



**Chairman: David Thomson**

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Brian Jackson  
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Dear Brian

**Improving the consistency and adequacy of the provision of consumer intervention: A discussion paper for all local authority Trading Standards Services**

On behalf of the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland I am happy to be able to respond to the discussion document produced by the OFT as part of the OFT/TSS Action Plan for Trading Standards.

The Society welcomes the proposal in the document to look at providing Consumer Intervention consistently across the UK. One of the great benefits of Consumer Direct was to end the "postcode lottery" whereby there was variable coverage of consumer advice. It is the logical next step to extend this to intervention on the more complex cases where a consumer, no matter how well informed, cannot seek redress on their own behalf.

I believe that there is widespread enthusiasm for creating a universal role for intervention as described in the discussion document in Scotland and would suggest that we could act independently as a pathfinder or pilot as was the case with Consumer Direct.

In relation to the terminology used in the discussion paper I must advise that the term intervention is not widely used in Scottish Trading Standards at the moment and informal consultation has seen a preference for the terms "second-tier" advice or "casework" the latter being the term used in Quality Mark Scotland assessment for consumer advice. This is particular is well understood amongst the Scottish advice community. I would therefore recommend that this be considered as a possible alternative descriptor for our local authorities.

Answers to the specific consultation questions are appended below. I am happy for these to be shared widely. These responses reflect the views of the Society; individual local authorities have also been encouraged to respond and may emphasise different viewpoints in their response

Yours sincerely

David Thomson,  
Chairman,  
Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland

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