



## Regulatory Bodies

### What is a regulatory body?

Regulatory bodies are organisations set up by Government with responsibility to monitor, guide and control various industry sectors in the interests of protecting consumers.

### Brief descriptions and web links to some of the key regulatory bodies:

#### Advertising Standards Agency (ASA)

The ASA is responsible for making sure that advertisements are legal, decent, honest and truthful. It covers advertisements in newspapers; magazines; on TV or radio; outdoor posters, direct mail leaflets and brochures; cinema advertisements, advertisements on the Internet including banner and pop-up ads; commercial e-mails and sales promotions of any kind.

[www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk)

#### The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (The Consumer Council)

The Consumer Council promotes and safeguards the interests of consumers and campaigns for the best possible standards of service and protection for consumers. It also investigates complaints about electricity; natural gas; coal; public transport (buses, planes, ferries; trains) and water.

[www.consumerCouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk)

#### Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSANI)

Set up in 2000, the Agency's three main duties are to: advise the public and the government about food safety, nutrition and diet; to protect consumers through enforcement and monitoring; and support consumer choice through accurate and meaningful labelling.

[www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/](http://www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/)

#### Financial Services Authority (FSA) – see also Consumer Council PowerPoint Guide

The FSA is the UK's independent financial regulator set up by Government to protect the rights of consumers who use financial services in the UK such as banks, building societies, credit unions and financial advisers.

[www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk)

### **PhonepayPlus**

PhonepayPlus is the organisation that regulates products or services - such as competitions, TV voting, helplines, adult entertainment, downloads, new alerts or interactive games - that are charged to users' phone bills or pre-pay accounts.

<http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk/>

### **Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR)**

NIAUR took over Ofreg's responsibilities in April 2003 and became responsible for water and sewerage functions in April 2007. It is an independent public body, which has wide ranging legal powers to regulate electricity, gas water and sewerage industries in the interests of Northern Ireland consumers.

<http://ofreg.nics.gov.uk/>

### **Northern Ireland Ombudsman- see also Consumer Council PowerPoint Guide**

The Northern Ireland Ombudsman deals with complaints from people who believe they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration by government departments and public bodies in Northern Ireland.

[www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

### **Office of Communications (OFCOM)**

OFCOM is an independent organisation which regulates the UK's broadcasting, telecommunications and wireless communications sectors. They also set and enforce rules on fair competition between companies in these industries.

[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

## **Office of Fair Trading (OFT) - see also Consumer Council PowerPoint Guide**

The OFT was set up in 1973 to protect consumer interests throughout the UK. They do this by encouraging businesses to comply with competition and consumer laws and to improve trading practices; carrying out market studies; empowering consumers with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices and get the best value from markets.

[www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk)

## **Banking Code Standards Board (BCSB)**

The BCSB was formed in 1999 to monitor and enforce the banking codes and to ensure subscribers eg banks and building societies, provide a fair deal to their personal and small business customers.

[www.bankingcode.org.uk](http://www.bankingcode.org.uk)