



**Consumer  
Focus**

Campaigning for a fair deal

**Consumer Focus  
Work Programme  
to March 2010**

**Campaigning for a fair deal**

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# Foreword

The creation of Consumer Focus, a new kind of campaigner, is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put consumers at the heart of business and government decision-making.

At a time of economic uncertainty and pressures on consumer's wallets, we have urgent work to do and while we will take time to get the organisation right, we are aiming high. This 18-month start-up plan is designed to take us from the foundations of good work undertaken by our predecessor bodies to an organisation with the leverage to achieve a fair deal for consumers across an unprecedentedly wide remit – covering the whole economy, with deep expertise on key markets such as energy and post. With a core staff of around 170 and strong new statutory powers of investigation, we will be the best-resourced advocacy body in the history of the UK consumer movement.

Our commitment is that we will develop and champion creative solutions which really help people, especially those who are more vulnerable. We will work to understand the needs of all consumers across England, Scotland, Wales and (for postal consumers in) Northern Ireland. We will be passionately independent in our work for them, working with people who put consumers first, but ready to stand up to those who don't.

**Lord Larry Whitty**  
Chair

**Ed Mayo**  
Chief Executive

## Consumer Focus Board

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Anna Walker

With Millie Banerjee CBE assisting during the transition phase.

# Executive Summary

## Consumer Focus is campaigning for a fair deal

This is a dramatic time for consumer advocacy, with food and fuel prices rising, rapid advances in technology and an extraordinary array of goods and services available for those that can afford them. At the same time a new range of consumer concerns is emerging, including a growing interest in well-being and sustainability.

There is a growing body of concern that Britain needs action to ensure that consumers get a fair deal. In preparation for our start, more than 200 organisations, individuals and businesses have given us their views on what is required. We are grateful for their feedback and collaboration, which has helped us to design and adapt our plans for the work ahead.

This is our first Forward Work Programme and runs from October 2008 through to March 2010. Consumer Focus will have a 'soft' launch in October 2008 but our formal launch is set for the new year, when we have more of our employees in post and are better equipped to make a real impact. The creation of the new organisation, therefore, will not be a 'big bang' on 1 October 2008 but an evolutionary process running up to spring 2009.

Through the consultation, we have set four strategic campaign goals to achieve a fair deal for consumers:

- Value** Help people obtain better value by raising the influence they have over the goods and services they receive.
- Service** Improve customer service and remove unnecessary problems that generate complaints from consumers.
- Access** Create an economy in which everyone can access the essential services they need, and where the poor no longer pay more or get less for their money.
- Sustainability** Harness the appetite of consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Our first campaign will be on the consumer-critical and high profile issue of fuel poverty and will be run over the winter. Some of this may be best delivered in partnership with a coalition of other organisations engaged in fuel poverty issues. Our first major probe is likely to be on the mobile phone sector where there is a large and growing number of consumer complaints and scope to work in tandem with the efforts of others, including the Ofcom Consumer Panel.



Summary of Key Projects		
Advocacy Programme	Actions and outcomes	Key projects
<b>Disadvantage</b>	Promote and protect the needs of consumers who are disadvantaged by health, disability, income, age or location – with an initial focus on fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fuel poverty</li> <li>Understanding of the needs of vulnerable consumers</li> <li>Good practice for meeting the needs of vulnerable consumers, particularly those in debt</li> <li>The digital divide: a new universal service obligation?</li> </ul>
<b>Energy Market</b>	Win a more effective and responsive energy market that recognises consumers' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market reviews by Ofgem and the Business, Enterprise &amp; Regulatory Reform (BERR) Select Committee</li> <li>The structure, pricing and transparency of energy tariffs</li> <li>A strategic plan for Consumer Focus's role in improving the working of energy markets at UK, EU and international levels</li> <li>Representation of those outside mainstream regulation</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Increase the number of people that benefit from initiatives for sustainable lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The market for sustainable energy</li> <li>Carbon-conscious consumers</li> <li>Adaptation to climate change</li> <li>Sustainable supermarkets?</li> </ul>
<b>Community Services</b>	Promote innovative models for sustainable community services, including post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Post Office closure programme</li> <li>Government's decision on the future of the Post Office Card Account</li> <li>Essential community services, including the role of post offices</li> <li>The accessibility of essential services in the UK</li> </ul>
<b>Post</b>	Improve service and value for postal consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hooper Review</li> <li>The universal service obligation</li> <li>Relationship with the regulator</li> </ul>
<b>Public Services</b>	Improve services for citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer engagement in public services</li> <li>Customer experience of public services</li> <li>Citizens' redress</li> </ul>
<b>Open Markets</b>	Address consumer detriment across markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer Law Reviews</li> <li>Regulators and the consumer interest</li> <li>Access for All</li> <li>Consumer 'digital rights' in the information society</li> </ul>

Summary of Key Projects <i>cont'd</i>		
Advocacy Programme	Actions and Outcomes	Key projects
<b>Complaints of General Interest</b>	Promote change by investigating a small number of consumer complaints that have wider relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Micro-enterprises as consumers</li> <li>Process for referrals to and from Consumer Focus</li> <li>Investigate complaints of general interest</li> </ul>
<b>Extra Help Unit</b>	Handle complaints on behalf of vulnerable energy and post consumers that are referred to us by Consumer Direct, including those at risk of disconnection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice</li> <li>Assistance</li> <li>Liaison with other representatives of individual consumers</li> </ul>
<b>International</b>	Influence international consumer policy, and bring back best practice to inform GB-based activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU Consumer Law Acquis Database</li> <li>The Third Energy Package and the European Citizen's Energy Forum</li> <li>EU telecommunications legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Externally Funded Projects</b>	Advance the consumer interest through practical projects for consumer benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer Focus will undertake a number of externally funded projects</li> </ul>

Alongside these key projects, this work plan lists other actions we will take in each of these programmes. Some will take the opportunity offered by this transition to lay the foundations for future work, for example by developing approaches for tracking consumer concerns. Others will continue, and build on, the vital work started by our predecessors. Meanwhile, our National Social Marketing Centre will be an internationally recognised centre of expertise on consumer behaviour and we will run a series of funded projects making a significant difference to the health of people in Scotland.

Our structure reflects the devolved nature of the UK, embracing Consumer Focus Scotland, Consumer Focus Wales and Consumer Focus Post (in Northern Ireland) –served by offices in Glasgow, Cardiff, London and, for postal services, Belfast. For a short time, we will also have staff in Bournemouth to assist with the transition. Our aim is to understand the diverse aspirations,

experiences and fears of consumers across the UK. We will certainly learn from others in the consumer field and we will track data on complaints and customer experience. However we will also conduct new consumer research, allowing us to work in the places policymakers don't usually go, and we will seek to create opportunities for consumers to talk direct to one another.

In all of our work, Consumer Focus will develop and champion creative solutions which really help people, especially those that are more vulnerable. We invite you to engage in and collaborate with this work to campaign for a fair deal.

# Section A: A Fair Deal

## A1. Who is Consumer Focus?

### Your top ten questions answered

1. Consumer Focus builds on the work of its predecessors: Energywatch, Postwatch and the National Consumer Council. Our policy and campaigns can create **synergies** across sectors that were not possible before. For instance, the role of post offices can be looked at in the wider context of sustainable communities and energy issues can be set in the wider context of climate change and sustainable development.
2. Consumer Focus has been established through **landmark consumer legislation**, with cross-party support – the Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007. Consumer Focus has strong new legislative powers. These include the right to investigate any consumer complaint, the right to open up information from providers, the power to conduct research and the ability to make an official supercomplaint about failing services.
3. The new organisation brings together experts who are **determined to make a difference** at a time when consumers are under unprecedented pressure. Difficult choices need to be made that balance short-term financial and ongoing environmental and social pressures. The three primary functions of the new organisation are to deliver these differences through intelligence, advocacy and impact.
4. We see ourselves as a **critical friend** of business and public service providers, not an opponent. We want providers to innovate, to compete and to flourish where they serve consumers well. We will work in partnership with business, within an appropriate ethical framework, where we believe this is the right way to achieve our strategic goals.
5. Our structure reflects the **devolved** nature of the UK, with Consumer Focus Wales operating out of our office in Cardiff, Consumer Focus Scotland out of Glasgow and Consumer Focus Post (Northern Ireland) out of Belfast, alongside our sister organisation the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland. For a short time we will also have staff in Bournemouth to assist with the transition. Policies and campaigns will be delivered within and across national boundaries where appropriate, with the involvement of staff around the UK. Whilst there are clear national differences, many consumer needs cannot be categorised by geographical boundaries, but rather by factors such as urban or rural deprivation, income, age, disability or poor health.
6. Consumer Focus must reflect consumers' real needs, and we are therefore reliant on a wide-ranging, timely, and detailed evidence base. We intend to gather **consumer intelligence** through: data provided by industry and by Consumer Direct; relationships with stakeholders such as Citizens Advice, Age Concern, Energy Saving Trust, Which? and the Trading Standards Institute; and commissioned research. This consumer intelligence will be shared across the organisation. We are also investigating how we can use the internet to understand and advise consumers, potentially through an online voting forum to allow consumers to draw our attention to their concerns.
7. Large organisations have bargaining power with their suppliers but the very smallest ones, including charities, suffer some of the disadvantages felt by individual consumers. They may also face problems specific to the business or third sector. We have commissioned a unique study on the **consumer experience of micro-enterprises** to identify the need for action, alongside other parties such as the Federation of Small Businesses and Chambers of Commerce.
8. Co-operative and influential relationships with our stakeholders are a prerequisite for success. The consultation on this forward work plan during summer 2008 has presented Consumer Focus with numerous ideas on how we can work with others. The development of a **stakeholder engagement** strategy is one of our priorities for the first phase of our life. For example, we want to work in a coordinated way with other, specialist consumer bodies to ensure that our work is distinctive and that it adds value. This includes the 'consumer panels' hosted by regulators in sectors such as communications and financial services, and 'consumer councils' in sectors such as water and transport.
9. Unlike our predecessors, Postwatch and Energywatch, Consumer Focus is not a direct complaints and advice service. Consumer Direct – which acts as the first port of call for practical information and advice right across all goods and services – has extended its coverage to energy and post, while new and expanded Ombudsman and redress schemes now operate in the post and energy fields. Consumer Focus will, however, **provide assistance to vulnerable consumers in the energy and postal markets** through an Extra Help Unit that will support Consumer Direct. We will have a team dedicated to helping customers who cannot do so themselves, or who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances (e.g. electricity or gas disconnections).

10. Consumer Focus' operational **budget** will be £15 million per annum. It is estimated that expenditure of £5.7 million will be incurred in the exercise of its functions in relation to relevant energy consumers and £3.4 million in the exercise of its functions in relation to consumers of relevant postal services. This budget excludes ongoing property liabilities (estimated at £2.2 million in 2009/10) and transition costs. In addition, Consumer Focus will undertake externally funded projects. At present these include the work of the National Social Marketing Centre and work for the Scottish Government.

### Consumer Advice

It is important to note that Consumer Focus is not an advice agency nor is it a statutory regulator bound by current rules. Other bodies such as Consumer Direct, Citizens Advice, local authority trading standards and the Office of Fair Trading play these roles. Advice for individuals on energy and post will be given by Consumer Direct (08454 04 05 06) which will be resourced from day one to handle this. Consumer Focus will, however, provide assistance to vulnerable consumers through an Extra Help Unit. We will have a small team dedicated to helping those customers who cannot do so themselves, or who find themselves in particularly vulnerable circumstances (e.g. electricity or gas disconnections).

# A2. A work plan for a fair deal

## A work plan based on our criteria and stakeholder advice

This work plan is based on the input of over 200 stakeholders, together with input from the employees of our predecessor organisations. We ran a consultation on our draft work plan over Summer 2008, and had an excellent response for a start-up organisation.

Everyone agrees that consumers need a better deal, respondents had lots of ideas for us, and most respondents welcomed the creation of a new cross-sectoral consumer body. We have taken many of these suggestions on board in defining this final programme of work.

Our approach to consultation is summarised in the annex at the back of this document but, in brief, here is how we have and will continue to address the top four concerns that we received from our stakeholders across the UK.

### Retention of expertise

Stakeholders are concerned about the impact of this transition on critical consumer issues such as fuel poverty and the post office closure programme. We have worked closely with Postwatch and Energywatch to make sure that work on ongoing programmes will continue through the transition, and are grateful to the role our colleagues have played in that planning and delivery at a difficult time.

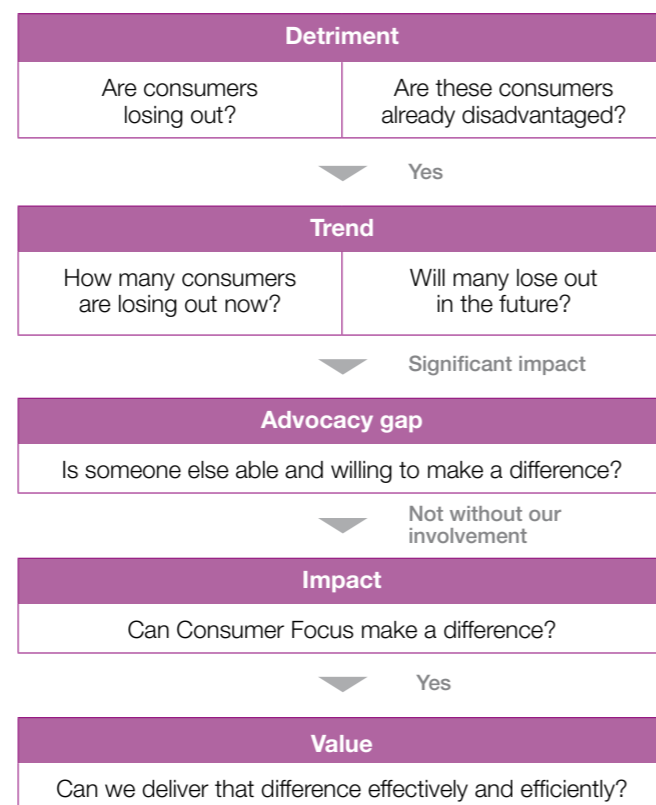
This final version of our forward work plan has been structured to demonstrate the retention of sectoral expertise, and the depth of work that will be undertaken in these areas. It also demonstrates how our activities often support more than one of our strategic goals; how we work across the UK; and the timing of our activities.

That said, Consumer Focus is a new organisation, with a new remit, and there may be a change in approach in certain areas.

### Measures and criteria

Stakeholders told us that our draft criteria and measures were not concrete enough. This is a valid comment and due, in part, to the fact that we are at a very early stage in our life. Our programme teams will be defining the measures for success for individual projects in the early days of the new organisation, but we have been able to revise our criteria in response to feedback. The criteria (as shown in Figure 1 below), will determine how we prioritise projects within our wide remit.

Figure 1: Criteria for work planning



### Stakeholder relationships

Many respondents were concerned that Consumer Focus would duplicate work that is being carried out by other consumer and citizen representatives. We are very aware of that risk, given our wide remit, and have incorporated the risk into the criteria above.

Respondents also gave feedback on their relationships with our predecessor organisations. Some were positive, some were not.

We will be aiming to draw on those lessons, starting with the development of formal and informal working relationships with stakeholders:

- **Formal** e.g. entering memorandums of understanding with key partners, and the retention or development of industry or consumer specific working groups
- **Informal** e.g. introducing stakeholders to their counterparts in the new organisation in order to open up direct communication channels, and the involvement of stakeholders in research, such as that on the needs of micro-enterprises as consumers.

Consumer Focus Scotland, Consumer Focus Wales and Consumer Focus Post (in Northern Ireland) will develop their own stakeholder engagement plans, informing and drawing on the UK approach.

### Web-based Advocacy

With the internet and mobile communications, it is more possible than ever before for consumers to make their voice heard and to contribute as active participants in change. The rise of online consumer action opens up new ways to campaign and to build consumer power. Through partnership and experimentation, Consumer Focus will support new models of advocacy in which consumers increasingly, and rightly, speak for themselves rather than relying on others to speak for them. At the same time, Consumer Focus will also continue to work to raise the voice of those excluded from the new digital opportunities.

### Research & Consumer Intelligence

Consumer Focus will be a knowledge-based organisation, which will depend on high quality, cost-effective acquisition and use of 'consumer intelligence'. This is likely to come from a range of sources, at the national and devolved level, including:

- A knowledge base on consumer detriment
- Complaints data from Consumer Direct and other sources
- Industry relationships
- Consumer-oriented non-government organisations
- Trading standards services
- User generated content from consumers online
- Academic research
- Horizon scanning of policy initiatives likely to impact consumers (including international trends)

The new organisation will supplement these sources with new primary research, working towards models of consumer segmentation that allow the organisation to build a differentiated picture of the full diversity of consumer experience.

### Workload

Respondents had few ideas on what we should not do, and more often than not they provided us with more ideas, yet many had concerns about the volume of work we are setting ourselves.

This is an 18-month programme, and our resource plan shows that it is achievable. We believe that the new format helps to communicate this. Nevertheless, we know we are aiming high, and have built flexibility into the programme to allow us to respond effectively to external drivers.



## A3. Strategic Goals

### We have set a mission and vision for the new organisation in a high-level strategic framework for our work from 2008 to 2011

#### Values and Behaviours

We aim to live up to three values throughout our work:

**Courage** We speak out for all consumers;

**Can-do** We do the right thing, to get results for consumers;

**Creativity** We welcome innovation and seek out partnerships to benefit consumers.

#### Vision

We believe that people are the best judges of their own needs and that Britain will be more successful if consumers, particularly those who are currently more vulnerable, have more of a voice in relation to the goods and services they receive.

We believe that it is not just the economy but society that benefits if consumers have robust rights. If given the right chance, consumers will play their part in promoting fairness and sustainability.

#### Mission – Fair Deals and Fair Chances

We will make a difference to people's lives as consumers, particularly the more vulnerable, by championing policy changes that can help make people as powerful as the institutions that serve them.

We will engage, inform and support consumers to act. Where they cannot act for themselves, we will act for them through campaigning to improve the performance of those that serve them.

#### Strategic goals

We have also set four strategic goals for our work over the period up to 2011. These are:

**Value** Help people receive better value by raising the influence they have over the goods and services they receive.

**Service** Improve customer service and remove unnecessary problems that generate complaints from consumers.

**Access** Create an economy in which everyone can access the essential services they need, and where the poor no longer pay more or get less for their money.

**Sustainability** Harness the appetite of consumers to move to more sustainable lifestyles.

Our activities will aim to support one or more of these four goals as shown in the detailed work plan in Section B. There is no hierarchy, with each goal meeting different consumer needs, and significant interplay between them.

#### Serving consumers who are vulnerable

The new organisation will also have a quantifiable commitment to vulnerable consumers. When problems arise, we believe, that consumers can be described as 'vulnerable' if they are not able to take forward a complaint with their supplier due to:

- the urgency of their situation e.g. debt collection action or unmanageable payment arrangement
- their personal circumstances, whereby the consumer is unable to deal with the matter themselves
- the complexity of the problem, which makes it difficult for the consumer to deal directly with their supplier and requires expert help to resolve their problem.

## A4. How we will campaign for a fair deal

### We will change the policy and practice of organisations like government and business, in order to benefit consumers. This, what we call 'advocacy', is the core activity of Consumer Focus

The new organisation will therefore need to be a credible, professional and independent campaigner and lobbyist. We will need to be flexible and rapid in response. This means:

- priorities should be set on the basis of where we can make the most incremental difference
- an ability to deploy and redeploy resources swiftly and effectively, including through outsourcing where cost effective
- minimising the operational constraints imposed by separate funding streams
- maximising the use of project based working methods
- an organisational design that allows fully for possible future expansions of remit to other sectors e.g. water.
- the right relationship with governments – a trusted but independent 'critical friend'
- targeted and articulate delivery of advocacy where and when it will have the maximum impact
- a culture that is not cowed by vested anti-consumer interests
- empowerment of employees to take responsibility for building relationships and delivering messages where they maximise impact.

There are likely to be different levels of advocacy on consumer issues. Devolved policy issues are handled by decision makers in Wales, Scotland, England, and Northern Ireland; 'reserved' matters cover the UK. But it is also important to be active and energetic in collaboration with the European Consumer Group, BEUC, and the global alliance, Consumers International.

#### Our advocacy tools are:

##### Redress and enforcement powers

- formal complaints to goods and service providers, regulatory or self-regulatory bodies, Government Departments, industry and local government associations or Commissions of Inquiry
- judicial action
- supercomplaints
- the Competition Appeals Tribunal.

##### Campaigning and Public Relations

- Sponsoring Private Members' Bills in Westminster, Members' Bills and Committee Bills in Scotland, and pursuing issues with National Assembly for Wales through appropriate channels
- Online petitions
- Partnership working
- Media campaigns
- Rating and/or positive acclaim of providers
- Rating and/or shaming of providers



## Lobbying and Public Affairs

- Contact with officials
- Lobbying elected members and influencing committee work
- Engaging and promoting amendments to government legislation in Westminster, Edinburgh and Cardiff
- Engagement in working parties
- Representations to Ministers
- Evidence to official enquiries and public consultations
- Official questions raised in elected bodies
- Working collaboratively on research and communications

Consumer Focus has a duty to support consumers with complaints where they are disconnected or threatened with the disconnection of their energy supply. In order that the new arrangements work more widely for all consumers, we have also decided to exercise our powers to support vulnerable consumers in energy and post. To do this, we have established a dedicated team, the Extra Help Unit, to handle cases referred to Consumer Focus from Consumer Direct for consumers who have been disconnected, threatened with disconnection, or who meet the definition of vulnerability.

More widely, there are also a range of information and empowerment tools to help inform and support consumer behaviour. We will explore online options, in particular, as a source of innovation for this. Over time we want to find the right balance between speaking up for consumers and finding new ways of taking action that enable consumers to speak up for themselves.

The Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007 gives us powers to pursue complaints of general consumer interest and to gather information from providers of goods and services. We will develop our work using these powers, taking care to act in a proportionate way and in line with the resources that we have to make good use of these.

One way of characterising the choice of all such advocacy tools is to look at different 'advocacy models'. In the different streams of work we do, we will select the right approach to get the right balance for impact in our portfolio of advocacy work.

Advocacy Models	
Developmental Advocate	Developing new initiatives to make change or to build the capacity of Consumer Focus to make change.
Research Advocate	Focusing on in-depth studies on key sectors to generate policy recommendations.
Think tank Advocate	Attempting 'big picture' research allied to the policy high ground.
Watchdog Advocate	Open, public lobbying on issues.

# A5. From launch to impact: Our three phases

## This document outlines the work that we are going to undertake over the next 18 months

Our initial priority is setting a firm foundation for the future, with investment in staff and the building blocks of policy and campaign development: developing relationships with stakeholders, determining our boundaries, and identifying internal business processes that will help us to work efficiently and effectively across our remit.

There will be **three phases** to our work over the 18-month period of this work plan. The first phase is about **set-up and continuity** – ensuring that the priority needs of consumers are still met, alongside the internal work required to build a strong foundation for the future. Building on this first phase of around six months, we will invest in **core issues** through additional initiatives that reflect our central concerns as a new consumer organisation. The third phase will then offer a more radical **future focus**, building on those core issues and activities to shape and champion a forward-looking consumer policy agenda.

We expect that our first major programme of work will be launched in early 2009.

### Our first six months

Inevitably some of our early capacity will be absorbed by reorganisation – both of employees, and of internal processes and priorities. Indeed, we are unlikely to be fully operational before spring 2009 and this Forward Work Programme reflects the need for a development phase. However, we have clear goals and timetable for our first six months, which are:

1. Soft launch from 1 October 2008, including support operations for vulnerable energy and post consumers.
2. Launching a campaign for action on the fuel poverty emergency in a new coalition with wider partners, running over winter 2008/09.
3. Completing the essential 'Postwatch' monitoring of The Post Office closure programme by early 2009.
4. Formal launch for Consumer Focus in the new year.
5. Starting work on a nationwide probe on the consumer experience and customer service related to mobile phones by March 2009.
6. Exploring and preparing new campaign themes for work from April 2009, such as:
  - Quality of Service
  - Access for All
  - Public Services
  - Going Green

### Phase 1: set-up and continuity

### Phase 2: core issues

### Phase 3: future focus

## Impact

The leverage that Consumer Focus will exert is not just down to the tools that we select, but also the 'power base' of influence we hold. Our leverage will be down to the following:

- In the know: we have good 'consumer intelligence', well regarded research and an ability to bring new solutions.
- In and out of the corridor: we use our insider/outsider status in relation to government.
- In the press: we use our media influence.
- Ability to network: we work with a diverse array of people and organisations sympathetic to the consumer interest, including unusual alliances across public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Part of a wider movement: there are nested levels of advocacy and impact in our work.

The reputation of Consumer Focus will be an important component of our influence, because each lever is only effective to the extent that key stakeholders believe it to be. We will achieve long-term influence by getting others to change their views and behaviour. To be influential, it is often important to be seen to be influential. In the designated markets of energy and postal services, there are likely to be more settled relationships and information flows. It is possible that the more Consumer Focus can influence, the less likely we are to use tactics of media campaigning, and vice-versa.

We will use our leverage to achieve impact for consumers. Ultimately our impact is the actual benefit to consumers produced by the changes we promote through advocacy. Examples might be fewer unnecessary complaints, cheaper bills, improved well-being or greater convenience. It is what we count as the real success or failure for Consumer Focus's work.

# A6. Evaluation

## There are four critical success factors that together define the 'balanced scorecard' for tracking the progress of our work

Our initial high-level objectives are detailed below:

### Good customer care and effective redress

- To achieve positive outcomes for consumers from our advocacy work, measured by impact indicators of the net number of people that are likely to benefit.
- To provide high quality customer services to support vulnerable people with complaints about energy and postal services, via our Extra Help Unit.

### High-impact and resource-efficient core staff team

- To develop and maintain an employee culture with values that complement the mission of the organisation.
- To ensure that employees have adequate levels of skills and expertise, and feel that they are valued and motivated.

### Positive Governance

- To deliver the activities set out in the Forward Work Programme.
- To provide realistic financial forecasts and monitor expenditure against budget, using property efficiently and effectively.
- To 'practice what we preach' by managing our own sustainability footprint.

### Strong relationships with key stakeholders

- To be seen by stakeholders to be influential (Reputation).
- To be seen by stakeholders to have an impact (Influence).

By June 2009, the mid-point of this Forward Work Programme, we will have developed the **metrics for reporting on our progress** against this framework, including:

- appropriate performance targets for the delivery of the advocacy programmes set out below

- a timetable for researching stakeholder views on our reputation and influence, using a package of indicators and benchmarking where possible
- a management information system that captures indicators of final impact in terms of the net number of consumers that are likely to benefit from our work.

# Section B: Our Campaigns for a Fair Deal

## An introduction to our advocacy programmes

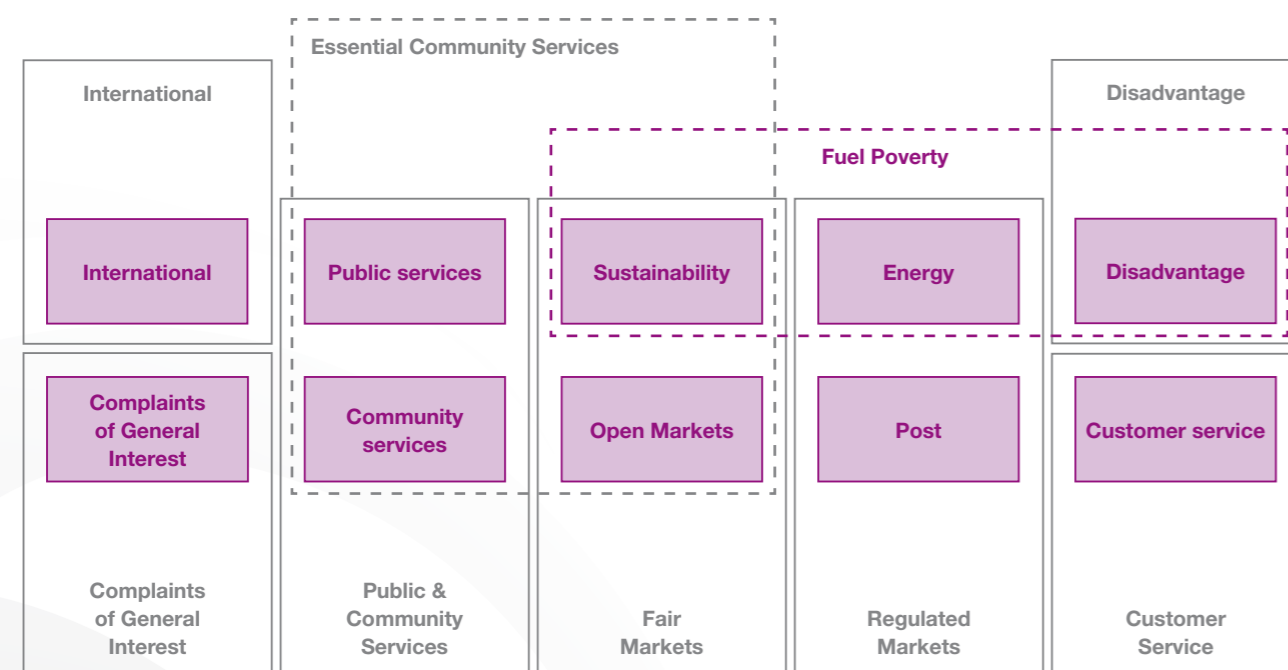
Consumer Focus will have ten advocacy programmes. Each is focussed on a key theme of our work, but none are expected to work in isolation. Our response to key consumer issues will be developed across programmes; for example, our response to fuel poverty is developed by our experts in the Disadvantage, Energy Market and Sustainability Programmes.

These programmes are not set in stone; we expect them to evolve and change over the course of time if we can improve our impact by adapting the way that we organise internally. We expect to do more work to identify outcomes from the work we have set out here,

and there will be decisions ahead on where to focus after we have completed some of the initial scoping work. We place a high priority on finding synergies across our advocacy programmes, working in matrix style across our offices and teams to achieve this. We will create teams with the right mix of competences to make the most of the close links between programmes in fields such as regulated markets (energy and post), fair markets (sustainability and open markets) and public and community services. The diagram below shows the grouping of advocacy programmes by team, and examples of projects delivered across programmes and teams.

## The relationship between Advocacy Programmes, Teams and Projects

**Key:** Advocacy Programme  Consumer Focus Team  Example Projects



For each major programme of work, we will also seek inclusive engagement with stakeholders. In particular, to encourage engagement with all our advocacy programmes, we will aim to take forward the Consumer Action Network, facilitated in the past by Energywatch, as well as looking at specific working groups (for example, progressively building on the work of Postwatch's Counters Advisory Group and expanding this to consider essential community services, including but not limited to post offices). We will explore how best to engage stakeholders at a strategic level and the Boards in Scotland, Wales and (for post) Northern Ireland will develop their own arrangements.

## Into the detail

Our work programme is detailed in the following sections, with six key elements:

- It is structured around Consumer Focus's **advocacy programmes** to link the programme to its operational implementation
- Each advocacy programme will have a high-impact core **focus**, from Consumer Focus's first campaign on fuel poverty to the completion of vital work started by predecessor bodies, such as the scrutiny of changes to the post office network
- A number of **activities** may support that focus through the three phases of the work plan. These are defined as far as possible prior to the set-up of the teams, and in the knowledge that some work will need to be reactive to market, industry or consumer driven events
- An indication is given of the number of policy and public affairs **employees** focussed on the programme at GB level. For every policy member of staff, there are additional specialists, from an internet team, communications specialists and administrative support workers, through to a Chief Economist. There are additional staff working at devolved level that will work alongside these staff, and we will regularly review linkages between issues and programmes to identify synergies and avoid duplication.
- We have given an approximation of the weighting of **funding** from our three funding streams: the energy industry, the postal services industry and from BERR (to support our wider remit). The weighting is presented in the form of a star rating, with five stars in total.
- Every activity has a designated **geographic focus**. Some will focus on consumer needs in a devolved context, others will be delivered across Great Britain. Additionally, policy development and campaigns for postal services cover the whole UK, due to Consumer Focus's responsibility for postal consumer in Northern Ireland

# B1. Disadvantage

To promote and protect the needs of consumers who are disadvantaged by health, disability, income, age or location – with an initial focus on fuel poverty

**GB Policy Resources: 5 Full time equivalent (FTE)**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★ Energy ★ Post ★ BERR**

## Background

This is a cross-cutting programme of work that addresses key issues facing consumers who are disadvantaged in some way, for example by income, location, age or health. Synergies will be realised by bringing together the work of predecessor bodies on the inter-connected issues of fuel poverty, debt and financial inclusion. The policy experts will also support related work undertaken by other advocacy programmes as Consumer Focus has a cross-cutting commitment to address the needs of consumers who are disadvantaged.

## Focus

The initial focus of this programme is the impact of rising fuel prices and the rising numbers of people experiencing fuel poverty over the winter months. Following this, we will identify and promote best practice in how businesses deal with vulnerable consumers, such as those in debt, along with key groups of people, including children as consumers.

1. Promote the need for an urgent package of measures that will address the needs of consumers in the face of rising energy prices.
2. Develop our understanding of the needs of vulnerable consumers.
3. Identify good practice for meeting the needs of vulnerable consumers, particularly those in debt, and promote it to companies.
4. The digital divide: scope the need for a new universal service obligation.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
1.1	<b>Campaign in partnership with others around an agreed Fuel Poverty Charter</b> for the implementation of an urgent package of measures that will address the needs of consumers in the face of rising energy prices. We will collaborate with the key groups in Scotland, Wales and England, that are concerned with fuel poverty, low-income, disability and the environment	1-3	✓	✓		✓	GB
1.2	<b>Develop and promote our understanding of the needs of vulnerable consumers</b> , including learning from work that has followed the Disability Discrimination Act Part 3 on duties in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services. This could potentially lead to support for, or sponsorship of, a Publicly Available Specification from the British Standards Institute. This could facilitate the implementation of the Consumer Protection Regulations, which transposed the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive into UK law	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)
1.3	<b>Identify and promote good practice by businesses across a number of sectors for dealing with vulnerable consumers</b> , with an initial focus on the treatment by companies of customers in debt	2-3	✓		✓		GB
1.4	<b>Identify and promote the needs of consumers who are disadvantaged by their lack of access to the internet.</b> Government, business and regulators are increasingly relying on the internet to provide information and services to consumers – including essential services, or elements of those services such as billing. In line with our wider campaign on Access for All, we will develop recommendations for action, including the scope for a new universal service obligation to promote digital inclusion	3	✓		✓		GB
1.5	Conduct outline scoping work to inform possible future policy work on financial inclusion, drawing on the work and achievements of the Financial Inclusion Taskforce; activities underway at devolved levels; the development of generic advice; work on financial capability; and the efforts of credit unions and community development financial institutions	2-3	✓				GB



	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
1.6	Explore the scope for developing a framework for evaluating and promoting best practice and innovation in terms of action by companies to support fuel poor customers, including a focus on payment methods, support on energy-saving measures and access to best tariffs	2-3		✓	✓		GB
1.7	Develop and promote policy action in more depth on two recommendations within Consumer Focus's wider Fuel Poverty Charter (see 1.1), in the context of any developments over the winter in terms of action by Government, regulator or companies	2-3		✓	✓		GB
1.8	Conduct scoping work on options for identifying and promoting company best practice and creativity in marketing to older people, recognising that this is a growing and important segment of consumers that is not always well-served at present	3			✓		GB NI (post)
1.9	Explore ways to promote the interests of children as consumers, including: the scope for classifying websites as advertising, so that they are subject to the same rules as other mediums; the potential for a partnership with the National Children's Bureau around a children's consumer panel; drawing on themes in the book 'Consumer Kids' co-written by Ed Mayo, Chief Executive, Consumer Focus; and co-operating with US agencies to achieve better harmonisation of marketing codes and children's privacy codes	1-3		✓	✓		England
1.10	Build on former Welsh Consumer Council (WCC) work by continuing to monitor trends in indebtedness and financial exclusion in Wales	1-3	✓				Wales
1.11	Conduct scoping work for a project to explore older people's finances in Wales	2-3	✓				Wales
1.12	Respond to Welsh Assembly Government forthcoming financial inclusion strategy consultation	1	✓				Wales

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
1.13	Organise a working group to discuss and make recommendations about the poverty premium paid by people on low incomes who have pre-payment meters, no internet access, etc	2	✓				Wales
1.14	Promote access to civil justice and participate in the Review of the Civil Courts, led by Lord Gill. We will also hold a seminar to explore further the possibilities for a public legal education strategy in Scotland	1	✓	✓	✓		Scotland
1.15	Provide policy support for the Administrative Justice Steering Group, established by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, and chaired by Lord Philip. We will publish a report looking at the role of administrative justice within Scotland	1	✓	✓	✓		Scotland
1.16	Promote the interests of consumers in relation to services such as energy, telecoms and personal financial services through new qualitative research on consumer behaviour, and make recommendations for action	3	✓	✓	✓		Scotland
1.17	Work in collaboration with the Scottish Council Foundation to raise the voice of consumers on key markets and how they work for them	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Scotland

# B2. Energy Market

To win a more effective and responsive energy market that recognises consumers' needs

GB Policy Resources: 5 FTE

Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ Energy

### Background

Concern about energy prices is no longer the preserve of a minority group of low-income consumers. Rising prices have hit consumers' wallets and placed the issue on the front page. Consumer Focus has a particular responsibility to monitor and influence the energy market, and starts its work at a critical point. The numbers in fuel poverty are now rising fast and the Government's fuel poverty strategy is subject to the challenge of a judicial review. The energy regulator, Ofgem, is conducting a market probe, while Government is due to consult on the post-2011 Supplier Obligation. A further consultation on energy efficiency, focussing on existing homes in particular, is also possible.

### Focus

In addition to providing market insight and analysis in support of Consumer Focus's first major campaign on fuel poverty (see the Disadvantage Advocacy Programme), this advocacy programme has particular responsibility for core regulatory issues such as price controls, industry codes, and representation on industry governance groups. We aim to have an impact on the way that energy markets operate at national and EU level, including the indexation of gas in relation to oil, innovation in tariffs and the needs of consumers whose energy supply is not covered by mainstream regulation.

1. Ensure that the consumer voice is heard in market reviews by Ofgem and the BERR Select Committee, and is acted upon.
2. Champion innovation and experimentation in the structure of energy tariffs.
3. Develop a strategic plan for Consumer Focus's role in improving the working of energy markets at UK, EU and international levels.
4. Explore the case for representation of energy consumers who are outside mainstream regulation (e.g. district heating).

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
2.1	Ensure that the consumer voice is heard in the ongoing market reviews, and the recommendations of the 2008 BERR Select Committee and the Ofgem probe are acted upon and deliver improvements for consumers	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
2.2	Champion innovation and experimentation in the structure of energy tariffs, working constructively with companies and with input from other stakeholders, so that those who use less no longer pay more. One example could be investigating how the move from pre-payment to credit meters can be facilitated as a route out of fuel poverty. This may inform work in other markets	2	✓	✓		✓	GB
2.3	In the context of current policy developments, develop a strategic plan for Consumer Focus's role in improving the working of energy markets at UK, EU and international levels	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
2.4	Explore the case for further advocacy on a potential regulatory gap by developing our understanding of the needs of energy consumers who are outside mainstream regulation (e.g. district heating)	3	✓	✓		✓	GB
2.5	Implement the initial stages of Consumer Focus's strategic energy plan	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
2.6	Explore campaign action on the indexation of gas in relation to oil, including through the International Programme, in engaging the European Commission and MEPs	1-3		✓			GB
2.7	Ensure the consumer voice is represented in Ofgem's electricity distribution price control review, along with the Industry Codes and Governance Review	1-3		✓	✓	✓	GB
2.8	Promote sustainable development by advising stakeholders on consumers' attitudes to renewable energy and energy efficiency, and how to influence them	1-3		✓	✓	✓	Wales

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
2.9	Advise the needs of consumers in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government on energy pricing and switching rates in Wales (once the results of the current Ofgem probe are known)	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Wales
2.10	Develop an understanding of problems facing those who are off the gas network and reliant on heating oil, propane or other fuels	2-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Wales

## B3. Post

### To improve service and value for postal consumers

**GB and Northern Ireland Policy Resources: 9 FTE**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ Post**

#### Background

The experience of postal consumers will be shaped by two reviews currently in progress: the Government's independent review of the UK's postal services and Postcomm's regulatory framework. Consumer Focus will respond to these reviews on behalf of the consumer, calling on the evidence base developed by Postwatch, and will seek to monitor and influence postal operators' activity to avoid consumer detriment. In a sector where, over time, the individual consumer has appeared to pay more and get less, Consumer Focus will call on Royal Mail Group to recognise and respond to the needs of these consumers.

#### Focus

Consumer Focus's primary aim during its start-up phase will be to ensure that the consumers' voice is heard in reviews of the market. The findings of the Hooper Review, in particular, will then drive our future work programme.

1. Ensure that the consumers' voice is heard in reviews of the market.
2. Track the universal service obligation of postal services to ensure consumer needs are met and that exceptions are clearly and openly justified.
3. Encourage the regulator to incorporate consumers' needs into its policy and regulation development.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geo focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
3.1	<b>Promote quality customer service through the Hooper Review and related developments</b> , raising consumer concerns such as pricing, mail integrity, collection, delivery and compensation	1-3	✓	✓	✓		UK
3.2	<b>Track the universal service obligation of postal services</b> to ensure it meets consumer needs and that exceptions are clearly and openly justified	1-3	✓				UK
3.3	<b>Encourage the regulator to incorporate consumers' needs into its policy and regulation development</b>	1-3	✓	✓	✓		UK
3.4	Support advice agencies with information and resources, linking into the Extra Help Unit to help them advise post as well as energy consumers	1-3			✓		UK
3.5	Conduct a limited, initial exploration of the consumer experience of receiving unwanted addressed (direct) and unaddressed (door-to-door) mail. This will draw connections with consumers' experience of other direct marketing channels, whilst also touching on the experience and performance of consumer opt-out preference services and related self-regulatory codes	3			✓	✓	UK
3.6	Provide evidence to Royal Mail Group and An Post of service failures in postal service between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and identify action plans for improvements	1-2	✓	✓	✓		NI
3.7	Research the customer experience of Royal Mail's delivery services and Callers Offices to seek to improve services	2-3	✓		✓		NI
3.8	Ongoing evaluation of the impact of cross-channel deliveries between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the impact of quality of service for the Northern Ireland postal consumer	1-2			✓		NI
3.9	Monitor and investigate issues in respect of the quality of service provided by postal service providers in Scotland, England and Wales at a devolved level	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Scotland England Wales NI
3.10	Conduct exploratory scoping work on parcel delivery solutions for rural areas of Scotland	1-3	✓		✓		Scotland

## B4. Sustainability

To increase the number of people that benefit from initiatives for sustainable lifestyles

GB Policy Resources: 4.5 FTE

Funding Weighting: ★ Energy ★ Post ★★★ BERR

### Background

There is now a consensus that there is no substitute for harnessing public action on the key challenges of sustainable development, including climate change. Although there have been welcome initiatives taken across society, the wider practice and policies required to support sustainable consumption have tended to lag behind. Consumer Focus's role is not to duplicate the extensive and urgent efforts of other non-governmental organisations and government bodies that focus on sustainable energy and other issues. Instead it will add value by bringing the consumer dimension to these issues, offering insight on key barriers and incentives to consumers adopting sustainable lifestyles.

### Focus

We want to make an impact by promoting policy change, around sustainable resource use and adaptation to climate change, that can make it easier for consumers to go green. We will also develop campaigns on the social dimension of sustainability, looking at the health of school children at lunchtime and the ethics of where our clothes come from.

1. Promote ideas for a more transparent and effective market for sustainable energy.
2. Report on the accuracy of advice and measurement tools available to carbon-conscious consumers in order to promote good practice.
3. Explore and scope the consumer agenda on adaptation to climate change.
4. Report on the performance of supermarkets in relation to health and sustainability.



	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
4.1	Working with the Energy Market advocacy programme, <b>promote ideas for a more transparent and effective market for sustainable energy</b> . Make an authoritative consumer contribution to the Government's proposals relating to the new renewable strategy, and inform debates relating to the Energy Bill, including the scope for feed-in tariffs for electricity, gas and heat and the roll out of work on smart meters	1-3			✓	✓	GB
4.2	<b>Review the advice (including 'green claims') and measurement tools available to carbon-conscious consumers</b> , in order to assist good practice	2-3			✓	✓	GB NI (post)
4.3	<b>Explore and scope the consumer agenda on adaptation to climate change</b> , including factors that would ease the transition and develop plans to promote solutions to consumers, opinion leaders or policy makers as appropriate	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
4.4	Develop a plan to <b>take forward the National Consumer Council's (NCC) programme of mystery shopping in order to address the performance of supermarkets</b> on key sustainability issues, such as health and resource use	3	✓		✓	✓	GB
4.5	Conduct research, building on the success of 'Greening Supermarkets', in order to produce a methodology for a league table of responsible clothing retailers (for publication in a future period). The assessment would take into account social and energy/environmental issues and include indicators that reflect the different stages of the clothing lifecycle	3				✓	England
4.6	Quantify the costs and benefits of living a sustainable lifestyle in a period of uncertainty about the economy and energy supplies, with a potential initial focus on domestic appliances	2-3		✓		✓	England
4.7	Conduct scoping work on whether competition in one or more selected markets is distorted to the detriment of consumers by a failure to internalise environmental costs	3			✓	✓	GB

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
4.8	Participate in policy work on issues of food, health and sustainability, such as sharing the secretariat function for the Cross Party Group on Food in the Scottish Parliament – (with the Scottish Food and Drink Federation) and the Action Plan developed by the Welsh Assembly Government	1-3				✓	Scotland Wales
4.9	Use previous work on the lunchtime choices of pupils as a platform for developing policy in this area, in order to promote access to healthy and nutritious food	1-3				✓	Scotland
4.10	Take forward work on the policy framework in Scotland on energy efficiency and micro-generation to ensure that all consumers, regardless of income, tenure or social circumstance can benefit from micro-generation technologies	1-3	✓			✓	Scotland
4.11	Develop scoping work on recycling in Scotland and work to ensure a consistent, consumer-focussed approach across Scotland's local authorities to the provision of recycling facilities - making it easier for consumers to make positive behavioural choices	1-3	✓		✓	✓	Scotland
4.12	Contribute to the development of the Welsh Assembly Government's Quality of Food Action Plan to help implement the recommendations of the recent WCC report on malnutrition amongst older people	1-2			✓		Wales
4.13	Publish a piece of WCC work in progress that looks at consumer attitudes to recycling, whether actions match attitudes and what kind of techniques are most successful in encouraging positive behaviour change	1-2		✓		✓	Wales
4.14	Input to the Welsh Assembly Government on sustainable energy consumption as part of its statutory duty regarding sustainability	1-3				✓	Wales

# B5. Open Markets

## To address consumer detriment across markets

**GB Policy Resources: 6.5 FTE**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ BERR**

### Background

The Open Markets programme is at the heart of the new organisation. This programme will track consumer detriment across markets, choosing priorities for research and advocacy according to the trends that emerge from a wide range of consumer intelligence.

### Focus

The initial focus for this advocacy programme is 'Access for All': identifying what barriers consumers face when trying to access essential services, in particular those barriers created when those on low incomes pay more or get less for their money, and campaigning for their removal. We aim to make an impact in sectors that may be as diverse as legal services, food, airports and vets.

1. Continue to inform BERR's Review of Consumer Law, and the review at EU level.
2. Develop and promote best practice for regulators' advancement of the consumer interest.
3. Scope, define and begin implementation of a rolling campaign for accessible services.
4. Define and implement a rolling campaign on consumer digital rights.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
5.1	<b>Inform BERR's Review of Consumer Law so that it delivers appropriate protection for consumers.</b> Work with the International advocacy programme to inform the EU review of consumer law	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
5.2	<b>Develop and promote best practice for regulators' advancement of the consumer interest</b> in order to make the consumer voice louder and to ensure that consumers are put at the heart of the better regulation agenda	1		✓			GB NI (post)
5.3	<b>Define and implement a rolling campaign for accessible services, 'Access for All'</b> , using a range of techniques including: lobbying of government and industry; raising awareness of alternative products and services via direct relationships with the media and other stakeholders; and web-based advocacy	2-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)
5.4	<b>Define and implement a rolling campaign on consumer 'digital rights' in the information society</b> , with the triple objective of achieving a well-functioning online market, achieving a fair balance between consumer and intellectual property rights holders and giving consumers a secure digital environment and effective control of their data. To do this, we will work closely with European and international consumer organisations	3	✓	✓	✓		GB
5.5	Ensure that consumers needs are taken into account in the digital switchover through the continuation of the Digital Diary project in Scotland, and related work at GB level, including action to keep track of research and data on the impact of the digital TV switchover on consumers, particularly on consumers who are blind or partially sighted	1-3	✓		✓		Scotland GB
5.6	To explore whether there is a need to undertake research on why consumers give up chasing complaints before they get a satisfactory resolution, in order to identify what changes need to be made in a number of significant markets, or by individual companies. This will be linked to our review of redress schemes	3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
5.7	Keep capacity available to monitor issues of consumer detriment where new evidence emerges in our research, or in the media of problems that are current in relevant markets. This will include scope to conduct research on consumer experience of markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that may deliver poor value – including sectors with high levels of complaints, such as garages, furniture and builders</li> <li>where consumers may be particularly dependent, such as with vets, or users of residential homes or day care</li> <li>where consumer representation is weak, such as airport regulation</li> </ul>	1-3	✓	✓	✓		England Scotland Wales
5.8	Explore options with BERR on possible consumer interest and involvement in employment standards	2			✓		GB
5.9	Produce an updated (fourth) edition of 'The Legal System of Scotland'	2-3	✓				Scotland
5.10	Campaign for effective governance of any new system of regulation for the Scottish legal profession	1-3			✓		Scotland
5.11	Undertake a market study of the take-up and use of legal expenses insurance, to determine and promote its usefulness for consumers who do not have access to legal aid, but who want to pursue a complaint through the courts. The Financial Ombudsman Service has undertaken some research in this area on which this would build	3		✓	✓		GB
5.12	Promote appropriate consumer information on the labelling of meat by the retail sector in Scotland	2-3		✓			Scotland
5.13	Work with Trading Standards to promote awareness of digital switchover scams	2-3		✓			Wales
5.14	Conduct a review of the mechanisms being developed in Wales to give a voice to children and young people	2-3		✓			Wales

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
5.15	Work with the Children's Commissioner, Trading Standards and other stakeholders to look at what more could be done to inform young people, in the 16 – 24 age range, about their consumer rights	3		✓			Wales
5.16	Conduct a review of the advantages and disadvantages of advice services in Wales	3			✓		Wales
5.17	Conduct a survey to establish the extent to which people experience difficulty in accessing national events (Eisteddfod, Royal Welsh Show etc) following reported difficulties regarding transport, physical access and suitability of services	2-3	✓				Wales
5.18	Champion the interests of consumers in relation to property management services, working with the Office of Fair Trading to ensure their work is informed by the consumer perspective	1-3			✓		Scotland

# B6. Community Services

## To promote innovative models for sustainable community services, including post

**GB and (for Post) Northern Ireland Policy Resources: 5 FTE**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ Post ★ BERR**

### Background

Community cohesion can play a vital role in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change and rising food and fuel prices. Local outlets, such as post offices, libraries, pubs, shops and banks are an essential element of that cohesion through their commercial and social services. This programme, building on our expertise on post offices, will promote synergies across the public and private sector to encourage innovative, equitable and efficient models for the delivery of essential community services across the UK.

### Focus

Consumer Focus's aim in this first programme of work is to complete the work undertaken by Postwatch in scrutinising the implementation of the current post office closure programme and tracking the commitments made by Post Office Ltd. It will then extend its role to promote cross-government, and cross-sector, working to secure the future of post office and other essential community services, with particular references to the needs of rural communities and different types of consumers, and the potential for wider social enterprise solutions. We also aim to promote the consumer interest in housing.

1. Complete the work undertaken by Postwatch in scrutinising the implementation of the current post office closure programme and tracking the commitments made by Post Office Ltd.
2. Work with stakeholders to promote the needs of vulnerable consumers in response to the upcoming decision on the future of the Post Office Card Account, identifying and promoting alternative products to stakeholders as appropriate.
3. Identify the services that are essential in a sustainable community, to include a view on the importance of post offices, and approaches for their retention.
4. Scope the development of a tool to assess and track the accessibility of essential services in the UK.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
6.1	<b>Scrutinise the final closure proposals in the current post office closure programme</b> under the time-limited branding of Postwatch	1	✓		✓		UK
6.2	Working with the Disadvantage advocacy programme, <b>co-ordinate provision of information to, and responses from, stakeholders to the Government's upcoming decision on the future of the Post Office Card Account.</b> Develop understanding of the impact on the consumer experience (access to benefit payments, bill payments, postal services etc) and promote the need for alternatives as appropriate	1	✓		✓		UK
6.3	<b>Identify the services that are essential in a sustainable community and explore the future role and importance of Post Offices</b> as community services, particularly in a rural and island setting. To include options for common approaches for lifeline community services which may include banks, shops, theatres, pubs or post offices. Promote findings to opinion leaders and policy makers and use learning to inform the application of rural proofing in our programmes	2-3	✓		✓	✓	UK
6.4	As part of wider work on the theme of access and working with the Open Markets programme, complete scoping work to <b>explore the use of GIS and other segmentation and analytical tools in order to assess the state of community access to services across Great Britain</b>	3	✓				GB NI (post)
6.5	Monitor changes to the post office network, including an evaluation of outreach services in urban and rural areas, and their impact on the quality of service available to UK consumers in line with the Code of Practice agreed with Post Office Ltd	1-3	✓		✓		UK
6.6	Analyse the effectiveness of engagement of consumers and other stakeholders in the post office closure programme, and inform Postcomm's evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the Government's objectives	2	✓		✓		UK



	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
6.7	Investigate alternative models for the delivery of services traditionally offered at the post office, including by local authorities or as social enterprises, in England and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in the context of the Government's intention to review the delivery of postal services from 2011	2-3	✓		✓	✓	UK
6.8	Explore the scope for a Community Services Advisory Group, to take forward the successful work of Postwatch's Counters Advisory Group (which brought together stakeholders with an interest in the post offices network)	1-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	UK
6.9	Determine and promote as necessary the need for a cross-Whitehall Community Service Action Group to work together to find long-term solutions both in terms of using Post Office Ltd's network to provide local and national government services and products, and the network's future funding	1	✓			✓	UK
6.10	Complete scoping work to assess where Consumer Focus can make most difference in championing the consumer interest in the British and devolved housing markets. This can include exploring options such as: building on previous related work by the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC); exploring the experience of leaseholders; looking at the needs of owner occupiers, including around disrepair and repossession; researching the consumer experience of the Home Information Pack, including energy information; action around social housing in alliance with tenant groups; and local authority services for people that are homeless	2-3		✓	✓		GB
6.11	Scrutinise Post Office Ltd's review on each closure and outreach service as per their agreed review time frame	1-3	✓		✓		NI
6.12	Produce an updated (third) edition of 'Moving Home in Scotland' in light of the forthcoming introduction of the home report in December 2008	1		✓	✓		Scotland
6.13	Publish the second edition of 'Common Repair, Common Sense' - a comprehensive guide for owners with common repair responsibilities	1		✓	✓		Scotland

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
6.14	Promote the development of the single survey and home report, taking part in the Scottish Government's Home Report Implementation Group, and campaign for the introduction of standard builders' missives	2-3		✓			Scotland
6.15	Promote the voice of rural communities by working with the new Rural Development Council on the recommendations developed previously by the SCC	2-3	✓			✓	Scotland
6.16	Monitor and inform the development of legislation on consultation and school closures by the Scottish Government	2-3	✓			✓	Scotland
6.17	Analyse the Welsh Assembly Government's rural and urban regeneration policies, with particular reference to those made in the 'One Wales' policy document, to scope the potential for post offices as community hubs (noting that Royal Mail Group has already started work in engaging with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association)	2-3	✓				Wales

# B7. Public Services

## To improve services for citizens

**GB Policy Resources: 7 FTE**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ BERR**

### Background

Anyone who buys or uses goods or services, whether in the public or the private sector, is a consumer. This recognises that people are in a particular kind of relationship with providers whether they pay for goods and services directly (e.g. energy or groceries) or indirectly through taxation (e.g. health or local authority services).

Public services are an essential part of everyday life. This is especially true for people in vulnerable groups who rely on them to get by and who have limited scope to influence the quality and accessibility of services they need. These factors make public services a priority for Consumer Focus.

### Focus

Consumer Focus will advocate the need for public services to be more user-focussed, through the development of our evidence base and approaches that will combat current service failures. We will campaign for improvements in services as diverse as health, schools, policing and complaints. The Public Service programme also opens up opportunities to “move” beyond advocacy into direct assistance in the design and delivery of consumer-orientated public services.

1. Promote consumer engagement in public services.
2. Promote the need for, and inform, the development of a robust approach for measuring the consumer's experience of public services.
3. Organise a cross-sectoral event to assess progress on citizens' redress in public services.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
7.1	<b>Promote high-quality consumer engagement in public services</b> , for example by exploring the next steps for the current partnership in England with Involve and related actions in Scotland and Wales	1-3		✓			GB
7.2	<b>Promote the need for, and inform, the development of a robust approach to measuring customer experience and satisfaction with public services</b>	2-3			✓		GB
7.3	<b>Organise a cross-sectoral event to assess progress on citizens' redress in public services</b> since the publication of work and recommendations by the London School of Economics and National Audit Office in early 2005, including lessons from the different devolved contexts on redress	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
7.4	Scope and identify up to three projects to address areas of consumer detriment, representative of all Consumer Focus' strategic goals and avoiding duplication with existing campaigns. Potential areas for work include sectors that have a more complex service relationship with users, including police services, having your child 'statemented' and social services more widely, including in relation to Child Protection Orders	2-3	✓	✓	✓		England
7.5	Advise the Welsh Assembly Government on its programme of citizen-centred public service reform	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Wales
7.6	Promote consumer and citizen-centred reforms on health, building on previous work by the WCC	2-3	✓	✓	✓		Wales
7.7	Campaign for a reliable and affordable transport infrastructure through evidence provided to the Public Transport Users Committee	1-3	✓	✓		✓	Wales
7.8	Review patients' and communities' involvement in decision making in the light of the proposed restructuring of the NHS in Wales	1-3		✓			Wales

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
7.9	Engage parents on national representation, building on previous work by the SCC. We will carry out a series of workshops with parents in local areas to explore their views on the roles and responsibilities of a national parents' body and report on the findings to the Scottish Government	2-3		✓	✓		Scotland
7.10	Identify the current levels of parental involvement and representation in education, and assess the impact of the legislation by comparing the results to previous SCC surveys	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Scotland
7.11	Publish 'The A-Z of Scots Education Law: A Guide for Parents' (third edition)	1	✓	✓	✓		Scotland
7.12	A significant programme of work in the area of e-Health is likely to be taken forward in the year 2008-9 by the Scottish Government. Opportunities for Consumer Focus Scotland include the promotion of greater patient and public involvement at all levels; direct involvement in the development of information governance, with particular reference to patient confidentiality and promotion of patient access to electronically held records	1-2			✓		Scotland
7.13	Work with key stakeholders to tackle the significant gap in public and patient involvement at national level	1-3		✓			Scotland
7.14	Develop and promote the user focus in the inspection, audit, regulation and complaints handling of public services in Scotland in the light of the programme of reform following the Independent Review of Inspection, Audit, Regulation and Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland (the Crerar Review)	1-3			✓		Scotland

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
7.15	Continue the work of the SCC to promote the needs of all parents, including the need for stronger parental representation in relation to schools, particularly in consultations on school closures and the future of rural schools	1-3		✓			Scotland
7.16	Campaign for better ways of informing consumers about the results of local authority hygiene inspections when they are looking to eat out, drawing on the success of the Scottish scheme launched by the Food Standards Agency in late 2006	1-3			✓		Scotland

# B8. Customer Service

To track complaints on energy, post and mobile phones and use company performance advocacy

**GB Policy Resources: 16 FTE (Energy & Post) 3 FTE (Mobiles)**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ Energy ★ Post ★★★★★ BERR**

## Background

The Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act gives Consumer Focus duties to deal with cases where an energy consumer has been disconnected or threatened with disconnection, and powers to investigate complaints from vulnerable energy and postal consumers. The Customer Services team will have strong links to Consumer Focus' in-house Extra Help Unit, but will also use data from a range of external sources including industry, Consumer Direct and advice agencies. It will use this intelligence to monitor consumer concerns, and to work collaboratively with industry and the regulator to deliver improvements in policies and processes in the different sectors we focus on. It will also have strong links with the Energy Market, Post, Disadvantage and the Complaints of General Interest advocacy programmes.

## Focus

Consumer Focus will build on the work undertaken by its predecessors, using their tools and techniques to monitor industries that are failing consumers, and campaigning for improvements. The first industry to be subjected to this focus, in addition to the energy and postal sectors, will be the mobile phone industry. We will develop this work in close discussion with the Ofcom Consumer Panel and will work where we can with the regulator, which has published its 'Mobile Sector Assessment', and with companies themselves. Service failures in this sector have a number of similarities to those found in the energy sector including: billing, disputed charges, complex tariff structures and significant annual consumer spend.

1. Track complaints data to identify and promote options for service improvements.
2. Publish data on complaints and develop additional indicators to help consumers make an informed choice.
3. Monitor and report on the implementation of redress systems and complaint handling standards.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
8.1	<b>Track complaints data in key sectors</b> across England, Scotland, Wales and (for post) Northern Ireland to identify and promote options for improvements to services in collaboration with the relevant advocacy programmes	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
8.2	<b>Publish data on complaints in the post and energy sectors to help consumers make an informed choice</b> , developing more meaningful indicators where possible. We will continue the energywatch Confidence Code in partnership with internet price comparison sites	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
8.3	<b>Monitor and report on the implementation of redress systems and complaint handling standards</b> on a regular basis and undertake a formal review of how they are working in the energy and postal sector one year on. Work will be carried out in collaboration with others to ensure that this is adding value and operating with particular regard to the needs of vulnerable consumers	3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
8.4	Support advice agencies through the provision of information and policy resources to help them advise energy and post consumers	1-3		✓			GB NI (post)
8.5	Scope consumer needs and the opportunities to influence improvements in the mobile phone sector, working with the Ofcom Consumer Panel to define this work and a potential partnership going forward. This will inform and complement, rather than duplicate, the work underway by Ofcom – including the recently published 'Mobile Sector Assessment'	2-3	✓	✓	✓		GB
8.6	Monitoring information about the experience of Welsh consumers and in particular Welsh Language speakers who contact the Extra Help Unit. Advise on any Welsh Assembly Government initiatives that Welsh consumers might be eligible for	1-3	✓				Wales



# B9. Complaints of General Interest

To promote change by investigating a small number of consumer complaints that have wider relevance

**GB Policy Resources: 4 FTE**

**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ BERR**

## Background

Under the Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act, Consumer Focus will have strong new powers. These include the right to investigate any consumer complaint, the right to open up information from providers, the power to conduct research and the ability to make an official super-complaint about failing services. Consumer Focus therefore has the power to investigate complaints of general interest alongside its duties relating to the postal and energy sectors.

## Focus

The right to investigate any consumer complaint is a new power and Consumer Focus wants to ensure that it is used effectively and efficiently. This will need engagement with, and evidence from, consumers and their representatives.

1. Determine the needs of micro-enterprises as consumers, and the role of Consumer Focus in representing them.
2. Develop criteria that set out when Consumer Focus will accept referrals for investigation, and processes for onward referral.
3. Develop and implement a pilot for investigating complaints of general interest.
4. Investigate issues arising from complaints of general interest, and implement actions that offer positive outcomes for customers.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
9.1	<b>Determine the needs of micro-enterprises as consumers</b> , with particular regards to their energy and postal needs and the role of consumer focus in representing them	1	✓	✓			GB NI (post)
9.2	<b>Develop criteria that set out when the new body will accept referrals for investigation</b> , and processes for onward referral of, or responses to, such complaints. These will reference all four of the organisation's strategic goals	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
9.3	<b>Develop and implement a pilot for investigating complaints of general interest</b>	2-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
9.4	<b>Investigate issues arising from complaints of general interest</b> using pilot methodology, in collaboration with other advocacy programmes where appropriate, and implement actions that produce positive outcomes for consumers	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)

# B10. Extra Help Unit

To handle complaints on behalf of vulnerable energy and post consumers, including those at risk of disconnection

**GB and (for post) Northern Ireland Resources: 16 FTE**  
**Funding Weighting: ★★★★★ Energy ★ Post**

### Background

The Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act gives Consumer Focus the duty to deal with cases where an energy consumer has been disconnected or threatened with disconnection, and powers to investigate complaints from vulnerable energy and postal consumers.

### Focus

Consumer Focus operates an Extra Help Unit to advise vulnerable people or businesses who have complaints about energy and postal services. This provides an additional level of support to those who turn to Consumer Direct for advice or who are threatened with disconnection.

1. Operate an Extra Help Unit to advise vulnerable people or businesses that have complaints about energy and postal services.
2. Help vulnerable people and businesses by making representations to energy and postal providers on their behalf.
3. Deal with queries from elected and other consumer representatives to address the needs of individual vulnerable consumers of energy and postal services.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
10.1	<b>Provide an advice function for vulnerable postal or energy consumers</b> , including those at risk of disconnection	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
10.2	<b>Help vulnerable consumers of energy and postal services (including vulnerable businesses) reach a satisfactory resolution</b> by providing advice or making representations to the supplier on their behalf	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)
10.3	<b>Deal with related queries from elected and other consumer and citizen representatives.</b> This work will include the continuation of the 'Ask the Advisers' service for advice agencies	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB NI (post)

# B11. International

To influence international consumer policy, and bring back best practice to inform GB-based activity

**GB Policy Resources: 3 FTE**

**Funding Weighting: ★ Energy ★ Post ★★★ BERR**

## Background

Growing EU and international influence on GB policy means that this advocacy programme is an important aspect of the new organisation's advocacy strategy. This work is integral to all of our activities, rather than being a topic in its own right and this team will develop close links with all the different advocacy programmes.

## Focus

This advocacy programme has two roles in this transition phase: to continue the predecessor organisations' valuable work in the international arena, but also to develop an awareness of EU and international work within the organisation. It will include responsibility for liaison with our key international networks, BEUC (the European Consumer Group), the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), the European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization (ANEC), the Committee on Consumer Policy of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Consumers International.

1. Influence the review of the EU Consumer Law Acquis Database.
2. Influence the third energy package and the European Citizens' Energy Forum.
3. Influence EU telecommunications legislation.

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
11.1	<b>Contribute to the reviews of consumer law underway in the EU</b> , for example on issues of redress. Explore and advocate options for improvement, which might include consolidation of legislation, more effective private and collective redress and improved enforcement	1-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)
11.2	<b>Contribute to the new Citizens' Energy Forum and the third energy package</b> , campaigning for appropriate amendments to be retained and the work on the Charter taken forward	1-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
11.3	<b>Work with the Open Markets team to lobby on EU telecommunications legislation and the review of copyright in the EU</b> (particularly on the proposed directive on copyright term) and participate in the BEUC digital campaign team	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB
11.4	Participate in the BEUC team and project for the pan-EU consumer manifesto leading to elections in late spring 2009, and promote to UK candidates. Develop a post-election strategy of engagement with MEPs and, later, the new Commission and Cabinets	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)
11.5	Collaborate proactively with DG Sanco on the consumer markets scoreboard, which is going into its market investigation phase. Explore the development of common investigations/research projects with partners across the EU	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB
11.6	Participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Committee on Consumer Policy, in particular on the development and roll -out of the consumer policy toolkit	2-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB NI (post)
11.7	Lead the TACD Intellectual Property Working Group and participate in the TACD Information Society Working Group. Building on work by the NCC, influence OECD follow-up of the Future of the Internet Ministerial Meeting and, in particular direct civil society representation in communication policy making at the OECD	1-3	✓	✓	✓		GB

	Activity	Phase	Strategic Goals				Geographic focus
			Access	Value	Service	Sustainability	
11.8	Explore on the global level how to take forward the work of energywatch together with Consumers International in developing a global Energy Consumers' Charter, and to achieve its incorporation in a revised UN guideline for consumer protection	2-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	GB
11.9	Participate actively in the BEUC Sustainable Energy Campaigns Group, with major input on energy labelling and the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production	1-3				✓	GB
11.10	Participate in the TACD Climate Change and Sustainability Working Group, in particular the development of policy and advocacy to influence US and EU policy in the climate change agreements follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol in Copenhagen, December 2009	1-3				✓	GB
11.11	Inform the development of European quality standards for mail services which underpin the European Directive on Postal Services	1-3			✓		UK
11.12	Maintain relationships with the European Commission's Cardiff office and monitor the Welsh Assembly Government's implementation of European directives, which may have particular relevance to consumers in Wales	1-3	✓	✓	✓		Wales

## B12. Externally funded projects

### Consumer Focus also delivers a number of projects for partners, generating a significant income

We welcome the opportunity for joint and funded work, although we need to take account of related risks, particularly in relation to the delivery of our statutory duties.

#### National Social Marketing Centre

The National Social Marketing Centre is a strategic partnership between the Government (Department of Health) and Consumer Focus. Core funding comes from the Department of Health in the form of a three-year grant agreement and focuses primarily on England, but is enhanced for specific programme and project up-weights where additional work is agreed. The Centre is also increasingly securing funds from other Government Departments and devolved and UK organisations.

Work programmes and clients include:

- Research, Intelligence and Insight
- Social Determinants and Health Inequalities
- NHS London SHA Programme
- Transport for London analysis and support
- Wales – Centre for Health
- Scotland – Review
- Remember a Charity
- HSE – Health and Safety Executive
- HM Treasury – Thoreson Review support
- NAO – National Audit Office
- Sport England
- WHO Copenhagen – Tobacco Control Support
- WHO Copenhagen – Healthy Cities Support
- EU Determine project
- British Council Support Work
- World Meteorological Organisation
- Qatar training workshops
- SM International Training
- Brussels Technical Assistance
- SM Training Workshops for China/DfID CDC

More information can be found at [www.nsms.org.uk](http://www.nsms.org.uk)



Consumer Focus Scotland will be taking forward some significant projects funded by the Scottish Government. These include:

#### **Health Rights Information Scotland**

Working with the NHS and voluntary sector health service providers to promote patients' rights. This includes producing information for patients, advising organisations on best practice and getting the public involved in the process.

#### **Scottish Accessible Information Forum**

With a remit right the way across the public and private sectors this project is actively involved in improving the standards of information available to disabled people.

#### **The Healthy Living Award**

This National Healthy Eating Award Scheme for the food service sector in Scotland was launched in the summer of 2006. The project builds on the success of the Scottish Healthy Choices Award which ended in September 2004, following seven years within the current SCC. The new award presents a new and greater challenge to the food service industry. It works with caterers across Scotland, to make it easier for people to eat healthily when eating out, with a major focus on establishments in which people eat regularly, in particular the workplace, food on the high street and family eateries. Since its launch, over 850 establishments across Scotland have registered to become award holders and over 320 have successfully achieved award accreditation.

#### **Community Food and Health (Scotland)**

Community Food and Health (Scotland) aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity, ability and confidence to access a healthy and acceptable diet for themselves, their families and their communities.

## Annex: How we produced this plan

### This section details how stakeholders were involved in the development of this work programme

#### **Stage One: Stakeholder identification**

Our three predecessor organisations provided their stakeholder contact lists. These were then merged and categorised by interests. The start-up team supplemented this with contacts from selected areas such as mobile phones companies and potentially interested government departments. Our CEO Ed Mayo wrote to stakeholders introducing the new organisation, advising them of the timing for the consultation process and asking them to respond when the time came.

#### **Stage Two: Consultation**

The twelve-week consultation was launched on 12 June 2008. Ed Mayo emailed stakeholders with a link to the draft of the Forward Work Programme. Alongside the non-governmental stakeholders, Lord Whitty wrote to ministers and MPs, including the Secretary of State. A consultation website was launched with background about the new organisation and links to key consultation documents.

Between 25 June and 14 July, a series of events for specific groups of stakeholders were held. These were:

Energy industry – 25 June

Postal industry – 7 July

Advice agencies – 7 July

Cross-Whitehall – 11 July

Regulators – 14 July

Attendees are listed overleaf. Additional events were held in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Staff in the predecessor organisations were also asked to contribute in a series of workshops and ongoing dialogue.

#### **Stage Three: Analysis**

Feedback from all stakeholders, including the synthesised minutes of the consultation events, was collated, categorised and then analysed.

Consumer Focus's full response to the issues raised will be published alongside this forward work plan on 1 October 2008. This summarises stakeholders' responses to questions asked with an explanation of how the programme was changed in light of the responses received. It also outlines the strength of feeling amongst respondents and states how offers of collaboration will be taken forward.

Consumer Focus Scotland, Consumer Focus Wales and Consumer Focus Post (Northern Ireland) will develop more detailed work plans during our first six months.

## Stakeholders involved

Event attendees		
AccountAbility	Citizens Advice Scotland	Energy Savings Trust
ACEVO	CBI Cymru	Energy Savings Trust Wales
Acona	CIFAS	Energy Supply Ombudsman
Advertising Association	Citizens Advice	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Advice UK	Citizens Advice Cymru	Ethical Consumer
Age Concern	Civic Offices	European Commission Office in Wales
Age Concern Cymru	Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health	Fairtrade Foundation
Association of British Insurers	Commissioner for Children and Young People	Financial Services Authority (FSA)
Basic Skills Cymru	Commissioner for Older People	Food Standards Agency Wales (FSA)
(BERR) Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	Community Housing Cymru	Forum for the Future
Better Regulation Executive	Consumer Council for Water	Foundation for Credit Counselling
Bevan Foundation	Consumer Credit Counselling Service	Friends of the Earth Cymru
Breakthrough Breast Cancer	Consumer Direct	George Lennard Associates
British Gas	Consumers International	Glasgow Caledonian University
British Standards Institution	COSLA	Good Energy
British Wind Energy Association	Cynnal Cymru	Help the Aged Cymru
British Wind Energy Association Wales	Department for Communities and Local Government	Information Commissioner's Office
BT Group plc	Department for Environment, food and Rural Affairs	Institute of Welsh Affairs
Bus Users UK	Digital UK	Job Centre Plus
Campaign for Community Banking Services	E.ON UK	Law Society of Scotland
Cardiff Council	EDF Energy	Legal Services Commission
Care and Repair Cymru	Energy Retail Association	Local Better Regulation Office

Event attendees continued		
Local Government Information Unit	Oxfam Cymru	The Chairman's Club
London TravelWatch	Passenger Focus	The Company Agency
Mail Users Association	Post Office Ltd	The DX
Money Advice Scotland	Postcomm	Trading Standards Institute
National Assembly for Wales	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales	UK Intellectual Property Office
National Children's Bureau	Queen Margaret University College	University of Dundee
National Consumer Council	Rhonda Cynon Taf Council	Utilities Intermediary Association
National Consumer Federation	Royal Mail Group	Victim Support
National Debtline	Royal National Institute for the Blind	Wales Audit Office
National Energy Action	Saveonyourbills.co.uk	Wales Centre for Health
National Energy Action Cymru	SCOTSS	Wales Co-operative Centre
National Federation of Women's Institutes	Scottish and Southern Energy	Wales Heads of Trading Standards
National Grid	Scottish Executive	Waste Awareness Wales
National Right to Fuel Campaign	Scottish Parliament	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
New Local Government Network	Secure Mail Services	Welsh Assembly Government
NHS Direct Wales	Social Audit Ltd	Welsh Language Board
Now Let's Talk Money	Scottish Retail Consortium	Welsh Local Government Association
RWE npower	Sustain	Welsh Refugee Council
Ofcom	SustainAbility	Welsh Water
Ofcom Consumer Panel	Sustainable Development Commission	Which?
Office of Fair Trading	Sustrans Cymru	World Wildlife Fund Cymru
Ofgem	Ofgem	
Ofwat	Tesco plc	

## Stakeholders involved continued

United Kingdom programme respondents		
Age Concern	EDF Energy	National Energy Action
Alliance Against Intellectual Property Theft	Energy Saving Trust	National Social Marketing Centre
Audit Commission	Energy Retail Association	Ofcom
Barclays	Financial Services Authority	Ofcom Consumer Panel
Department of Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR)	Fairtrade Foundation	Office of Fair Trading
British Chambers of Commerce	Federation of Small Businesses	Ofgem
British Gas	Food Standards Agency	Ofwat
British Standards Institution	Financial Services Authority	Passenger Focus
Citizens Advice	Good Energy	Postcomm
Care Commission	Green Alliance	Royal National Institute for the Blind
Consumer Council for Water	Homeless Link	Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Campaign for Community Banking Services	iDeA	Royal Mail Group
Charity Commission	Local Better Regulation Office	RWE npower
Commission for Rural Communities	Legal Complaints Service	Scottish Power
Corona Energy	Mail Users Association	Scottish and Southern Energy
DCLG (Gypsy and Traveller Unit)	National Children's Bureau	Tenant Participation Advisory Service
Disability Forward	National Consumer Federation	The Ombudsman Service Ltd
Department for Environment, food and Rural Affairs	National Federation of SubPostmasters	Utilities Intermediary Association
E.ON UK	National Grid	University of Bath School of Management

Wales programme respondents		
Children's Commissioner for Wales	Energy Saving Trust Wales	Ofgem
Consumer Council for Water, Wales Committee	Food Standards Agency Wales	Ombudsman Service Ltd
Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills	Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Performance Wales
Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing	Legal Complaints Service	Royal Mail Group
Department for Public Health and Health Professions	Legal Services Commission	Scottish Power
Department of Social Justice and Local Government (SJLG)	Local Better Regulation Office	Shelter Cymru
E.ON UK	National Energy Action Cymru	Trading Standards Wales
Energy Retailers Association	Nick Bourne, AM	

Scotland programme respondents		
Stirling Council	Glasgow City Council	Scotland Office
E.ON UK	Harper Macleod LLP	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Energy Retail Association	Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Scottish Power
Faculty of Advocates	Office of Fair Trading	Stirling Council
Falkirk Council	Perth & Kinross Council	VisitScotland
	Royal Mail Group	Waterwatch Scotland

Northern Ireland programme respondents		
Countryside Alliance	Postwatch Northern Ireland	Training for Women Network
Disability Action	Royal Mail Group	
Margaret Ritchie MLA (Minister for Social Development)	Rural Community Network	

# Contact details

We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work. Please send these to the Head of Communications, at the address below:

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