

## **WEB ANNEXE E**

---

### **CONSUMER COMPLAINTS**

---

For many years consumer complaints data were routinely submitted to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) by local authorities' Trading Standards Services (TSS), local authority environmental health departments and some advice agencies. However, the introduction of Consumer Direct ([www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)) has triggered important changes in both the collection and the reporting of consumer complaints data. Consumer Direct is a telephone and online advice and information service for consumers in Great Britain, supported by the OFT in partnership with Trading Standards Services.

The roll out of Consumer Direct started in the second half of 2004 and continued throughout 2005-06. However, with the roll-out, increasing numbers of TSSs stopped providing quarterly returns to the OFT. The volume of missing information is too great to generate reliable estimates for 2005-06. Once coverage is nationwide, results from the Consumer Direct central database should be as good as, and in most cases better than could be derived from the old system.