

Press Release

Are your customers making the right choice? New consumer advice leaflets from the AMUSF

The leaflet, which is the first of a series of four has been designed to guide the consumer in making his/her choice of contractor and materials making the process of buying or refurbishing upholstered furniture easier.

The leaflet, which will be available to members from mid April will have sufficient space for members to stamp their name and contact details.

Others leaflets in the set:

Choosing the right Soft Furnisher.
Caring for your upholstery.
Rented Accommodation - Guidance.
Fillings - Making the right choice.

Your guide to the completion of a successful project

Choose a member of the AMUSF to undertake your project - All members are assessed prior to joining and regularly reassessed to maintain standards.

By choosing a member you will have the benefit of years of experience to guide you through the decision making process.

Your member will make available to you a huge choice of covering materials sourced from top suppliers from all over the world but if by some chance you require a branded product not available in our member's range, he will almost certainly be able to source your choice via the Association's fabric purchasing scheme.

You will have access to dozens of fabric pattern books displaying hundreds of designs and thousands of colours - The choice will be yours but the contractor will assist you in reaching a conclusion, if you need help - To assist you:

Bear in mind that the small piece of cloth you view in the pattern book will look completely different in a large expanse and that colour which looked so rich and colourful in the sample book may well be overpowering in your lounge.

Colour matching - Please remember that pattern books are representative only of the colour and design and whereas every care is taken by fabric suppliers to maintain consistency, variations do occur from time to time. If colour match is important, you should request a stock cutting before proceeding and ask the contractor to supply a further cutting from your chosen cloth before use, minimising the risk of dissatisfaction.

Customer's own material - Most contractors will be pleased to use a Customer's Own Material but please bear in mind the following:

If you supply your own cloth, any failure in its performance will be a matter for you to deal with and no responsibility will be accepted by the contractor.

You may pay a premium for the use of your own cover so any potential saving may not prove significant.

If you run short of material you will be required to source additional stock.

You should ensure the cloth meets the relevant British Standard in relation to the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. Whereas there is no requirement on the contractor to check when using a Customer's Own Material, most will insist the fabric is treated or used with an appropriate Interliner. The Regulations are currently under review and proposed changes may make the use of compliant material a requirement.

Contracts - Always get a written estimate or contract detailing the exact nature of the work and in particular:

Most consumers experience problems through lack of communication and unclear contracts, it is therefore important to make your requirements clear to the contractor before proceeding.

Specify your choice of fabric, design and colour and don't forget to request a stock cutting if required.

Delivery dates - Make the contractor aware of any preferred delivery dates and ensure these are noted on the contract. Please bear in mind that the furnishing business is seasonal and quality contractors will, at holiday times for example Christmas, be heavily booked for months in advance.

'Re-upholstery or Recovery'. Are you clear about what you are ordering. For example, do you expect the furniture to be completely stripped and all the fillings replaced. Make this clear on the contract.

What about cushions and fillings - Have you seen samples? Do you know what to expect? Will it be too hard or too soft? Ask your contractor - He will advise and if necessary show you samples.

Payment - Most contractors will expect a deposit, usually one third of the total. The balance should be paid on delivery.

Complaints - If you are not happy - SAY SO.

Why do prices vary so much?

The most common reason for variations in pricing is a failure to compare like for like. If you do seek more than one estimate, ensure that when comparing prices you consider the following:

Are both contractors quoting to re-upholsterer (Stripping out completely and replacing fillings?) or does one quote differ by offering less?

Is the replacement cover the same?

What about VAT, is it included in both prices?

These and other factors need to be considered if you are to avoid problems.

Always rely on a member of the AMUSF. By using a member of a bona-fide Association, like the AMUSF you will be making your first and most important decision.

If you have any further questions you should ask your chosen contractor and don't forget the key to a successful project is good communication.

Thank you to Trent Upholsteries of Nottingham for their assistance in preparation of this leaflet.

ENDS

878 Words.

Press and consumers - If you would like a copy of the new leaflet please contact the Association.

Further information is available from:

The Association of Master Upholsterers & Soft Furnishers
102a Commercial Street,
NEWPORT
South Wales
NP20 1LU.
E-mail amu@easynet.co.uk Web www.upholsterers.co.uk Tel 01633 215454.