

In the second half of 2004 the Consumer Direct initiative was launched in four pathfinder regions within the UK. Consumer Direct will be launched in four more regions in mid 2005 and a final wave of three regions in early 2006.

The primary objective of Consumer Direct is to provide a consistent easily accessible UK advice service for consumer enquiries of all kinds. In addition to consumer complaints, it therefore handles pre-purchase enquires and cases where there may be no actual problem but the caller is seeking advice about his or her rights.

In due course a central database of Consumer Direct enquiries will provide valuable information on consumer complaints and other consumer issues. However, in the short term the launch of Consumer Direct has resulted in OFT being unable to publish aggregate data on complaints in the familiar format of a two way table of goods and services by complaint type.

There are various reasons for this.

In part it is the result of changes in the way data about complaints are recorded and codified by the new system, some information, for example complaint type being recorded in an entirely different way to before.

In part it is the result of difficulties with data submission arising as local Trading Standards Departments migrate to new computer systems, leaving gaps within the data.

In part it is concern that in the period immediately after launch regional complaints statistics taken from Consumer Direct rather than Trading Standard department returns may not be typical of longer term trends.

OFT is examining alternative ways of publishing statistics on complaints during this transitional period and will make them available on this website as soon as they are available.

01.01.2004 – 30.06.2004

## Complaints by goods/services category and trading practice

The total number of Consumer Complaints received for the first six months of 2004 was 419,285.

Trading Practices (see key below)

Group A	House fittings and appliances	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
AA	House construction	1054	123	328	181	63	17	1	55	1822
AB	Home maintenance, repairs and improvements	24376	4256	6329	4414	658	301	79	1757	42170
AC	Double glazing products & installation	8027	1274	2064	1992	337	87	42	241	14064
AD	Furniture	5433	2379	1460	975	300	210	19	333	11109
AE	Upholstered furniture	10119	1969	1664	1838	409	281	47	266	16593
AF	Floor coverings	3471	453	641	580	135	12	16	181	5489
AK	Textile	1216	286	471	176	83	51	3	110	2396
AL	Radio, TV etc	9591	1155	1964	1769	371	70	40	410	15370
AM	PC & hardware	8695	1474	1970	1517	322	27	40	356	14401
AN	Large white goods	10818	906	1070	1896	269	359	39	277	15634
AO	Other electrical domestic appliances	4927	445	972	801	176	715	27	235	8298
AP	Repairs to domestic appliances & equipment	1336	344	291	356	65	21	5	171	2589
									Grand Total	149935

Group B	Other household requirements	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
BA	Food and drink	3331	171	5810	123	137	1807	1535	2447	15361
BB	Domestic solid & liquid fuel	224	28	152	22	16	17	1	64	524
BC	Gas	1173	165	875	257	121	81	1	408	3081
BD	Electricity	637	97	868	131	99	23	0	319	2174
BE	Water (inc sewerage)	242	13	120	47	30	97	0	83	632
BF	Postal service	186	105	290	40	19	6	0	29	675
BH	Laundry & dry cleaning	711	47	85	113	16	7	0	28	1007
BJ	DIY materials/tools	621	123	355	62	40	103	4	129	1437
BM	Telecommunications excl. mobiles	1561	162	2087	348	272	7	1	431	4869
BN	Mobile phones & services	8917	1179	3758	1790	755	13	10	527	16949
BO	Internet service providers	854	202	847	154	178	2	2	139	2378
BP	Hardware, cleaning materials	901	213	535	174	61	317	11	177	2389
BQ	Gardens	1786	501	622	245	52	132	4	240	3582
									Grand Total	55058

Group C	Personal goods and services	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
CA	Clothing	6042	810	3577	978	729	89	1	712	12938
CD	Pharmaceutical products	1378	330	888	188	82	128	10	211	3215
CE	Toilet articles	1036	179	576	105	73	303	6	151	2429
CF	Jewellery	2711	659	1002	452	162	11	3	172	5172
CH	Tobacco	140	16	349	17	3	80	640	61	1306
CK	Footwear	3230	137	638	496	155	14	4	197	4871
CL	Nursery goods & services	1476	123	207	238	41	317	1	43	2446
CM	Homeworking schemes	126	73	483	23	33	1	0	7	746
CZ	Other personal goods & services	7679	2541	10333	1212	794	584	116	855	24114
									Grand Total	57237

Group D	Professional and financial services	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
DA	Personal banking	451	46	810	91	118	6	8	40	1570
DB	Hire & credit	1328	182	2392	403	692	8	0	293	5298
DE	Ancillary credit business	445	59	742	109	140	5	8	44	1552
DF	Life insurance	76	17	162	25	43	0	0	10	333
DG	Non-Life insurance	1409	438	1382	386	578	11	10	156	4370
DL	Mortgages and other secured credit	199	42	477	46	108	0	0	37	909
DM	Credit 'repair' services	75	14	74	16	17	5	6	1	208
DN	Pensions excl. occupational	19	6	22	2	4	0	0	1	54
DO	Extended warranties & guarantees	599	271	517	282	202	6	6	29	1912
DP	Estate agency, house purchase, surveying	632	74	1311	65	165	9	0	76	2332
DQ	Letting & management agencies	457	104	274	93	227	23	6	49	1233
DY	Other professional services	3294	843	10658	378	526	42	9	349	16099
DZ	Other financial services	772	146	2272	162	329	7	6	165	3859
									Grand Total	39729

Group E	Transport	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
ED	New motor vehicles	6097	469	1689	1097	257	34	0	323	9966
EE	Second hand motor vehicles	20350	606	6823	2792	709	260	6	591	32137
EF	Motor vehicle repairs & servicing	7657	594	1243	1267	204	112	2	570	11649
EG	Motorcycles & repairs	1763	153	382	261	57	44	0	50	2710
EH	Bicycles & repairs	763	119	121	87	20	67	1	37	1215
EK	Petrol & oil	778	35	482	37	9	203	5	364	1913
EM	Road, rail, air, & sea travel excl. car hire	487	193	384	92	114	18	1	220	1509
EN	Freight, shipping, & removals services	225	61	54	28	16	32	1	49	466
EO	Motor vehicles spare parts, tyres, & accessories	1565	467	497	225	75	141	0	109	3079
EY	Boats, caravans, trailers, motorised buggies etc	1125	106	399	161	88	30	0	57	1966
EZ	Other motoring costs inc. car hire	1186	258	949	219	301	60	1	231	3205
									Grand Total	69815

Group F	Leisure	1	2	3	4	6	8	A	P	Grand Total
FC	Travel agents	324	156	515	80	144	3	0	140	1362
FD	Holiday caravan renting & caravan sites	122	19	116	19	80	5	0	28	389
FE	Time sharing	267	95	865	36	73	0	0	20	1356
FG	Books, newspapers & magazines	630	579	1669	143	202	12	17	192	3444
FH	Entertainment, catering & accommodation	871	363	839	145	172	495	7	304	3196
FK	Holidays	2309	572	2964	359	420	10	1	507	7142
FL	Sports goods, hobbies	918	354	506	142	120	59	11	127	2237
FM	Toys, games, & video consoles	1402	236	393	179	47	560	17	110	2944
FN	Compact discs, audio & video tapes, records, video	1489	605	2249	214	152	6	37	166	4918
FO	Pets, pet foods & veterinary goods and services	1096	98	646	71	43	153	1	87	2195
FP	Betting, competitions & prize draws	1213	273	9798	82	328	11	7	78	11790
FQ	Photography (equipment, film processing, services)	1174	337	451	199	56	4	1	99	2321
FZ	Other recreational goods & services	1263	483	1537	218	210	224	70	212	4217
									Grand Total	47511

**Trading Practices key:**

1. Defective goods or substandard service
2. Non-delivery of goods and delay or non-completion of services
3. Selling techniques:
  - misleading claims, representations or advertisements (price, quality, etc.)
  - presentation of goods or services (availability, labelling, packaging)
  - lack of information
4. Difficulty of getting faults put right or offers of inadequate redress
6. Unfair terms and conditions including attempts to restrict liability
8. Safety
- P. Prices and pricing (including value for money)
- A. Age restricted sales