Annexe D – Business Survey Questionnaire
INTRO

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is ... and I am calling from TNS-BMRB. We are conducting a survey for the Office of Fair Trading among business involved with home improvements, maintenance and repairs.

Would it be possible to speak to [NAME FROM SAMPLE]?

IF NO LONGER THERE/ NOT AVAILABLE: Would it be possible to speak to the owner or manager of this business?

IF NOT ABLE TO SPEAK TO OWNER/MANAGER ASK TO SPEAK TO THE PERSON WHO HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS.

ONCE SPEAKING WITH CORRECT PERSON REPEAT INTRODUCTION.

Would you be able to spare some time to answer some questions? It should take no more than 15 minutes. Your answers will be treated as anonymous.

IF NECESSARY:
The OFT may publish the results of this survey, but as mentioned responses will be anonymised. Names of individual businesses who have taken part in the research will never be passed to OFT.

IF NECESSARY:
The survey will ask you about the work you do for your customers and any problems or concerns you have with the way the market operates. We are particularly interested in the things that help or hinder you in providing good quality services to your customers.

IF YES: PROCEED WITH INTERVIEW. IF NO: MAKE APPOINTMENT/RECORD OUTCOME.
A) Screening and company profile

ASK ALL
A1. First, may I just check, does your business undertake any repair, maintenance or home improvement work for domestic properties?

SINGLE CODE.

Yes
No
Refused

IF NO OR DK, SCREEN OUT. IF YES, CONTINUE.

IF A1 = YES
A2. And does your business carry out ANY work directly for consumers? Please EXCLUDE any work you do for other businesses, for example via a managing agent or property management company.

SINGLE CODE.

Yes
No
Refused

IF NO OR DK, SCREEN OUT. IF YES, CONTINUE.

IF A2 = YES: For the purposes of this survey we just want to talk about the work you undertake directly for the consumer.

IF A2 = YES
A3. Yourself included, approximately how many people work in your business? If your business is spread over more than one site please include people based at ALL sites. Please include all full time, part time and agency staff but exclude sub-contractors.

ENTER NUMBER. ACCEPT ESTIMATE.

1-99999
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
A4. And at any one time, how many people does your business typically have working on your behalf as sub-contractors?

ENTER NUMBER. ACCEPT ESTIMATE.

0-9999
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
A5. And is this the only site for your business or are you based over more than one site?
SINGLE CODE

Only site
Based over more than one site
No permanent site
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
A6. I’m now going to read out a list of different types of work. Please tell me which, if any, of these areas your business regularly works in. Please only include work done in relation to domestic properties and undertaken directly for consumers.

IF NECESSARY: Please do include work carried out by sub-contractors on behalf of your business.

READ OUT

Decorating
Plumbing
Electrical work
Installation or repairs to boilers or central heating systems
Installing insulation
Damp proofing
General building work (including, for example extensions and conversions)
Fitted kitchens
Fitted bathrooms
Other work to interior of house
Roofing
Glazing, conservatories or external doors
Guttering, fascias or soffits
Other work to exterior of house
Tarmacing or paving
Adaptations to make house more accessible for people with a disability
Any other work not covered above (specify)
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
A7. Approximately how many projects of all these types does your business typically undertake each month?

IF VARIES ASK: How many did you do in the last month?

ENTER NUMBER. ACCEPT ESTIMATE.

0-9999
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
A8. Is your business mainly involved in...
Home improvement work, or
Maintenance and repair work?
Don’t know

IF A8 = Maintenance and repair work
A9. And would you say most of the work you do is emergency or non-emergency?

Emergency
Non-emergency
Don’t know

ASK ALL
A10. Which of the following most accurately describes how you generally go about the work you do for your customers?

In practice, customers generally rely on us to ASSESS what needs to be done...

READ OUT

Entirely
Almost entirely
To some degree
Hardly at all, or
Never?
Don’t know

ASK ALL
A11. And, can I just check, do you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Often work with sub-contractors,
Sometimes work with sub-contractors, or
Never work with sub-contractors?
Don’t know
Refused
B) Sources of business and marketing

ASK ALL
The next few questions are about your sources of business and how customers go about choosing suppliers.

ASK ALL
B1. Is your business mainly...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Local,
Regional, or
National?
Don’t know
Refused

ASK ALL
B2. What do you think are the main reasons that consumers choose your business over your competitors?

DO NOT READ OUT. PROMPT TO CODES IF NECESSARY. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

PROBE: What are the other reasons they choose you?

They have used you previously – repeat business
Recommendations from family/friends/colleagues/neighbours (word of mouth)
You are cheaper than competitors
Your prices are reasonable/ competitive (not cheapest)
You allow them to pay using their preferred method (e.g. cheque, card)
You are a member of a trusted trader scheme
You are a member of a trade association or professional body
You have qualifications or accreditations
You can work within their timescales/start quickly
Consumers feel they can trust you
You provide guarantees/warrantees
You have a good understanding of consumers’ requirements
You are rated well on the Internet
You have a reputation for high quality
You generally provide good customer service
You advertise/ people have seen your adverts
You are a local business
Consumers are impressed with examples of your previous work (e.g. in a showroom/ friends house)
Other (specify)
Don’t know
ASK ALL
B3. I’m now going to read out a list of factors that consumers may think about in choosing a supplier. For each of these please tell me how important YOU think they are to your customers.

RANDOMISE STATEMENTS

- Price
- Quality of product and work
- Customer service – for example how quickly you can deal with their enquiries
- When the work can be done – for example whether you are able to do the work when the consumer wants
- Reliability and having the confidence you will deliver

FOR EACH FACTOR: Is it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Extremely important,
Very important,
Fairly important,
Not very important, or
Not at all important?
Don’t know
C) Business practices

I’m now going to ask you a few questions about your day-to-day operation.

**ASK ALL**

C1. Which, if any, of the following do you provide routinely for your customers IN WRITING before you start work?

**READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

- Quotations
- Basic specifications outlining the work to be undertaken
- More detailed specifications with detailed descriptions of the work
- Contracts including terms and conditions
- Complaints procedure
- Details of any guarantee or warranty offered
- None of these
- Don’t know

**ASK ALL**

C2. When you take on a job, which of the following payment structures do you use? Please tell me as many different ones as apply.

**READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY.**

- Payment in full in advance before work started
- Payment in full on completion of work and no deposit up front
- Deposit up front and balance on completion
- No deposit, payment in instalments
- Deposit up front and payments in instalments
- Don’t know
- Refused
D) Membership of trade associations and approved trader schemes

I'm now going to ask you about your membership of trade associations and professional bodies. By trade associations we mean associations of businesses within a sector, which represent their member businesses. Businesses typically pay a membership fee to their trade association, and in return it represents their professional interests and, for example, provides access to training.

ASK ALL
D1. Of which trade associations and professional bodies, if any, is your business currently a member? I will read out a list of some of the larger bodies, but if the one you are a member of is not included, please specify it at the end.

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

- Federation of Master Builders
- National Federation of Builders
- Glass and Glazing Federation
- FENSA
- National Federation of Glaziers
- National Federation of Roofing Contractors
- National Insulation Association
- Electrical Contractors Association
- National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers
- Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors
- Painting and Decorating Association
- Kitchen, Bathroom, Bedroom Specialists Association
- Furniture Industry Retail Association
- Other (please specify)
- None
- Don't know

I'm now going to ask you about approved trader schemes. By 'approved trader schemes' we mean voluntary schemes for businesses to join, which aim to raise standards in a business sector or to help consumers find a reputable trader. Such schemes might be run by local authorities, other government bodies, trade associations, or commercially by businesses. Schemes might include up-front checks on member businesses - for example whether you have appropriate insurance - and monitoring of feedback and complaints from customers about member businesses.

ASK ALL
D2. Are you aware of any approved trader schemes run by local authorities - that is County Councils or Boroughs, for example?

- Yes
- No

ASK IF D2 = 1
D3. Of which local authority approved trader schemes, if any, is your business currently a member? I will read out a list, but if the one you are a member of is not included, please specify it at the end, including the name of the local authority that runs the scheme.

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

- Dundee Trusted Trader Scheme
Rhondda Cynon Taff Building Trade Charter Scheme
Northumberland and North Tyneside Trader Register
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Trader Register
Derbyshire Trusted Trader
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Trader Register
Herefordshire Trader Register
Worcestershire Trader Register

Buy with Confidence Scheme - Hampshire County Council
Buy with Confidence Scheme - Devon County Council
Buy with Confidence Scheme - Surrey County Council
Buy with Confidence Scheme - East Sussex
Other local authority scheme (please specify)
None
Don't know

ASK ALL
D4. Of which other sorts of approved trader schemes, if any, is your business currently a member? I will read out a list, but if the one you are a member of is not included, please specify it at the end.

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

National Register of Warranted Builders (Trustmark scheme run by Federation of Master Builders)
National Federation of Roofing Contractors Trustmark Scheme
NICEIC Trustmark Scheme
National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers Trustmark Scheme
Electrical Contractors Association Trustmark Scheme
'Corgi Trades Person' Scheme - electrical, gas, plumbing, ventilation [INTERVIEWER: DO NOT INCLUDE THOSE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE GAS SAFE REGISTER HERE]
Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors Licensed Plumber Scheme
The Furniture Ombudsman Scheme (operated by the Furniture Industry Retail Association)
Construction Licensing Executive (Scotland)
FENSA Trustmark Scheme
Glass and Glazing Federation Trustmark Scheme
National Federation of Glaziers' Charter
Other (please specify)
None
Don't Know

IF (D4 = None or DK and D2 = No) or ((D4 = None or DK) and (D3 = None or DK))
D5. Can I just check, have you heard of these sorts of schemes?

IF NECESSARY: I mean have you heard of approved trader schemes in general; not just the ones I read out at the last [IF D2 = YES: two questions / IF D2 = NO: question].

Yes
No

IF (D3 = None and D4 = None and D5 = Yes) or (D2 = No and D4 = None and D5 = Yes)
D6. Why are you not a member of any approved trader schemes?

DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Don't know how to join
Not aware of any schemes in my sector
Too expensive to join
Don’t think the schemes in this market are of a high standard
Don’t see how it will benefit my business
Don’t have time to join a scheme
Think schemes will get in the way – e.g. add regulation that makes it harder to get things done
Too much focus on systems and processes rather than quality
Don’t have or need the processes/paperwork they insist on – e.g. written complaints process
Don’t need any more business
Business has not been going long enough
Not suited to small businesses
Don’t meet criteria to join scheme
Other (specify)
Don’t know

**IF D2 = Yes or D5 = Yes or any schemes coded at D4 (codes 1-13)**
D7. I’m now going to ask about your views on the effectiveness of approved trader schemes. For each of the following please tell me how effective you generally think approved trader schemes are.

- Helping your business to gain the trust of consumers
- Raising standards of quality and workmanship
- Raising standards on business practices – for example providing quotes and having a complaints process
- Generating enquiries and sales
- Driving out rogue traders

Are approved trader schemes generally...

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE.**

Very effective
Fairly effective
Not very effective, or
Not at all effective?
Don’t know
E) Barriers, challenges and problems

The next few questions are about any barriers or challenges you may face in undertaking work in the home improvement and repairs market.

ASK ALL

E1. I’m now going to read out a list of potential issues you may face in delivering your work. For each of these can you tell me how much of a problem you think each of these is in terms of delivering your service to the highest quality?

- Suppliers providing incorrect materials and fittings
- [IF ANY WORK SUBCONTRACTED] Mistakes or poor quality work done by subcontractors
- The customer having unrealistic or impractical expectations
- Cash flow problems
- Problems recruiting people with the right skills
- Variations in the levels of work (for examples periods of not enough or too much business)
- Undercutting by poor quality or rogue traders
- Duties placed upon your business by consumer law being unclear or hard to understand

FOR EACH: Is it a...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE.

Very big problem
Fairly big problem
Not a very big problem, or
Not a problem at all?
Not applicable
Don’t know

ASK ALL

E2. I’m now going to read out a list of potential problems some of your DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS may have raised about your work or work carried out on your behalf by sub-contractors. Please can you tell me which, if any of these, your business has experienced in the last 12 months?

READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Problems with plans and specifications – for example being unclear or including mistakes
Faults with work that meant things needed to be done again
Fixtures, fittings or other materials not being of adequate quality or already damaged when they got to the consumer
Wrong fixtures, fittings or other materials being delivered to the consumer
Disagreements over whether what was done matched the descriptions or specifications
Delays
Cost being higher than expected due to no firm price being agreed in advance
Cost being higher than expected due to additions to agreed price
Knock-on inconvenience or damage such as damage to carpets or water being cut off unexpectedly
Problems getting snags or faults sorted out after initial work
Complaints about customer service
Some other problem (specify)
No problems in last 12 months
Don’t know
Refused
F) Demographics

ASK ALL
F1. Finally, can you tell me roughly how many years your business has been in operation?

PROMPT TO CODES IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

Less than 1 year
1-2 years
3-5 years
6-10 years
More than 10 years
Don’t know
Refused