participate in mediation as part of the early resolution process
- ✓ Avoids increased detriment through costly solicitor and court fees
- ✓ Full use of The Motor Ombudsman and CTSI-approved Code logos at their premises, and on their customer-facing literature and website
- ✓ A dedicated profile on the [Garage Finder](#) which can help to drive footfall, new business leads and revenue
- ✓ Valuable ratings and reviews from customers on their Garage Finder profile
- ✓ Amplified exposure through The Motor Ombudsman's marketing and PR activities
- ✓ Exclusive access to interactive and smart dashboards to allow accredited businesses to view the progression of customer contacts through the dispute resolution process, as well as the principal reasons for consumer complaints
- ✓ The DVSA will record whether a vehicle testing station (VTS) is a member of a Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Code of Practice during the MOT test centre inspection, which may help to consider a business as low risk, thereby resulting in reduced regulatory checks
- ✓ A certificate demonstrating commitment to one or more of The Motor Ombudsman's [Codes of Practice](#)
- ✓ The ability to enter The Motor Ombudsman's [Star Awards](#) to gain valuable exposure and recognition for the exceptional work and service provided to consumers



## 8.3 Code of Practice performance summary



The following Code of Practice performance summary provides a year-on-year comparison of key metrics for each of The Motor Ombudsman (TMO)'s four CTSI-approved Codes of Practice.

The following is a glossary of terms used in this section:



**CONSUMER CONTACTS** are received by The Motor Ombudsman's Consumer Contact team, which can include a general query, and enquiries relating to live cases.



**EARLY RESOLUTIONS** are when complaints can be resolved simply with minimum intervention from The Motor Ombudsman.



**ADJUDICATION CASES** are raised if the business that a consumer has a dispute with is accredited to The Motor Ombudsman, the business has been given a maximum period of eight weeks to try to resolve the issue directly with the customer, and the complaint requires a formal decision.



**FINAL DECISIONS** are only ever issued by the ombudsman, and are the last stage of The Motor Ombudsman's involvement in a case if a consumer or accredited business does not accept the outcome of the adjudicator.

A final decision is made independently from the adjudicators by looking at all the facts of the case, and is binding if the consumer chooses to accept it.



**ESCALATION RATE** is the proportion of consumer contacts that become adjudication cases.

### 8.3.1 Service and Repair Code

#### Service and Repair Code



The **Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair**, introduced in 2008, ensures that consumers receive an honest and fair service when visiting an accredited business's premises for work or repairs on their vehicle. It covers the use of clear advertising, open and transparent pricing, completing extra work only with prior agreement, and the use of competent and qualified staff. All businesses accredited to the Service and Repair Code can be found on The Motor Ombudsman's online Garage Finder.<sup>2</sup>

The **Service and Repair Code** covers the following principal areas:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Advertising;            |  Staff competency;           |
|  The booking in of work; |  The standard of work; and   |
|  Pricing;                |  The handling of complaints. |

In 2023, and on the fifteenth anniversary of its launch, the Service and Repair Code was extended to encompass mobile mechanics, tyre fitters, and smart repairers for the first time.

#### 8.3.1.1 Service and Repair Code performance data

	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
Consumer contacts	24,316	15,690	33,520	▲
Early resolutions	171	81	61	▼
Adjudication cases*	1,693	1,821	2,430	▲
Ombudsman final decisions	99	207	379	▲
Escalation rate (Contacts to cases)	7%	12%	7%	▼

\* The adjudication cases figure relates to the volume of cases passed to adjudicators for review.

<sup>2</sup> [www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder](https://www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder)



## 8.3.2 New Car Code



First launched in 1976, and endorsed by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) in 2004, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for New Cars** ensures that vehicle manufacturers supply new cars and warranties to consumers responsibly. The Code helps to safeguard new car buyers from misleading advertising, and ensures that documentation supplied to consumers is easy to understand, that the terms of a warranty will be respected, and that any complaints will be handled swiftly.

In 2023, a total of **42** businesses were accredited to the New Car Code, meaning that **98%** of all new vehicles sold across the UK were covered by it.

The **New Car Code** covers the following principal areas:

- ✓ Advertising;
- ✓ The availability of replacement parts and accessories; and
- ✓ New car provisions;
- ✓ Complaints handling.
- ✓ Manufacturer new car warranties;

No changes were made to the New Car Code in 2023.

### 8.3.2.1 New Car Code performance data

	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
Consumer contacts	15,453	12,551	17,922	▲
Early resolutions	152	141	84	▼
Adjudication cases*	1,164	1,226	1,533	▲
Ombudsman final decisions	141	129	228	▲
Escalation rate (Contacts to cases)	8%	10%	9%	▼

\* The adjudication cases figure relates to the volume of cases passed to adjudicators for review.



### 8.3.3 Vehicle Warranty Products Code



Unveiled in 2009, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for Vehicle Warranty Products** aims to provide guidelines for the supply of automotive warranties, including coverage of both insured and non-insured products. The Code covers around 75% of the extended vehicle warranty products sold annually, providing consumers with additional protection when taking out a policy with an accredited business.

The Vehicle Warranty Products Code covers the following principal areas:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertising;                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service contracts, guarantees and non-insured products; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point of sale obligations;                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insured products; and                                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The clarity of information provided to customers; | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints handling.                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The handling of claims;                           |   |

No changes were made to the content of the [Vehicle Warranty Products Code](#) in 2023.

#### 8.3.3.1 Vehicle Warranty Products Code performance data

	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
Consumer contacts	4,054	4,019	7,907	▲
Early resolutions	16	14	9	▼
Adjudication cases*	321	388	640	▲
Ombudsman final decisions	32	46	107	▲
Escalation rate (Contacts to cases)	8%	10%	8%	▼

\*The adjudication cases figure relates to the volume of cases passed to adjudicators for review.

## 8.3.4 Vehicle Sales Code



Launched in 2016, the **Motor Industry Code of Practice for Vehicle Sales** focuses on the sale of both new and used cars at an accredited garage, dealership or used car outlet, as well as the supply of finance and warranties. It covers areas, such as the use of transparent wording of advertising and pricing, clear and transparent invoicing, and that the sale of a used car is supported by a vehicle provenance check to ensure that it has not been stolen, written-off and is free of any outstanding finance payments. Businesses accredited to the Vehicle Sales Code can be found on The Motor Ombudsman's Garage Finder.<sup>6</sup>

### The Vehicle Sales Code covers the following principal areas:

 Advertising;	 The provision of warranty products;
 The presentation of used cars for sale;	 The provision of finance products;
 The presentation of new cars for sale;	 Aftersales support; and
 The vehicle sales process;	 Complaints handling.

No changes were made to the content of the [Vehicle Sales Code](#) in 2023.

### 8.3.4.1 Vehicle Sales Code performance data

	2021	2022	2023	Trend (2023 v 2022)
Consumer contacts	45,821	27,305	78,759	▲
Early resolutions	289	181	116	▼
Adjudication cases*	2,652	2,958	4,289	▲
Ombudsman final decisions	228	316	634	▲
Escalation rate (Contacts to cases)	6%	11%	5%	▼

\* The adjudication cases figure relates to the volume of cases passed to adjudicators for review..

<sup>6</sup> [www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder](http://www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder)

## 8.4 Case studies - adjudication outcomes and final decisions

For all case studies relating to The Motor Ombudsman's Codes of Practice in 2023, please refer to the 2023 ICAP Report, which can be found at:

[www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/useful-information/media-publications/reports/independent-compliance-assessment-panel-reports](http://www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/useful-information/media-publications/reports/independent-compliance-assessment-panel-reports)



<sup>10</sup>[www.themotorombudsman.org/garage-finder](http://www.themotorombudsman.org/garage-finder)



**THE MOTOR  
OMBUDSMAN**

[TheMotorOmbudsman.org](https://TheMotorOmbudsman.org)

**Follow and Like us:**



**Linked** 