



BUSINESS CENTRE ASSOCIATION CONSUMER CHARTER OCT 2011



This shield identifies operators and locations that adhere to the **bca** Code of Conduct and Best Practice including this Consumer Charter.

Next page

Close

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BUSINESS CENTRE ASSOCIATION
bca

Explanation:

The Business Centre Association (**bca**) is the only UK trade association representing Serviced Offices, Workspace, Virtual and Accommodation Address services. Established in 1989, the **bca** is the voice of the industry and is committed to setting industry standards by encouraging a network of excellence.

The **bca** regulate the Serviced Office, Workspace, Virtual and Accommodation Address services through a mandatory Code of Conduct and Best Practice which demonstrates a strong commitment to professional and ethical conduct. This framework of values and principles are emphasised when **bca** members renew their commitment to the **bca** Code annually.

Explanation of Terminology:

Consumers – mean, those purchasing services and space from Space Providers of Serviced Offices, Business Centres, Workspace and light industrial space, Virtual and Accommodation Addresses.

Operators of Serviced Space – means Space Providers of Serviced Offices, Business Centres, Workspace, light industrial space, Virtual and Accommodation Address services.

Internet Agent/Broker – means Internet Brokers or internet Agents whose business includes the use of the internet to identify potential consumers of serviced Space.

Who can help:

The Business Centre Association (**bca**)
Kinetic Centre, Theobald Street,
Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, UK, WD6 4PJ
consumercharter@bca.uk.com
Telephone +44 (0)20 8387 1444

Internet Broker details:

Should you need the contact details for an internet broker, then please contact The Business Centre Association who will provide you with the necessary information.

Privacy:

Information you provide to us will be treated in confidence and will only be given out with your agreement or when legally necessary.

Business ethics:

This charter explains the professional business ethics and processes together with the independent impartial advice delivered to consumers when seeking information from internet brokers on space availability and services offered by providers of Business Centres, Workspace, light industrial space, Virtual and Accommodation Addresses.

The aim is to provide the public with both a valued and beneficial service which is transparent therefore we are committed to this 'Charter of Excellence'.

In signing this Charter we recognise that 'Operators of Space' are consumers as well as 'Prospects' seeking suitable space accommodation being covered by this Consumer Charter.

In signing this Charter we agree that we will observe the highest principles of ethics, equity, professional conduct and fair practice in dealing with others and will conduct business in a manner to enhance the operation, image and reputation of the Flexible Space sector including Virtual and Accommodation Address services.



This shield identifies operators and locations that adhere to the **bca** Code of Conduct and Best Practice including this Consumer Charter.

Consumers:

In relation to this 'Consumer Charter' consumers are defined as those purchasing services and space from Space Providers of Serviced Offices, Business Centres, Workspace and light industrial space, Virtual and Accommodation Address providers.

Statement:

bca Consumer Charter – incorporating trust, integrity, business ethics, best practice and professional conduct all being essential prerequisites when building business relationships and using business services.

Background:

To promote best practice and quality standards within the industry for the benefit of the Consumer, thus enabling consumers to have confidence with the companies who subscribe to the Charter. To improve the service for the consumer (customer) by stipulating that Internet Brokers and Agents provide specific accurate information to consumers/customers who approach them.

Establishment:

This charter established by The Business Centre Association (**bca**) is to ensure transparent, impartial, Consumer Information as provided by referrals from Internet Brokers, Estate Agents when offering the consumer a Choice of Business Centre, Serviced Office, Workspace and light Industrial locations together with Virtual and Accommodation Address services.

The **bca** has more than 800 member locations and all of its members are expected to comply with The Business Centre Association Code of Conduct and Best Practice which is renewed annually.

FAQ's for Consumers

To assist 'Consumers' detailed below are a number of questions which we hope will assist you in your search for suitable space.

- i Who are we dealing with and who is being paid?
- ii Are the internet brokers independent?
- iii Are internet brokers **bca** accredited-what does this mean?
- iv What will you do with my contact information?
- v What Service can we expect to receive from an internet broker?
- vi Am I viewing a **bca** member location?
- vii What is the benefit of using a **bca** location?
- viii Are you recommending any Business Centre?
- ix Who do you recommend on Budget?
- x What is included in my monthly payment?
- xi What other additional costs/charges should I be aware of?

Internet Brokers:

1. All advice given will be impartial
2. The introductions that we provide are completely independent, impartial and at no cost to you, our aim is to fulfil your requirement and make arrangements for you to view the appropriate locations.
3. We will endeavour to match your specific requests particularly relating to location, facilities and price and ensure that your enquiry is forwarded as quickly as possible to the space provider. Subject to your agreement, we will arrange viewing(s) for specified locations. To make sure all parties are able to communicate and confirm viewing appointments we will give the space operator your email address and contact mobile number unless otherwise requested.
4. Any information published relating to space provider's locations will reflect correct data and have the permission of the Operator to use such information.
5. We aim to ensure that our staff are adequately trained to provide you with an excellent service. However, if this has not been your experience please contact [in the first instance your internet broker and if the matter is not resolved and a decision cannot be reached, then contact the **bca** by email/ telephone] so that the industry trade association (**bca**) may be given the opportunity to investigate and remedy the problem.
6. Following a successful introduction and once you have signed the necessary agreement and paid your deposit, the space provider will pay us a fee.
7. Consumers are made aware that premium listings attract greater commission, however, the locations presented are not recommended more than other locations and the broker's advice is unbiased and impartial.
8. We undertake that all information and location advice provided to you is completely independent and impartial and in no way does this reflect the commission that we are paid.
9. In all communications you can expect to be treated with courtesy and politeness at all times, and we request that the same applies when the situation is reversed.
10. The information we supply is in accordance with the Data Protection Act, this means that on some occasions we will be unable to deal with your request if the information you require is not in accordance with the Act.
11. We cannot offer advice relating to any legal issues.

Consumers:

This code is presented for the benefit of consumers and we trust that all parties will act in a respectful manner towards each other and that Consumers acknowledge their contractual payment obligations.

Consumer Redress:

In the first instance the Consumer will raise the grievance in writing with the party concerned namely the space provider, the internet broker or both. If the grievance is not resolved to the Consumers satisfaction the following 'Redress' procedure is available to the Consumer.

Consumer Redress General Information:

The aim is to simplify and expedite the redress process for the benefit of the Consumer. This redress process does not affect the Consumers statutory rights.

Consumer Redress Process:

- A** The submission of the grievance must be submitted in writing email is acceptable together with full contact details (name of company, name of contact, full address and postcode, telephone/mobile number) and sent to:
The Business Centre Association Ltd (**bca**), Kinetic Centre, Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 4PJ
email: complaints@bca.uk.com
- B** The **bca** will in writing (email) acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- C** The **bca** will investigate and carry out a fact find in relation to the complaint.
- D** The **bca** will endeavour to investigate and respond to a complaint within 14 days and not exceeding 28 working days. However, the **bca** recognises there will be occasions when this is not possible and in those instances will communicate and advise the Consumer of such a deferment.
- E** The **bca** is committed to verifying and investigating a complaint and gives an undertaking that once the facts are established a solution will be sought, and the complainant and relevant stakeholders will be informed of the outcome.

Space Providers:

12. We aim to ensure that our staff are adequately trained and will make every effort to provide you with an excellent service. However, if this has not been your experience please contact [in the first instance your space provider and if the matter is not resolved and a decision cannot be reached, then contact the **bca** by email/ telephone] so that the industry trade association (**bca**) may be given the opportunity to investigate and remedy the problem.
13. We cannot offer advice relating to any legal issues.
14. As a space provider/operator we may pay a commission fee.
15. As a space provider/operator we will supply the internet brokers with correct data relating to respective location(s) and give permission for the internet brokers/agents to use such information.
16. Some space providers may choose to pay more commission, however Internet Brokers undertake not to make requests for commission exceeding the standard fee. Premium listings on Internet Broker websites attract greater commission.
17. If during the first 12 months of the agreement there is a change in a clients' space requirement the space provider having communicated with the broker may adjust the broker commission payment to reflect such change.
18. In all communications you can expect to be treated with courtesy and politeness at all times, and we request that the same applies when the situation is reversed.

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19. Complaints about the service delivery will be treated quickly and sympathetically, we do request that we be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to your complaint.
Any such complaints must be in writing/email.
20. We cannot offer advice relating to any legal issues.
21. We encourage your comments good or otherwise about the service you have received and welcome any suggestions you might have regarding any of the internet broking services you have used, any flexible space providers, the **bca** or the flexible space sector in general. Your feedback is welcomed, please email consumercharter@bca.uk.com
22. In all communications you can expect to be treated with courtesy and politeness at all times, and we request that the same applies when the situation is reversed.