



The GUILD
of MASTER CRAFTSMEN



A guide to our
Conciliation Service

What is the Guild's Conciliation Service?

In the event of a dispute The Guild acts as an impartial third party and endeavours to open a channel of communication between the customer and Guild member. Having examined all the facts at our disposal, we suggest to both parties practical action by which the dispute may be resolved.

We provide the customer with a form to complete. This form makes it as easy as possible for the customer to give the information we need. Upon receipt of the completed form, The Guild sends the member the customer's version of the facts, and expects the member to reply promptly in writing, giving their own version of the facts. In this way, the differences of opinion become apparent.

The Guild is then able, by an exchange of correspondence, to suggest a course of action to resolve those differences and to use its best endeavours to persuade the parties to agree away forward. This part of the service is free of charge. Most Conciliation cases are settled in this way. On rare occasions disputes cannot be settled by an exchange of correspondence alone. In these cases, it is usually possible to reach a resolution through an inspection of the work by an independent expert. The inspector is asked to decide what action, if any, either party must take to put matters right.

Prior to the inspection taking place, The Guild asks both parties to sign an undertaking to abide by the decision of the inspector. The inspector's fee will depend upon the amount

of work they have to do and is normally moderate. No inspection is arranged without The Guild first obtaining the customer's agreement and notifying the customer of the inspector's fee. Both parties will be required to deposit the full fee with The Guild before this procedure is put into effect. The Guild will then make the appropriate refund in the light of the inspector's findings.

Does the Guild exist to assist its members or the general public?

Both. One of the aims of The Guild of Master Craftsmen is to foster high standards in the workmanship of, and service provided by Guild members. This brings benefits to the public too.

How do you attempt to achieve this aim?

Applicants for membership undergo The Guild's assessment procedure. As part of this procedure, references are obtained from customers of the applicant. The applicant will only be granted membership if these references are of a sufficiently high standard and the applicant fulfils all other criteria for membership. All members must comply with the Guild's Code of Practice, a summary of

which is included in this leaflet, as well as abide by The Guild's Aims and Objectives which can be found on the Guild's website at www.guildmc.com. The Guild's Council of Management has no hesitation in expelling a member who is shown to have failed to meet the standard required by The Guild.

How is the Guild funded?

Members of The Guild pay an annual subscription.

Doesn't this mean that you are only interested in the welfare of your members?

Not at all. We believe that the interests of The Guild and its members are best served when its members' reputation for skill and integrity is spread by the recommendations of satisfied customers.

This sounds very good in theory, but does it work in practice?

Most of the time it does. Guild members do occasionally make mistakes, just like everyone else, and disputes can arise. When this happens, the customer can call upon The Guild's Conciliation Service.

Does the conciliation process work quickly?

Often it does. However, if the dispute is particularly complicated, a lengthy exchange of correspondence and/or an inspection may be necessary.

Will the Guild member agree to use the Conciliation Service?

Upon joining the Guild, every member agrees to use the Conciliation Service where applicable.

Will the Guild take sides?

The Conciliation Service exists for the benefit of both the member and the customer. This means the Guild remains impartial and, where appropriate, uses the services of an independent expert as described previously. Its only concern is to establish the facts and endeavour to bring about a resolution.

The conciliation service can usually help

As it is a conciliation service not an arbitration service, it cannot help where another contractor has become involved, if legal action has already been instigated, or if compensation or refunds are required.

For further information on The Guild's Conciliation Service please write to the address on the back of this leaflet, telephone 01273 478449 or email conciliation@thegmcgroup.com.

The Guild of Master Craftsmen Conciliation process is conducted strictly conditional upon the prior written agreement of all parties that: the entirety of the process including for example, all communications and documentation, shall be and remain confidential and is conducted on a Without Prejudice basis and no information or documentation relating to it shall be disclosed to any third party and shall not be admissible as evidence or disclosed in any legal or other proceedings. Providing and except that in the event of the parties to the process reaching terms of settlement which are agreed in writing and signed by the parties to the process then the terms of such settlement (but not the

negotiations leading to it or any other aspect of the process) may be disclosed by any party to the process in any subsequent legal or other proceedings.

All Members of The Guild of Master Craftsmen are independent contractors. The Guild of Master Craftsmen Ltd, The Guild of Master Craftsmen (Services) Ltd and their associated companies accept no liability, whether in contract, tort or otherwise, for any loss or damage whatsoever and whether caused by any breach of contract, negligence or otherwise, on the part of any Member of the Guild, or by itself or any of its officers, employees or other agents.

Code of practice of the Guild of Master Craftsmen

- Reach a satisfactory standard of workmanship.
- All complaints brought to the Guild's attention must be dealt with by the member speedily and satisfactorily.
- Members should be aware of their legal obligations.
- Membership numbers should be given to the public when requested.
- Members should make subcontractors aware of their membership and the obligations placed upon them.
- Members to abide by agreed time table of work.
- Members to obtain written approval from customer before carrying out any variations.
- Members should ensure all remedial work is completed.
- Members to provide customer with a choice of material.
- Member to agree with the Independent Inspection when required by the Guild.
- Members should have fully paid Public and Employers Liability insurance.
- Members should allow their work to be inspected.
- Partnerships must adhere to the Companies Act 2006.
- All estimates and invoices must bear the VAT number (if registered).
- Any franchisor granted membership must have a signed undertaking that they will deal with any complaint.
- Once membership has ceased The Guild emblem or name may no longer be displayed. Written evidence confirming this will be required.
- The Council of Management reserves the right to expel members when their behaviour and or workmanship have fallen below the required standards. The member has the right of appeal.

The Guild of Master Craftsmen

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Website: www.guildmc.com

Members of The Guild of Master Craftsmen must also abide by The Guild's Aims & Objectives which can be found on the Guild's website at www.guildmc.com.