

Checkatrade.com

Membership Support Pack

Updated November 2020



For support call
Reviews Team today
on 01243 608 823

Received a negative review?

On average, our members receive one negative review a year. When this happens, we know it can be disappointing and your version of events will differ to that of your customers. Checkatrade are then in the middle of this and as a review site, we are responsible for displaying all genuine feedback we receive, whilst also trying to support our members and consumers. If this does happen to you, we have a dedicated and experienced Reviews team available Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. until 5p.m. If you would like to speak to someone for support and advice, please call us on 01243 608823 and we will be happy to go through what happens if a customer of yours leaves a negative review. This is also explained below.

If we receive a negative review we will always notify you before anything is published on the Checkatrade website. This will usually be via email and will explain the details of the customer and their review.

Depending on the severity of the complaint, there could be up to 7 working days where the complaint is pending publication.

Within this time, we strongly encourage you to contact your customer to see if anything can be resolved. It could be something that is easily rectified and where possible we will support you in trying to achieve a resolution for you and your customer. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, the customer may withdraw the negative review and every month we do receive calls from customers asking us to do this which is always great to hear!

For any published complaint, you will always have a right of reply. This is displayed directly below the feedback and allows others to see your version of events. This reply can be very powerful, and when written in the right way, it shows your customer service in the event of an unhappy customer and your after care. **Please refer to our The Power of a Reply for advice on how to compose your response.**



If you feel the customer’s comments are factually incorrect and there is evidence to support this, we will always review this evidence and the feedback will be updated accordingly.

Finally, if the customer does not give us permission to let you know about the negative review, we will not publish the feedback. The reason for this is because we want our members to have the opportunity to either resolve or reply to any feedback and if you do not know who has left the review, we do not feel this is fair. These again are recorded internally and monitored.

Even with a negative review, the majority of our members go on to benefit from Checkatrade membership. Negative Reviews, when handled well, can be an opportunity to create customer loyalty.

Useful links

Struggling to get payment from your customer?

Please find below 2 links which we hope can give you advice as to where you stand when customers won’t pay.

www.gov.uk/invoicing-and-taking-payment-from-customers

www.cashflowprotector.co.uk

The first is a Government website giving advice on how to invoice your customers and their obligations to pay you within a given time period. There is also a link on the third page of the website informing you of what to do if they do not pay by the end of the time stipulated.

The second link is to a company that charges a small fee in order to get outstanding money from customers. They specialise in customer-orientated credit-control; blending customer service expertise with the persuasive insistence of professional collectors, so you get paid quicker.

Action Fraud...

Action Fraud is the UK’s national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre. They provide a central point of contact for information about fraud and cyber-crime. For further information, we advise you to give them a call on 0300 123 2040 or visit their website.

www.actionfraud.police.uk



Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline (C.A.C.H)

C.A.C.H is a free service that will be able to offer you advice on your next steps (legally). They can offer advice for many different areas including terms and conditions and contracts made with customers and are linked to trading Standards. You can reach them on 0345 404 05 06 or alternatively visit their website.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The Negative Reviews Checkatrade Policy

The policy that your customers can view is available on the Checkatrade website. We would encourage you to have your own Policy for your customers to follow in the event of a dispute.

www.checkatrade.com/resolving-issues

Remember, in your member’s area, you can download ready-made paperwork that complies with Trading Standards law as well as information and guidance to protect your business and your reputation.

The power of a reply

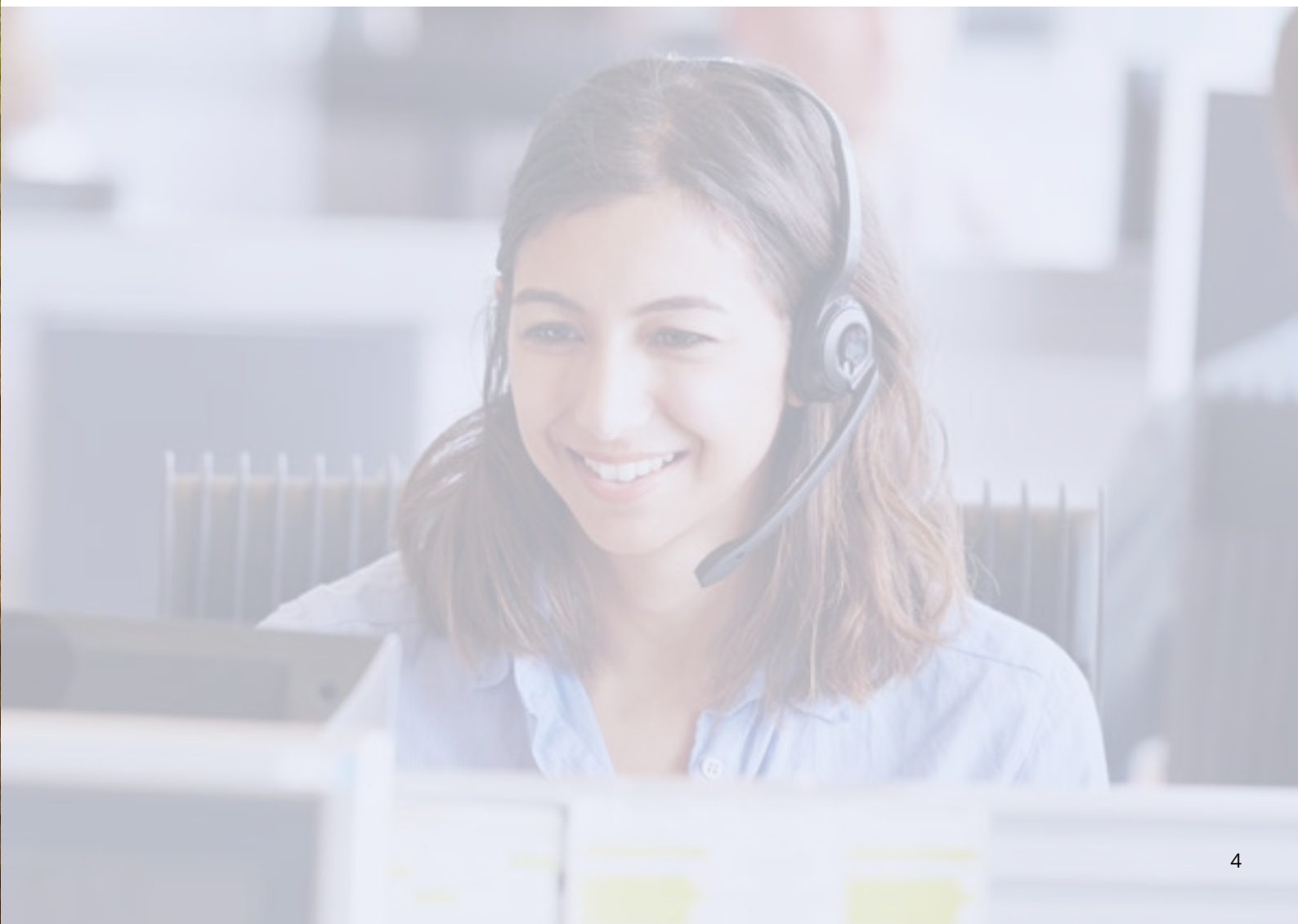
If you need to reply to a negative review, make sure it shows your customer service and after care skills in handling a complaint. Complaints, when handled well, can be an opportunity to create customer loyalty.

- ✓ **Less is more!** – it is normally better to keep your reply brief and to the point.
- ✓ **Avoid using technical terminology** – there may be times where you need to use this, but most consumers will not understand what this means unless they are in the trade themselves.
- ✓ **Do not include customer details** – we will not publish consumer's details, for positive or negative feedback.
- ✓ **Refer to other positive reviews** – encourage customers to view all of your other glowing reports.
- ✓ **Avoid being defensive** – don't forget that your comments will be seen by potential consumers so you must remain professional and calm. Using insulting language about your customer will not help!
- ✓ **Use your reply to turn the situation into a positive** – what have you done to try and resolve these issues? Let consumers know about the efforts you have made to rectify the problems to give them confidence that if the job doesn't go smoothly, you will do all you can to rectify it.
- ✓ If you would like further advice or support with your reply, give us a call.



What Checkatrade do to try and protect members from untruthful reviews

- ✓ We do not accept anonymous reviews.
- ✓ Depending on the severity of the complaint, there could be up to 7 working days where the complaint is pending publication. This provides you with an opportunity to look into the complaint and either resolve it or provide a reply.
- ✓ You will always have the opportunity to provide your version of events that will be published with the feedback.
- ✓ Where possible, we offer to be the 'go between' for both parties to try and assist with a resolution where communication may have broken down.
- ✓ We offer an Alternative Dispute Resolution where we feel necessary. This service does come at a cost due to the level of investigation provided by an independent third party. Please contact us for further information.



Tips to avoid disputes

Good communication is key

Good communication before, during and after a job can prevent problems from occurring and ensure everyone is clear on the expectations of the job.

Before – provide clear and detailed paperwork including estimates, quotes, contract, payment terms, terms and conditions etc. Clearly set out what you are going to do, timescales and pricing.

During – keep all channels of communication open during the job so anything the customer may be unhappy with can be dealt with at the time. If any part of the job requirement changes, keep the customer updated and create an additional contract for variations from the original agreement.

After – if there is an issue, address this as soon as possible. Delay in addressing it will just add to your customers frustrations. Be specific in how you can address their concerns and what action you are going to take to remedy the situation. You should also consider having your own complaint process your customers can follow.

Put things in writing

Keeping written records will help and you should consider keeping your own complaints log. Anything agreed with the customer should also be put in writing to avoid confusion or miss-communication.

Written agreements will also serve as evidence if needed and can manage expectations on what has or hasn't been agreed.

Keep to your word

Things like missing an appointment/not turning up on time, not returning a call or sending that quote you promised are what we receive most complaints about at Checkatrade. These can all be avoided by keeping your customer up to date, usually with a simple call or email.



Remain Professional

Always remain calm and professional. If you maintain a good relationship with your customer, they are more likely to be open with you in raising concerns before they become a big problem.

Listen to your customers to understand their issues and ask them to be as specific as possible. In turn you also need to be specific in how you are going to address their complaint.

Unfortunately, we do receive complaints about members behaviour and them becoming rude or aggressive, which can be very damaging to your reputation.

Q&A's

This customer does not live at the property but they are a landlord, can they still leave feedback?

Yes, both the tenant and landlord of a property can leave feedback.

This work was carried out sometime ago, will the feedback be published?

We accept feedback up to 24 months old unless we are provided with a guarantee/warranty.

Can anyone leave feedback?

Anyone can leave feedback about their experience with a Checkatrade member, regardless of whether they found you on Checkatrade.

Do you publish the feedback straight away?

Depending on the severity of the complaint, there could be up to 7 working days where the complaint is pending publication.

I have dealt with the negative review, can you remove it?

Yes, if the customer contacts us to request their complaint is withdrawn, we will happily do this.

I have evidence that the feedback is factually incorrect, what happens now?

If you feel the customer's comments are factually incorrect and there is solid evidence to support this, we will always review this evidence and the feedback will be updated accordingly.

I don't recognise the customer?

We would encourage you to leave your right of reply to any reviews.

Will you publish the negative review at the top of my page?

All feedback is published in the date it is received.

Do you remove members due to negative reviews?

Yes. In the unlikely event that a business falls short of the Checkatrade Standard, its membership will be terminated. This may be due to a serious negative review or the volume of negative reviews. We will however try where possible to make you aware if we have concerns and may place your membership on a probation period where we monitor your membership and feedback. We hope by making you aware of these concerns, you will be able to avoid future occurrences.

I didn't agree to have these negative reviews published!

We understand receiving a complaint can be disappointing and hurtful. It is about you, your business and its your reputation. Checkatrade is built on feedback, we must ensure we are open and honest in displaying all feedback we receive and our approach to positive and negative reviews must be consistent. Therefore, part of being a Checkatrade member is agreeing to being accountable for all feedback, the good and the bad. We will try our best to support you through the process. The best outcome for all is that the complaint is resolved and withdrawn and this does happen. You have a right of reply to any negative review and this will always be displayed directly underneath, explaining your side of the story.

Feedback do's & dont's

It is extremely important that **we receive accurate, genuine feedback from the consumers** that use our members, ensuring the continued effectiveness of Checkatrade for both our members and their customers. **Therefore, all members must adhere to the following feedback procedure.**




The correct procedure

'Hand the customer a feedback card at quote stage for them to complete in their own time and post to us'




Why?

'This will give the customer time to check your Checkatrade profile and turn your quote into a job.'









Must do

-  Hand the feedback card to the customer at quote stage and explain the importance of them completing the feedback card for your business in their own time when the work has been completed.
-  Advise all members of your team of the correct feedback process in place at Checkatrade.
-  Explain to your customer the importance of them completing their contact details on the feedback card. This is so Checkatrade can contact the customer to verify their feedback. Their details will not be published or passed to third parties.

Can do



-  Send the customer a direct link to your Checkatrade reviews.
-  Direct the customer to Checkatrade.com to leave feedback online.
-  Send reminders to your customers about leaving feedback for your business using the members area tool.

Don't

-  Stand over / with the customer whilst they complete feedback, this may put customers under pressure to complete feedback that is not entirely accurate.
-  Put customers under pressure to complete feedback in your presence.
-  Ask customers to complete the feedback and hand it back to you / offer to post the feedback card for the customer.
-  Complete your customers feedback under any circumstance by card or online. This includes transferring customer feedback from other review sites to Checkatrade.
-  Hand the customer your tablet / iPad – mobile – laptop to complete feedback.
-  Ask the customer to email or write a letter to you with their feedback.
-  Do not call the customer to obtain feedback over the telephone.
-  Offer incentives in exchange for positive feedback.

If this procedure is not followed, it may affect your membership with Checkatrade as this is a breach of our code of conduct.

Checkatrade DO NOT:

-  Accept feedback that does NOT include a name, postcode and a mobile number and email address.
-  Accept feedback that relates to any of the above 'Don't's'.