

A CONSUMER CHARTER FOR REGULATORS

The main purpose of regulation is to promote and protect the interests of consumers in sectors where market forces alone would not deliver the best outcome. An effective regulator will...

Put consumer interests at the heart of what regulators do through...

A **legal framework** that includes a primary purpose to pursue the interests of current (and future) consumers

A **vision and strategy** backed by project management and other organisational processes in which the consumer interest is embedded;

A **Board** with a lay Chair and a lay majority including consumer expertise;

Culture and values that ensure consumer interests run through their behaviour and everyday ways of working.

Understand what a good outcome looks like for all consumers and deliver it including...

Access for all including disabled people and consumers in vulnerable positions

Clear, simple, accurate and understandable information about products and services

Fair **marketing** practices, where necessary curbing pressure selling and misleading advertising

Effective choice for consumers between providers competing to offer better products and services at a better price, with the ability to switch easily

Fair pricing and contracts with no hidden twists and tricks and no unfair cross subsidy

The consumer interest taken into account when deciding issues affecting **infrastructure investment**

Quality delivered to agreed or contracted standards and good quality outcomes which are responsive to consumer needs

Protection from harm so that products and services which cannot be used safely cannot be sold

Resolution of individual **complaints** quickly and fairly by regulated firms, and access for consumers to an Ombudsman or other independent mechanism for resolving disputes which is free to the consumer

Be an alert watchdog and act swiftly on behalf of consumers by...

Identifying risks, scanning the horizon using consumer insight and intervening early to prevent problems emerging and to spot when things are going wrong

Creating the right incentives for the market to work well for consumers

Ensuring that data is published to allow consumers to compare performance of providers, for example on complaints

Working closely with other regulators to maximise consistency of approach and share best practice including on enforcement

Involving consumers and their representatives, including consumer bodies through regular dialogue and research to understand consumer views and behaviour in the development of policy and in delivery

Ensuring compliance with licence conditions and other rules through investigations and effective enforcement backed by legal powers, imposing **penalties** on firms where rules have been breached and securing **redress** for consumers who have been adversely affected including compensation where appropriate

Be transparent and accountable to consumers through...

Working openly, consulting and reporting regularly on their performance in achieving consumer outcomes

Providing a readily accessible **channel for feedback** and complaints about the regulator

Using **language** that ordinary people can understand