

## **OFT: Update on Campaign Priorities 2009/10**

This note updates the campaign priorities paper published in May at [www.oft.gov.uk/campaigns](http://www.oft.gov.uk/campaigns). It updates on what we've done so far; and what's planned in the remainder of the fiscal year.

### **Campaign priorities**

The OFT has established seven campaign priorities:

- **Scams**, summer 09 warnings on concert ticket sales, lotteries in November 09; and Scamnesty, working with participating local authority Trading Standards Services (TSS), in February 2010
- **promotion of Consumer Direct (CD)**, working in partnership with CD local representatives and with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), our prime campaign focus is the 'Know Your Consumer Rights' campaign, launched during National Consumer Week in September; with further activity to promote CD in the run up to Christmas and January sale period
- **Business guidance on consumer rights**: linking guidance to the 'Know Your Consumer Rights' campaign to be launched in February 2010
- further roll out of our **doorstep selling campaign** in Nov 2009
- promotion of **Save Xmas** messages, primarily in partnership with Citizens' Advice (CA) and Transact from November 2009
- development of the **Consumer Code Approval Scheme** 'OFT approved' in partnership with Code partners (ongoing), and
- **Consumer education**: further roll out of our consumer education resource Skilled to go (again ongoing activity).

Individual marketing strategies for each of the above can be found at [www.oft.gov.uk/campaigns](http://www.oft.gov.uk/campaigns)

New TV films promoting our Consumer Direct, scams, doorstep selling, Save Xmas and OFT Approved Code activity can be viewed from mid October on You Tube at [www.youtube.com/user/OFTWebEditor](http://www.youtube.com/user/OFTWebEditor)

### **Progress/Plans**

#### **Scams**

In September, we launched our 'Just Tick It' campaign warning consumers about fraudulent ticket websites. Supported by a host of musical and sporting celebrities, the OFT campaign coincided with new research which revealed that 20 per cent of people know someone who has been

scammed by bogus ticket sites. Music and sports stars including Kate Nash, Dave Rowntree from Blur, Fightstar, and England rugby captain Steve Borthwick are backing the campaign to help raise awareness of the issue and to help protect their fans. Our publicity struck a media chord, with TV features on BBC, Sky and Five News; Radio 1 Newsbeat promoted scams as their lead story throughout the day; while DJ Chris Evans ran the story during Radio 2 Drivetime.

Detailed information on how people can protect themselves from scams can be found at, [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/ticketscams](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/ticketscams). Our fake website is at [www.justtickit.co.uk](http://www.justtickit.co.uk). Fake ticketing information will be promoted until the end of this financial year.

Next up are warnings on lottery scams in November, working from home scams in January and Scamnesty –in February 2010. To date 106 local authority Trading Standard Services have already agreed to work with us on Scamnesty, ensuring that national and local publicity is mutually reinforcing. Our campaign approaches for scams will use PR and digital media.

We are also in the process of developing a chronic' scam victim's toolkit for use by frontline support agencies and are aiming to have this ready to pilot in December 2009.

### **Consumer Direct**

Working in partnership with BIS and the TSI, September saw the launch of BIS's Know Your Consumer rights campaign during National Consumer Week. The campaign deliberately describes consumer rights simply – goods should fit the description given; are of satisfactory quality and are suitable for purpose – and signposts people to Consumer Direct for further advice. Next up is promotion of CD during the busy consumer Christmas period where our focus will be on more vulnerable consumers in particular, targeting our campaign at those in lower socio-economic classes. Regional communications officers have also been invited to bid for local projects to get to the heart of the local community.

### **Business guidance on consumer rights**

While the 'Know Your Consumers Rights' campaign is designed to empower consumers, business knowledge of consumer rights is also important. Front line retail staff need to be fully aware of consumer rights. BIS have already launched guidance for smaller companies (see [www.businesslink.gov.uk/consumersrights](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/consumersrights)) and the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) have been developing their training provision for companies. Working in partnership with BIS and TSI, we aim in February, to launch further guidance materials to enhance business knowledge of consumer rights. Preliminary discussions have already been held with the British Retail Consortium and our communication strategy for this project will be on [www.OFT.gov.uk/campaigns](http://www.OFT.gov.uk/campaigns) in the next few weeks.

### **Doorstep Selling**

Commencing in November, our doorstep selling campaign – 'Your Doorstep, Your Decision' - will focus on rogue traders. Our prime target audience is vulnerable consumers aged 70 plus and carers of those vulnerable to rogue trader approaches. We have liaised with various local authority TSS across the country and our aim is to reinforce existing activity. Our campaign approach will consist of PR – getting the issue talked about and targeting programmes which feature rogue traders; a

national door drop to elderly consumers and dissemination of campaign collateral through the COI Publicity Register and through wider stakeholders. In addition, a 30 second public information film mentioned above will highlight the issue.

### **Save Xmas**

Further roll out of savings messages primarily through intermediaries such as Citizens Advice Bureau offering advice at workshops and community events; complemented by wider PR to raise awareness of the activity. Activity will be ongoing from November. The toolkit materials which support the workshops are currently being updated. A public information film will encourage families to save earlier for Christmas.

### **OFT Approved Code**

Focusing on those sectors covered by the Code, we are working with code sponsors to get the codes talked about. Our approach comprises ongoing PR utilising relevant events to generate news; digital media, signposting consumers to [www.oft.gov.uk/codes](http://www.oft.gov.uk/codes) where they can easily access details of companies who are Code members and go beyond the law in the consumer rights they offer. Activity is ongoing rather than short burst; a 30 second public information film also highlights the code as a source of reassurance when buying goods or services.

### **Consumer education: Skilled to go roll out**

The response from teachers to Skilled to go, which we launched in June 2008, has been excellent. Developed in partnership with teachers, this online educational tool comprises three modules – Buying and selling, Technology and Utilities. New modules, focusing on scams and buying and running a car, are being developed for launch in 2010. Ahead of that, existing content is being updated and enhanced – including how Skilled to go fits with the Adult Financial Capability Framework - and will be available from November 2009. New versions for use by Trading Standards and secondary schools in Scotland will be launched in January and February 2010 respectively. All versions will be available at [www.oft.gov.uk/skilledtogo](http://www.oft.gov.uk/skilledtogo)

### **BIS Proposed Consumer Advocate**

BIS's consumer white paper published in July proposed the appointment of a Consumer Advocate to act as a consumer rights champion and to co-ordinate the delivery of existing consumer education by various players such as the OFT. BIS plan further dialogue on the Advocate appointment shortly. Ahead of that, OFT have placed further meetings of what we called the Consumer Education Alliance on hold.

### **Further Information**

If you'd like further information about any of our campaign activity, drop me or one of the campaign managers an email. We'd also welcome details of any campaign activity you're planning. As always, we're happy to explore possibilities for closer partnership working.

David Murphy  
Head of marketing and campaigns  
6 October 2009

**OFT Campaign Contacts**

**Scams:**

Paul McSherry      0207 211 5836      paul.mcsherry@oft.gsi.gov.uk

**Consumer Direct:**

Karen Chilvers      0207 211 8676      karen.chilvers@oft.gsi.gov.uk

**Business Guidance on Sale of Goods:**

Angharad Davies      0207 211 5832      angharad.davies@oft.gsi.gov.uk

**Doorstep Selling, Save Xmas and**

**OFT Approved Code:**

Harriet Gardner      0207 211 8109      harriet.gardner@oft.gsi.gov.uk

**Consumer Education – Skilled to go:**

Sam Brew      0207 211 8868      sam.brew@oft.gsi.gov.uk