



Review of Additional Charges

Ofcom Consultation 2008

Response of
The Trading Standards Institute

May 2008



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Sarah Evans, Consumer Policy Manager
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07 May 2008

Dear Sarah

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments on the Ofgem review of additional charges.

The Trading Standards Institute is the professional body for Trading Standards professionals working in both the private and public sectors.

It is the national body responsible for representing, supporting, lobbying, and championing Trading Standards to a range of stakeholders including government, business, consumers, and the media.

We look to provide innovative solutions across the regulatory arena; to administer and award professional qualifications; to accredit and certify training and ensure the ongoing competence of members; and to influence and lobby on behalf of the profession as a whole.

We aim, through our actions and our members' actions, to empower consumers and reputable business to contribute to a vibrant economy.

We strive to eliminate rogue traders and unfair trading practices from the marketplace, to promote environmental sustainability, and to make an effective contribution to the health and social wellbeing of citizens and communities.

In compiling this response, TSI has sought the view of our Lead Officer on Civil Law, David Sanders. If you require clarification on any of the points raised in the response, please do not hesitate to contact David at locivillaw@tsi.org.uk or by telephone on 0845 608 9492.

In conclusion, TSI is happy for this response to be made publicly available and published on the Ofcom website.

Yours sincerely



Ron Gainsford
Chief Executive

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Trading Standards Institute Response

The Trading Standards Institute represents members both in the private and public sector. Our public sector members are mainly involved in the enforcement of consumer law, but have been advising consumer on their legal rights on products and services since 1974.

Traditionally the 'Top Ten' most complained of services were very predictable. It included building work and repairs to property, second hand cars and car servicing, and complaints about shoes and other fashion items.

Now there are four new entries in the Top Ten and they all involve services to do with mobile phones, broadband and the type of services that Ofcom regulates.

Of these four, charges feature prominently, especially where consumers are persuaded to change contracts to save money. Of course this is a relatively new and developing industry and there are bound to be teething problems. However, this Institute is aware that the majority of complaints are not in fact technology-based, but relate to sales practices and charges and the difficulties and frustrations of dealing with a remote supplier and the confusions created by sub-contractors.

TSI welcomes the review of additional charges and is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. TSI believes that this review will serve well to address many of the typical industry complaints, particularly in respect of the low paid and perhaps vulnerable consumer.

TSI has no specific comments on the substance of the consultation and believes that the process here undertaken will be generally beneficial to consumers within the telecoms industry.

Trading Standards Institute – 07 May 2008
