

## **The Bye-Laws Governing The Furniture Ombudsman Standards Board**

This document sets out the Bye-Laws of The Furniture Ombudsman Standards Board and helps to promote the transparency and spirit of The Furniture Ombudsman, its practices and procedures.

### **Constitution**

- 1) The Standards Board shall wherever possible be balanced so as to represent equally the interest of the consumer and the industry.
- 2) The Standards Board shall comprise of a Chair, a Vice-Chair and board members who volunteer their services for the good of the consumer and the members of The Furniture Ombudsman.
- 3) The Chair shall be appointed by The Furniture Ombudsman for a term of 2 years after which he shall stand down or be re-elected. The members of the Standards Board shall elect a member for the position of Vice-Chair as is necessary from time to time.
- 4) Individual members of the Standards Board shall be appointed by The Furniture Ombudsman for a term of 1 year after which they shall stand down or be reappointed.
- 5) The Furniture Ombudsman may appoint additional or replacement members to the Standards Board from time to time in order to balance the interests of the Standards Board or enhance its quality.
- 6) In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume their duties.
- 7) The Chair shall not have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the furniture and home improvement industry.
- 8) Should circumstances dictate that a member wishes to stand down from the Standards Board, they shall be asked to provide 3 months notice to The Furniture Ombudsman in writing.

### **Conduct**

- 9) The Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Standards Board shall be of good character and shall observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the stewardship of the Standards Board and its duties.
- 10) The Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Standards Board shall avoid any danger of being influenced or appearing to be influenced by their private or business interests in the exercise of their duties to the Standards Board. All members should declare any personal or business interest which may, or may be perceived by a reasonable person, to influence their judgement.
- 11) Members of the Standards Board shall be excluded from discussions or decisions regarding matters directly involving the business which they are currently, or have been previously engaged with.
- 12) Should any circumstances arise in respect of an individual member of the Standards Board which could harm the interests of The Furniture Ombudsman, the management is authorised to take any appropriate action which they deem necessary.

## Responsibilities

- 13) The Standards Board shall meet quarterly in order to support the aims of clause 3.13 and 3.15 (as may be amended from time to time) of The Rules Governing the Operation of The Furniture Ombudsman Alternative Dispute Resolution Service;
  - 3.13 Where in the opinion of The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman, there are exceptional grounds to re-examine a decision or award which is contained in adjudication he may refer the case to The Furniture Ombudsman Standards Board for their comment and recommendations. If accepted by The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman; those recommendations will become binding on the Full Member as an appendix to the adjudication.
  - 3.15 In order to maintain the integrity of The Furniture Ombudsman Alternative Dispute Resolution Service, the Standards Board shall review a cross section of adjudications monthly to ensure that decisions are both fair and reasonable. The Furniture Ombudsman Standards Board shall make recommendations to The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman on the administration of cases, the Rules of Full Membership and any other policy or procedure and shall meet quarterly for that purpose.
- 14) All members of the Standards Board shall endeavour to attend all meetings and support the aims and objectives of The Furniture Ombudsman. Members shall publish their feedback on adjudications to the Standards Board, The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman and the Individual Adjudicator.
- 15) The Chair shall effectively manage the course of Standards Board meetings ensuring that all members are heard and are given a reasonable opportunity to put forward their views.
- 16) Where members are asked to vote on a course of action regarding any matter, and there is an even split, the Chair shall have the casting vote and he shall advise the Head of The Furniture Ombudsman of the decision accordingly. There should be a minimum of 3 board members, including the Chair to agree on a decision to make a recommendation.
- 17) Having been made aware of a decision to recommend, The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman shall advise the Standards Board whether he shall adopt their recommendation within 14 days.
- 18) Wherever possible the Standards Board shall conduct their meetings in the presence of The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman, or another individual or is sent to represent him. The Head of The Furniture Ombudsman will invite Adjudicators to attend meetings when it is practicable to do so.
- 19) Members shall conduct all forms of external communication via The Furniture Ombudsman.
- 20) Members of the Standards Board shall provide their permission to The Furniture Ombudsman to publish their name and an agreed profile on websites.