

## Consumer Focus Board

Paper 6.1

**Title:** Reputation Audit  
**Purpose:** For Information  
**Date of meeting:** 16 September 2010  
**Responsible officer:** Adam Scorer  
**Prepared by:** Adam Scorer  
**Attachments:** Annex A: Reputation Audit Consumer Focus UK

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### 1 Overview

- 1.1 Between May and July this year we undertook an audit to garner stakeholder perceptions of Consumer Focus and in particular their feedback on how we might improve the effectiveness of our relationships.
- 1.2 The audit was conducted by Ipsos Mori and consisted of 71 interviews with stakeholders of Consumer Focus Post (Northern Ireland), Consumer Focus Scotland and Consumer Focus Wales had previously conducted a similar exercise in 2009 and the Report incorporates key findings.
- 1.3 The Audit sought stakeholders responses on:
  - 1.3.1 Overall perceptions of Consumer Focus
  - 1.3.2 Perceptions on the role and remit
  - 1.3.3 Perceived level of impact and influence
  - 1.3.4 Stakeholder communication
  - 1.3.5 Work prioritisation
- 1.4 A presentation on the detail of findings, interpretation and the next steps will be made to the Board on 16 September.
- 1.5 The Audit has been shared with all staff.

### 2 Action for the Board

- 2.1 To **note** the findings of the Reputation Audit and consider priority areas for improvement.

### 3 The key issues

- 3.1 The Reputation Audit shows that stakeholder perceptions of Consumer Focus are generally positive. In particular:
  - 3.1.1 Seven out of ten say they are favourable toward Consumer Focus.
  - 3.1.2 Consumer Focus staff are regarded as knowledgeable and professional.

- 3.1.3 There are positive views about the Chairs, the Boards and senior managers.
  - 3.1.4 Over half of stakeholders feel they know us well and a further fifth very well.
  - 3.1.5 Policy development is felt to be effective, with many stakeholders viewing it as evidence-based, high quality and respected.
  - 3.1.6 Stakeholders feel that Consumer Focus has had a good level of impact and influence with just over half saying Consumer Focus has made at least a fair amount of difference to their own policies and activities.
- 3.2 A number of areas stand out as areas for increased focus. These include:
- 3.2.1 Stakeholders who are critical of Consumer Focus tend to be from businesses and trade associations who feel that their views are given insufficient regard.
  - 3.2.2 Awareness of Consumer Focus's areas of work is mixed with the awareness of many stakeholders, understandably, restricted to their own sectors.
  - 3.2.3 Stakeholders were sometimes unsure about where Consumer Focus sits within the complex network of consumer bodies and what our distinctive role and remit is.
  - 3.2.4 Some stakeholder feel that Consumer Focus would benefit from having a higher public profile.
- 3.3 Stakeholders see communication as an area where there is scope for improvement. Four areas were identified as:
- 3.3.1 Regular tailored email updates to stakeholders.
  - 3.3.2 Increasing personal contact.
  - 3.3.3 Seeking stakeholder views throughout the key stages of projects.
  - 3.3.4 More structured engagement with feedback on how stakeholder views have been taken into account.

## **4 Resources**

- 4.1 We have an option with Ipsos Mori to repeat the Reputation Audit in 2011 at a cost of £36,000. This is a reduced price and would include Consumer Focus Wales' stakeholders.
- 4.2 However, we have no commitment to repeat the Audit and SMT will consider the financial environment and the value of the 2010 Audit in deciding whether to repeat the activity with Ipsos Mori or any other supplier in 2011 or subsequently.

## **5 Next steps**

- 5.1 Upload the Reputation Audit on the website.
- 5.2 Ipsos Mori to present audit to a staff group to kickstart a comprehensive consideration of stakeholder relationship management across Consumer Focus.
- 5.3 SMT review the value of undertaking a similar activity in the future.