

Guidance for the factsheet and covering letter

Introduction

The OFT has, in partnership with Local Authority Trading Standards Services (TSS), produced a factsheet that summarises the main benefits to consumers, businesses and TSS of providing second-tier consumer advice and of intervening to help consumers resolve disputes and gain redress.

The purpose of the factsheet is to help raise awareness among Local Authority councillors of these benefits and to help establish/maintain support for provision of this type of service by TSS.

There is also an optional covering letter which is signed by Philip Collins, Chairman of the OFT and, for the English and Welsh versions, is co-signed by Councillor Geoffrey Theobald OBE, Chairman of LACORS.

What TSS can do

TSS can choose to:

- a) ask the OFT to send the factsheet to named councillors with the OFT/LACORS covering letter, or
- b) distribute the factsheet to their Local Authority's councillors.

Option to add local information to the factsheet

The factsheet includes three case studies which illustrate the potential for TSS to help vulnerable consumers to resolve disputes and obtain redress. TSS can, if they wish, replace these with relevant case studies and/or statistics from their own Local Authority, if available.

Printing

TSS that choose option (a) above should email brian.jackson@oft.gov.uk in the Trading Standards Partnership Team specifying the names and addresses of the councillors (and/or chief executive) they would like the factsheet and covering letter sent to.

TSS that choose option (b) above can print copies of the factsheet themselves. Alternatively, colour copies printed on heavyweight paper can be provided to TSS by the OFT. To order copies, please email the OFT at the address above specifying how many you require.

Where TSS would like the OFT to print and/or distribute the factsheet *and* the TSS wishes to replace the standard case studies with their own case studies and/or statistics, relevant case study information should be sent to the address above.

The Councillors Handbook

The OFT/LACORS covering letter provides that further copies of the *Local Authority Trading Standards Services – Councillors’ Handbook* are available from Trading Standards Services on request. If you require further copies of these to be sent to you, please email the address above.