



# Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme Accreditation Guide



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## Revision history

Date	Requirement	Section	Summary of changes
05/12/2023	N/A	3.1 Types of Bronze audit 8.6 Quality assurance terminology	Clarification of what an Enhanced Audit is

## 1. Getting started

### 1.1 How to apply

Your journey to FORS accreditation starts with registration. To register for FORS, simply:

- Complete the [application form](#)
- Accept the [FORS Terms and Conditions](#)
- Acknowledge the [FORS Privacy Notice](#)
- Pay the relevant [annual subscription fee](#)

Your operation name on the application must be the same as that registered with [Companies House](#).

Before completing the application form [check your operation](#) is not already registered. If your operation has previously registered for FORS and you would like to re-register, please email [enquiries@fors-online.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fors-online.org.uk).

### 1.2 Defining your scope of accreditation

When registering, you will need to list the number of vehicles and operating centres you wish to include in the scope of your accreditation. If you have more than one operating centre, you can choose which to include.

All vehicles used for servicing and delivery at each operating centre must be in scope of your accreditation. You may include vehicles not used for servicing and delivery, however, these vehicles, and their drivers, will be in scope of the audit and will be required to meet all FORS Standard requirements.

### 1.3 Access to FORS Online

Once you have registered, you will be issued with a FORS ID and access to FORS Online, where you can manage your accreditation.

### 1.4 FORS logo usage

Once you are accredited, you will be issued your FORS logo and be listed on [Who's on board](#). Your logo will reflect your level of accreditation and will include your FORS ID. You are encouraged to use your logo for marketing purposes on stationery, website and emails but your logo must only be used on vehicles that are in scope of your FORS accreditation. Your FORS accreditation logo must be used in accordance with the [FORS External design guidelines](#).

## 2. FORS accreditation and auditing

### 2.1 Routes to FORS accreditation

There are three routes of FORS accreditation dependent on the size and structure of an operation:

Accreditation type	Eligibility	Audit requirement
Single Operating Centre Accreditation (SOCA)	Operators with either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One operating centre</li> <li>• More than one operating centre but with different operational policies</li> <li>• More than one operating centre but opting to accredit one or more via the SOCA route</li> </ul>	One Bronze audit at the operating centre in scope of accreditation
Multi Operating Centre Accreditation (MOCA)	Operators with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two or more operating centres in scope of FORS accreditation</li> <li>• The same operational policies*</li> </ul>	Number of operating centres in scope of accreditation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two to four operating centres – two Bronze audits</li> <li>• Five to 15 operating centres – three Bronze audits</li> <li>• 16+ operating centres – 20 per cent of all operating centres Bronze audited (100 per cent over five years)</li> </ul> Regardless of whether it operates vehicles, the head office must be audited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First as part of the audit process</li> <li>• At every initial and re-approval audit</li> </ul>

\*Requires senior management declaration. This is required by the FORS Administrator before the MOCA application can progress.

Accreditation type	Eligibility	Audit requirement
Internal Audit Fleet Accreditation (IAFA)	<p>Operators with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 or more operating centres in scope of FORS accreditation</li> <li>• The same operational policies</li> <li>• An established internal transport management quality system</li> <li>• Internal auditing team capable of auditing against the FORS Standard</li> </ul>	<p>IAFA operators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergo a FORS audit of the quality system and internal auditing team</li> <li>• Use its own internal auditing team to conduct:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bronze audits on 20 per cent of operating centres annually (100 per cent over five years)</li> <li>- Quality assurance checks on 100 per cent of audit reports</li> <li>- 100 per cent of auditors undergo an annual witnessed audit by the FORS Administrator</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 2.2 Methods of audit

There are three methods used for FORS auditing:

- On-site audit – a face-to-face audit conducted at your administrative or operating centre. On-site audits are only used for Bronze.
- Remote audit – a face-to-face audit conducted using a video communication platform such as Microsoft Teams. Remote audits are only used for Bronze.
- Online audit – an audit of evidence submitted through FORS Online or via email. Online audits are used for Silver and Gold. In certain circumstances, they may also be used for Bronze follow-ups.

### 3. FORS Bronze Accreditation

Bronze Accreditation is achieved through passing an audit of the Bronze requirements of the FORS Standard.

Accreditation is valid for one year, but this is extended to two years for SOCA through an additional Bronze concession year when Silver accreditation is achieved. A new Bronze certificate will not be issued, however, the Bronze expiry date will be updated on FORS Online.

#### 3.1 Types of Bronze audit

There are four types of Bronze audit:

Bronze Audit type	Description
Initial audit	Initial audits are conducted for any of the following scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-ever accreditation</li> <li>• After accreditation has been expired for more than 12 months</li> </ul>
Re-approval audit	Re-approval audits are conducted to ensure FORS accreditation does not expire. The re-approval audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will cover all Bronze requirements as well as any minor action points* raised at the previous audit</li> <li>• Must be undertaken at least 45 calendar days – but no more than 75 calendar days – before the expiry of your accreditation</li> </ul>
Follow-up audit	Follow-up audits are conducted when an initial or re-approval audit is unsuccessful. Follow-up audits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be passed within 30 calendar days of notification of failure</li> <li>• Not passed within 30 days will result in a full initial or re-approval audit being conducted</li> </ul>
Enhanced audit	An audit and subsequent action plan, as specified by the FORS Quality Assurance team on specific requirements to mitigate a quality assurance issue

\* Any unresolved minor action points from the previous audit will escalate to major action point.



### 3.2 Bronze Accreditation procedure

Once registered, you should progress to FORS Bronze in your subscription year. It is recommended that you self-assess your operation prior to the Bronze audit using the FORS Bronze Audit Toolkit.

The detailed procedure to attain Bronze Accreditation is as follows:

Procedure stage	Actions
1. Requesting an audit	<p>1.1 Request a Bronze audit through FORS Online.</p> <p>1.2 An invoice for the audit will be issued by the FORS Administrator.</p>
2. Appointing an audit provider	<p>2.1 A FORS Audit Provider will be appointed by the FORS Administrator and will contact you to agree and arrange an audit date.</p> <p>2.2 The audit team can be a single person or a team of people.</p> <p>2.3 Audits are only conducted by appointed FORS Audit Providers.</p> <p>2.4 The FORS Audit Provider must not have provided consultancy services to your company within the past two years. This would constitute a conflict of interest and could void any accreditation award. Both Audit Provider and your operation have a joint responsibility to ensure that no conflict of interest exists.</p> <p>2.5 If you believe a conflict of interest exists, contact the FORS Administrator and an alternative Audit Provider will be appointed.</p>
3. Pre-audit actions	<p>3.1 The auditor will contact you prior to audit to confirm the address, audit start time, company details and audit-specific information.</p> <p>3.2 You may be required to provide information about your fleet operation and scope of accreditation.</p>
4. Audit arrangements	<p>4.1 The audit will be carried out at the premises of the operating centre being audited on the agreed and confirmed time and date.</p> <p>4.2 Under certain circumstances, a remote (video call) audit may be offered.</p>

Procedure stage	Actions
5. Audit representation	<p>5.1 During the audit, your operation must be represented by the formally appointed responsible person (as required at Bronze M3) who maintains continuous and effective management of the fleet activity. The responsible person must be available and present for the entirety of the audit and must provide photo ID if requested.</p> <p>5.2 Consultants employed in a support role may be present at audit but must not be the sole representative of the operation, unless they are the formally appointed responsible person as required at Bronze M3 and employed to maintain continuous and effective management of the fleet activity.</p>
6. Audit conduct	<p>6.1 The audit will follow a set format where you will need to answer questions, explain policies and procedures, and provide evidence to demonstrate that your operation meets the Bronze requirements of the FORS Standard.</p>
7. Post-audit actions	<p>7.1 The auditor will write up an audit report and action plan that will undergo a quality assurance check prior to the audit result being issued.</p> <p>7.2 The FORS Administrator will notify you of the outcome within ten working days of the audit. If the audit is successful, you will receive your certificate confirming your Bronze status.</p>
8. Unsuccessful audit actions	<p>8.1 If the audit is unsuccessful with less than 16 minor action points, you will need to pass a follow-up audit within 30 calendar days of notification of failure.</p> <p>8.2 If the audit is unsuccessful with 16 or more major action points, you will need to undertake a further initial Bronze audit.</p> <p>8.3 Any unresolved minor action points will escalate to major action points at the Bronze re-approval audit the following year.</p>

### 3.3 Failure to maintain FORS Bronze

Failure to maintain your FORS Bronze Accreditation will result in your operation being downgraded to dormant status, even if:

- An audit is booked
- An audit has been conducted and you are awaiting results
- You have failed an audit and you are in the follow-up process

If your operation has been downgraded to dormant while waiting for your audit result, and your audit (or follow-up audit) result is a pass, you will automatically be awarded Bronze Accreditation when your audit is processed.

### 3.4 Accreditation decision

The FORS Administrator will email you within ten working days with the results of the audit and attach a copy of the audit report, together with your Bronze certificate if the audit result is a pass. The audit report will outline the action plan with any action points that have been found and require attention.

The audit outcome can be:

- Pass – your operation will become a FORS Accredited Operator
- Pass with minor action point(s) – your operation will become a FORS Accredited Operator
- Fail – your operation will not become a FORS Accredited Operator and an action plan will be issued

## 4. FORS Silver and Gold Accreditation

Progression to Silver or Gold is not mandatory. However, your operation can achieve Silver and Gold accreditation by uploading and submitting evidence to FORS Online.

Accreditation for Silver and Gold is valid for one year.

### 4.1 Silver and Gold Accreditation procedure

The detailed procedure to attain Silver and Gold Accreditation is as follows:

Procedure stage	Actions
1. Applying for FORS Silver or Gold	<p>1.1 The application can be found via the evidencing section on FORS Online.</p> <p>1.2 Your Bronze accreditation must be valid at the time of application with at least 45 calendar days validity.</p> <p>1.3 SOCA operators may select the ‘unified audit’ option to provide a single re-approval date for Bronze, Silver and Gold Accreditation. This allows Silver and Gold evidence to be submitted at the same time and to have one expiry date for all accreditation levels. Aligning dates improves simplicity but may result in accreditation time being lost in the first year.</p> <p>1.4 MOCA operations and their individual operating centres can only apply for Silver or Gold when all operating centres are Bronze accredited.</p>
2. Uploading evidence	<p>2.1 You are required to upload evidence to demonstrate that you meet all the Silver and/or Gold requirements.</p> <p>2.2 Re-approval audits will cover all Silver or Gold requirements as well as any minor action points* raised at the previous audit.</p> <p>2.3 MOCA operators must provide evidence for all operating centres in scope of FORS Silver or Gold Accreditation. However, this may be evidenced in one single application under the main FORS ID.</p>

\*Any unresolved minor action points from the previous audit will escalate to major action point.

Procedure stage	Actions
3. Submitting evidence	3.1 Whilst your Silver and Gold evidence can be uploaded at any time, all evidence must be valid at the time of submission to avoid action points being raised.
4. Audit conduct	4.1 Once submitted, your evidence will be audited to determine whether it meets the Silver or Gold requirements.
5. Post-audit actions	<p>5.1 The FORS Administrator will notify you of the audit outcome within 15 working days of your submission.</p> <p>5.2 If the audit is successful, you will receive the relevant certificate confirming your Silver or Gold Accreditation.</p> <p>5.3 For unified audits, you will be awarded FORS Silver Accreditation if all Silver requirements are met but Gold are not.</p>
6. Unsuccessful audit actions	<p>6.1 You are required to pass a follow-up audit within 30 calendar days of notification of your unsuccessful audit.</p> <p>6.2 You will need to upload and submit evidence addressing any major action points within 15 calendar days of being notified to allow sufficient time for the follow-up audit to be completed.</p> <p>6.3 The FORS Administrator will notify you of the follow-up audit outcome within 15 calendar days of your follow-up audit submission.</p> <p>6.4 If major action points remain outstanding after the 30-calendar day follow-up period, a new full audit submission will be required.</p>

Procedure stage	Actions
7. Re-approving Silver and Gold Accreditation	<p>7.1 To maintain Silver and Gold Accreditation you must upload and submit evidence annually.</p> <p>7.2 At the time of submitting your re-approval application, you must have at least 45 calendar days remaining on your current accreditation.</p> <p>7.3 Failure to re-approve your Silver or Gold Accreditation will result in your operation being downgraded on the expiry date.</p> <p>7.4 Dependent on the audit date of your Bronze Accreditation, your operation could be downgraded to either Bronze or dormant and the additional Bronze concession year will be lost.</p> <p>7.5 Any unresolved minor action points from previous audits will escalate to major action points.</p> <p>7.6 For MOCA Bronze operators with individual operating centres at Silver or Gold, all operating centre accreditations will expire when the MOCA Bronze expires.</p>

## **5. Accreditation downgrades**

### **5.1 Accreditation expiry**

Your accreditation is valid for 12 months and your operation will be downgraded if a re-approval audit is not passed before your expiry date. Dependent on your level of accreditation, the downgrade could be to Silver, Bronze or dormant status. A downgrade will occur even if an application has been submitted and you are waiting for the result.

### **5.2 Accreditation removal**

In line with the FORS Quality Assurance procedure, accreditation may be suspended or terminated resulting in a downgrade. See section 9 for further details.

### **5.3 Downgrade to dormant**

If your operation is downgraded to dormant, your FORS Online account will be disabled and you must not use your FORS accreditation logo or certification. The logo must be removed from all marketing materials and vehicles.

## 6. Changes to your fleet operation

### 6.1 Notifying FORS

Once accredited, you are required to ensure your operation's details are up to date, which includes notifying the FORS Administrator of any material changes.

Like-for-like replacement of vehicles or drivers are not considered material and do not require notification.

### 6.2 Material changes

Material changes listed below must be notified to the FORS Administrator as they may affect your accreditation.

Change	When to notify	FORS action
Relocation of operating centre	Prior to relocation	Audit of the new location may be required within 30 days of re-location
Change to size and type of operation, including vehicle numbers and vehicle types	Immediately	Audit may be required within 30 days of notification
Change in FORS primary contact	Immediately	No action required
Change in legal status of the operation	Immediately	Audit may be required within 30 days of notification
Company or legal entity dissolved	Immediately	Accreditation terminated
Change of company name	Immediately	Re-issue of certification (with reference to former name)
Changes in operator licence status	Immediately	FORS Quality Assurance action



## 7. MOCA - Multi Operating Centre Accreditation

### 7.1 MOCA procedure

In addition to the Bronze Accreditation procedure in section 2.2, the detailed procedure to attain Bronze Accreditation via the MOCA route is as follows:

Procedure stage	Actions
1. Audit conduct	<p>1.1 The head office audit will be subject to a full Bronze audit. In addition, the audit will verify the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System for communicating policies and procedures to all operating centres</li> <li>• Scope of accreditation for operating centres, vehicles and drivers</li> </ul> <p>1.2 Once the head office audit has passed, the audits at the remaining operating centres will take place.</p>
2. Post-audit actions	<p>2.1 Once all audits have been undertaken, MOCA will be granted depending on the audit outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All operating centres pass – Accreditation awarded to the declared MOCA scope</li> <li>• Some operating centres pass – Accreditation awarded as SOCA to individual operating centres or to an adjusted MOCA scope</li> <li>• All operating centres fail – No accreditation awarded</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Certificates will be sent for each individual operating centre as each successful audit report is processed.</p> <p>2.3 The MOCA expiry date for all operating centres will be one year from the date the head office audit was passed.</p>

Procedure stage	Actions
3. Accreditation re-approval	<p>3.1 Head office and operating centre re-approval audits must be conducted and passed prior to the MOCA expiry date.</p> <p>3.2 All minor action points from all audit reports from the previous year across your operation should have been addressed and implemented. Any unresolved minor action points will turn into major action points at the head office Bronze re-approval audit.</p> <p>3.3 Head office re-approval audit for operators with more than 15 operating centres can be taken up to six months before the expiry date to allow sufficient time for all operating centre audits to be conducted and passed.</p>
4. Silver and Gold progression	<p>4.1 Progression to Silver and Gold can be applied for at any time. This may be for the whole operation or individual operating centres.</p> <p>4.2 FORS Bronze audits for MOCA Silver and Gold must be maintained in accordance with section 4.</p> <p>4.3 Due to the nature of MOCA, the additional Bronze concession year is not granted for individual operating centres progressing to Silver and Gold.</p> <p>4.4 You can upload evidence to support your MOCA Silver or Gold application for all operating centres as one single submission under the main FORS ID.</p>

Procedure stage	Actions
5. Increasing accreditation scope	<p>5.1 Additional operating centres can be added to the MOCA scope at any time.</p> <p>5.2 On application, a declaration must be made that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided is the correct reflection of the fleet size.</li> <li>• Any new operating centre is managed under the same policies and procedures.</li> </ul> <p>5.3 The declaration must be made that the whole operation either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets the vehicle safety equipment and driver training requirements relevant to the current level of accreditation (evidence will be required)</li> <li>• Will meet the vehicle safety equipment and driver training requirements relevant to the current level of accreditation at the next audit</li> </ul> <p>5.4 Further Bronze audits may be required dependent on the total number of operating centres and the ratio of audits required at section 4. If the expiry is within six months of the MOCA accreditation expiry date, the further Bronze audits may be deferred to the re-approval audit.</p>

## 7.2 Cautionary note

Through the FORS MOCA route, your whole accreditation may be at risk if:

- Any operating centre within the scope of accreditation breaches the FORS Terms and Conditions
- The MOCA main ID expires
- You do not undertake and pass the required number of audits prior to MOCA expiry date

## 8. Quality assurance

### 8.1 Maintaining the FORS Standard

Your operation is expected to always maintain the requirements of the FORS Standard, not just at audit. The FORS Quality Assurance team is on hand to help support operators in achieving this.

FORS may take action if any quality assurance issues (regulatory or safety) are identified. These may be reported through:

- Police, DVSA, HSE and other enforcement agencies
- Highway authorities and local authorities
- Office of the Traffic Commissioner
- FORS Accredited Operators and specifiers
- FORS Audit Providers and training providers
- General public

### 8.2 Quality assurance

Although FORS does not actively monitor an operator's conformity between audits, cross-checks are conducted against the Vehicle Operator Licensing (VOL) service to ensure there are no discrepancies and that general obligations are being met as part of the quality assurance procedure. If a discrepancy is found, your operation will be contacted for further details.

Whilst we reserve the right to take quality assurance action at any time to safeguard the integrity of the scheme and uphold the FORS Standard, our ethos is to support your operation when quality assurance issues arise. Notwithstanding this, upon written notice, we may, at our sole discretion, elect to either suspend or terminate accreditation. See the [FORS Terms and Conditions](#) for further details.

### 8.3 Scope of quality assurance action

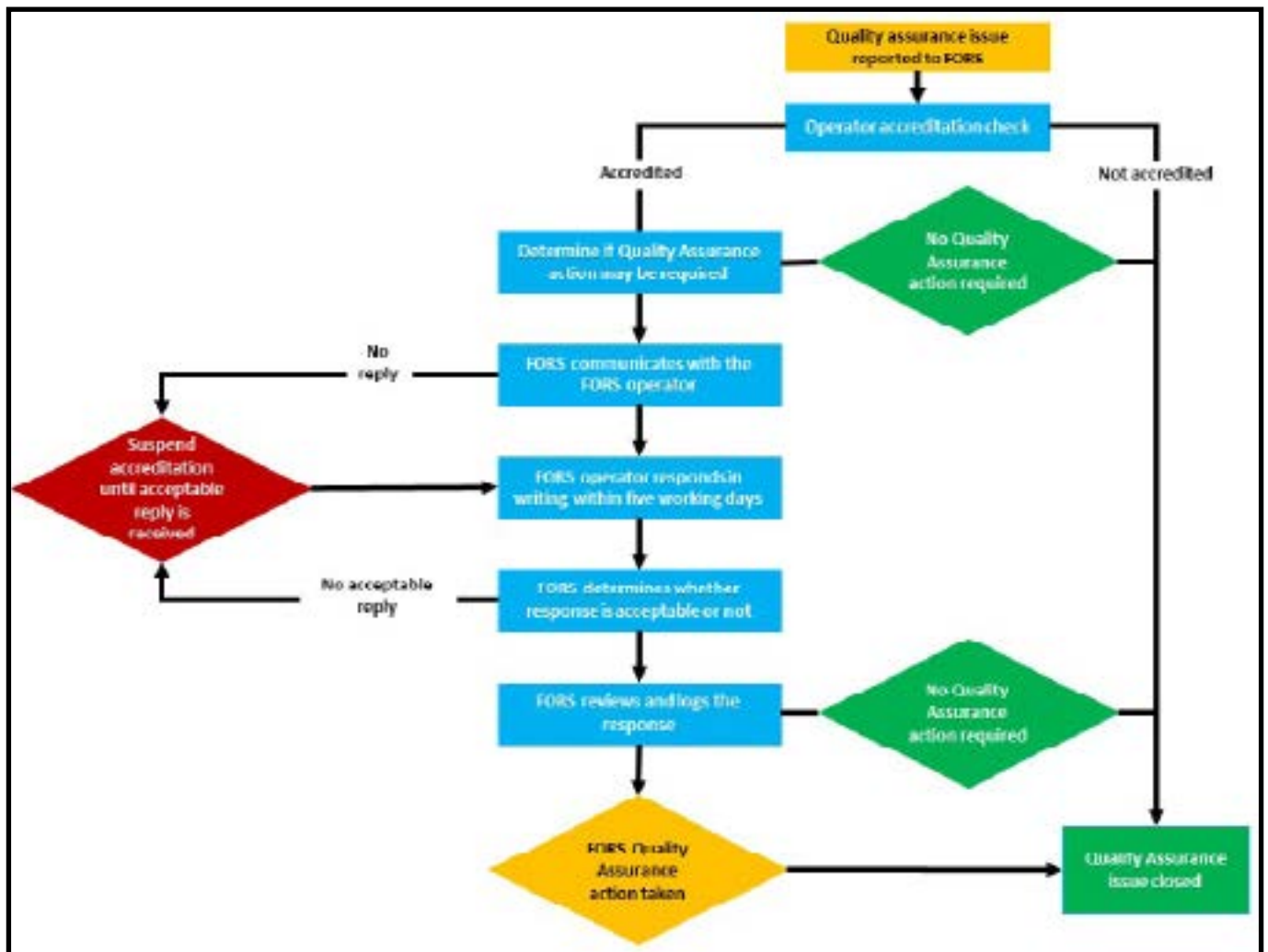
The scope of quality assurance action is determined by the location where the quality assurance issue was identified or where the relevant management is located.

If your operation is SOCA, the whole accreditation will be affected by any quality assurance action.

If your operation is MOCA, the accreditation of the operating centre where the quality assurance issue occurred will be affected by any quality assurance action. Where a quality assurance issue affects wider operational policies or procedures, the whole MOCA accreditation may be subject to quality assurance action.

### 8.4 Quality assurance procedure

When a quality assurance issue is reported or identified, the below steps are followed.



### 8.5 Notifying FORS Operators of a quality assurance issue

When a quality assurance issue is reported, the information is reviewed by the FORS Quality Assurance team. If accredited, your operation will be sent a letter via email and a response is required within five working days. On receipt of a satisfactory response, the most appropriate quality assurance action is taken. If a response is not received within five working days, a second reminder letter will be sent. Failure to respond within the second period (five working days) will result in suspension until a satisfactory response has been received.

## 8.6 Quality assurance terminology

FORS uses consistent terminology and actions with regard to quality assurance measures. Whilst remedial action is taken, support services are signposted and communicated to help your operation maintain the FORS Standard.

Term	Definition	Initial action	Further actions
Notification of complaint	A record of a minor non-conformity to the FORS requirements	Notification of complaint is issued in writing to the operator, which is followed up at the next Bronze audit.	Notification of complaint will be retained on file until the next Bronze audit.
Written warning	Notification to an operator outlining a quality assurance issue	A warning notification is issued in writing to the operator.	Written warnings and subsequent actions will be retained on file and checked at next Bronze audit.
Enhanced audit	An audit and subsequent action plan, as specified by the FORS Quality Assurance team on specific requirements to mitigate a quality assurance issue	Enhanced audit notification is issued in writing to the operator with instructions to undertake and pass an enhanced audit within 30 calendar days of notification.	If an enhanced audit is not passed by the agreed date, the operator will be suspended until the enhanced audit is passed.  A quality assurance review will be undertaken on all enhanced audits.
Suspension	Temporary removal of FORS accreditation for a period of up to six months  The duration of the suspension is dependent on the type and severity of the quality assurance issue	FORS Online account and access to benefits will be disabled.  During the suspension period, your operation must remove the FORS logo from any vehicle or marketing material and provide written confirmation that all logos have been removed.	On completion of the suspension period, to regain your accreditation, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass an enhanced audit</li> </ul> Where a suspension is imposed due to failing to respond to requests for information, an enhanced audit may not be required to lift the suspension.

Term	Definition	Initial action	Further actions
Termination	Removal of FORS accreditation for a period of six months or more	<p>FORS Online account and access to benefits will be disabled.</p> <p>During the termination period, your operation must remove the FORS logo from any vehicle or marketing material and provide written confirmation that all logos have been removed.</p>	<p>On completion of the termination period, to regain your accreditation, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-register to FORS (a new FORS ID may be issued)</li> <li>• Pass an enhanced audit</li> </ul> <p>Your operation must also complete a further enhanced audit 12 months after regaining accreditation.</p>

\*Conducted at a specific operating centre where the quality assurance issue was identified or at a head office.

## 8.7 Reported complaints

Where a complaint is reported and a quality assurance issue is established, the below actions may be taken.

Quality assurance issue	Frequency of issues	Quality assurance issue
Regulatory or safety critical issue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once</li> <li>2. Twice</li> <li>3. Three times</li> <li>4. Four times</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written warning</li> <li>2. Enhanced audit</li> <li>3. Suspension</li> <li>4. Termination</li> </ol>
Non-safety, non-regulatory issue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once</li> <li>2. Twice</li> <li>3. Three times</li> <li>4. Four times</li> <li>5. Five times</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written warning</li> <li>2. Second written warning</li> <li>3. Enhanced audit</li> <li>4. Potential suspension</li> <li>5. Potential termination</li> </ol>
Knowingly declaring false information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On application</li> <li>• At audit</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subject to Quality Assurance action</li> </ol>

## 8.8 Quality assurance following legal action

In the event of your operation being convicted in a court of law, subject to regulatory action at public inquiry, or answerable to any other legal action affecting the fleet operation, the quality assurance action will be dependent on the severity of the offence.

## 8.9 Progression to Silver and Gold Accreditation

In order for you to progress to Silver or Gold Accreditation, a review of any outstanding quality assurance issues and actions will be conducted. Any outstanding quality assurance issues and actions may affect your progression.



## 9. Complaints and appeals

### 9.1 Definitions

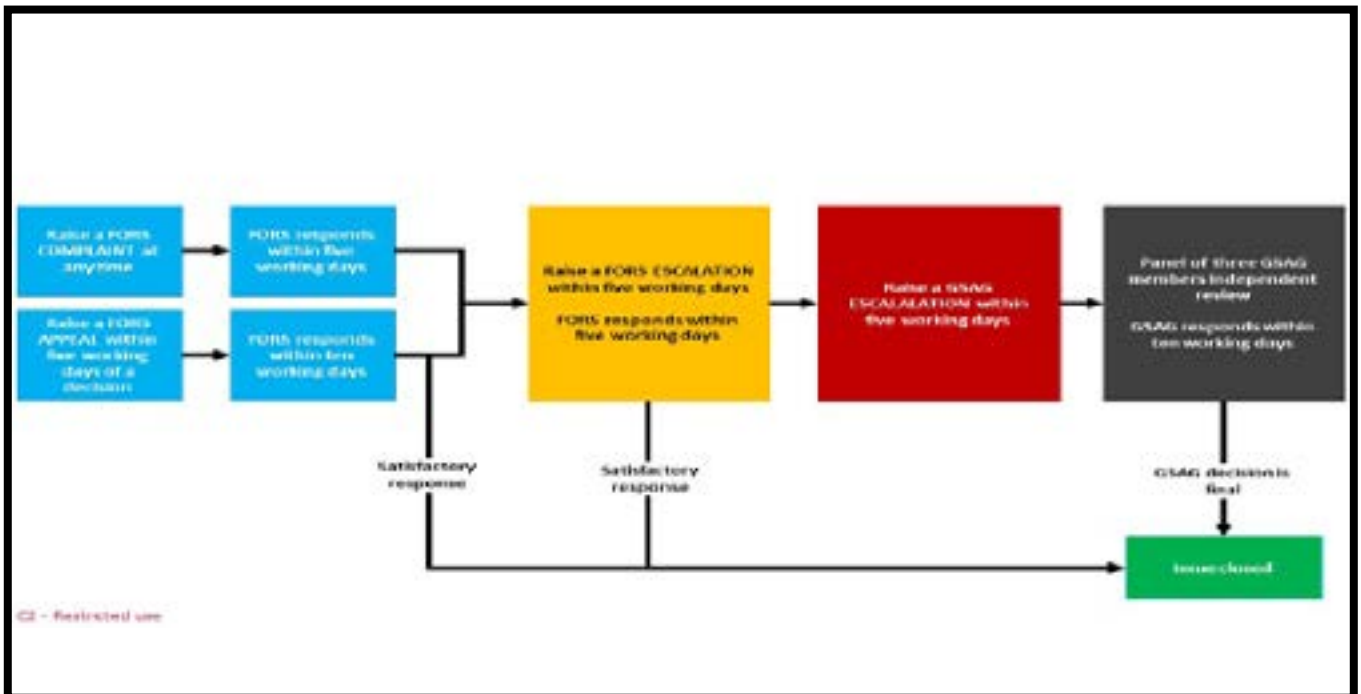
A complaint is where an operator feels that the level of service or treatment that they have received from the FORS Administrator or a FORS Audit Provider has fallen short of what might reasonably be expected.

An appeal is where an operator requests a review of a decision made by the FORS Administrator or a FORS Audit Provider.

### 9.2 Audit complaints and appeals flowchart

If you feel you have not been treated fairly by FORS, you can raise a formal complaint or appeal.

When a complaint or appeal is raised, the steps in the graphic below are followed.



### 9.3 Complaints and appeals procedure

The detailed procedure for a complaint or appeal is as follows:

Complaints	Audit appeals
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You must write to the FORS Administrator. Use the words 'FORS COMPLAINT' in the letter or email title.</li> <li>2. The FORS Administrator or Audit Provider will send you an acknowledgement and a copy of this process document that must be followed to investigate your complaint.</li> <li>3. Within five working days of receipt of the complaint, the scheme administrator will formally respond offering a resolution.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You must write to the FORS Administrator within five working days of receiving an audit or quality assurance decision. Use the words 'FORS APPEAL' in the letter or email title.</li> <li>2. The FORS Administrator will send you an acknowledgement and a copy of this process document that shall be followed to investigate your audit appeal. The FORS Administrator will forward the appeal to the FORS Audit Provider.</li> <li>3. Within ten working days of receipt of the appeal, the FORS Administrator will formally respond with a decision.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. If you are not satisfied with the response and wish to pursue the matter further, you may appeal with 'FORS ESCALATION' in the letter or email title to the FORS Administrator and request that the issue is to be escalated to senior management.</li> <li>5. Within five working days of receipt of the request for the escalation, the FORS Administrator senior management will formally respond.</li> <li>6. If you are still not satisfied with the response from the FORS Administrator and wish to pursue the matter further, you may appeal with 'GSAG ESCALATION' in the letter or email title and request that the issue be escalated by the FORS Administrator to the FORS Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG).</li> <li>7. The FORS Administrator will then request the FORS Governance provider to convene a panel of three nominated GSAG members. Each member of the panel will be sent all documentation relating to the complaint and will be asked to independently review the evidence and respond in writing with their recommendation.</li> <li>8. Within ten working days the GSAG panel must reach a majority decision and the FORS Administrator will notify you of the outcome of the appeal. The decision made by the GSAG panel is final.</li> </ol>	

## 9.4 Appeals procedure notes

If an audit decision is appealed and the appeal is:

- Upheld – the audit outcome will be amended
- Not upheld – the audit outcome will remain unchanged

If an audit decision is appealed and accreditation has expired, your operation will be downgraded until the outcome of the appeal has been determined.

If an audit decision is appealed, the 30-day period for completing a follow-up audit will be on hold until the outcome of the appeal is determined. Once determined, the remaining time of the 30-day follow-up period will recommence.



Find out more at  
[fors-online.org.uk](https://fors-online.org.uk)