

# Keeping your customers informed

A key part of the Services Directive being brought into UK law this year is about increasing consumers' confidence to consider businesses from anywhere in the EU. It achieves this by setting some basic requirements – ensuring consumers have access to a minimum amount of information and to a complaints procedure no matter where in the EU\* a business is based. The requirements are simple and should not need businesses to take much action to fulfil them.

From the end of 2009, businesses within the services sectors (except exclusions – see list available on the BIS website) should:

- Ensure that clients always have access to a certain set of information (listed overleaf)
- Make that information available to clients either: at the place where the service is provided; on a freely available website; in information documents about the service; or otherwise supplied on the provider's own initiative
- Provide another set of information to clients on request (listed overleaf)
- Supply clients with contact details where they can send a request for information about the service or make a complaint
- Respond to complaints in the shortest possible time and make best efforts to find a satisfactory solution
- Ensure they have no provisions in their general conditions of service that will result in differential treatment for clients of different nationalities or places of residence (except where justifiable e.g. price difference based on distance travelled)
- Ensure that any information provided as a requirement of the Directive is communicated clearly, in good time before any contract is concluded, or where there is no contract, in good time before the service is provided.

For further information, please visit our website at:

[www.bis.gov.uk/servicesdirective](http://www.bis.gov.uk/servicesdirective)

Or e-mail [servicesdirective@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:servicesdirective@bis.gsi.gov.uk) with any queries

## **Information to be made available always**

- Name and address
- Contact details allowing for rapid and direct communication
- General terms and conditions used by the business
- Existence of any contractual clauses
- Price of the service, where pre-determined
- Main features of the service if not clear from the context
- Legal status and form
- Name of trade register or similar if relevant; plus registration number or means of identification within the register
- Relevant regulator if subject to an authorisation scheme
- Relevant identification number if service is subject to VAT
- For the regulated professions, any professional body or similar with which the provider is registered, plus professional title and country where obtained
- Existence of any after-sales guarantee not imposed by law, if relevant
- Existence of professional liability insurance, in particular contact details of insurer and the territorial coverage, if relevant
- If the provider is subject to a code of conduct or is a member of a trade association or industrial body that provides for recourse to a non-judicial means of dispute settlement, this must be made clear (and mentioned in any information document detailing the provider's services), specifying how to access detailed information on how to use it

## **Information to be made available on request**

- Price of the service where this is not pre-determined, or method for calculating the price if an exact price cannot be given, or a sufficiently detailed estimate
- For the regulated professions, reference to the professional rules applicable to them in the country where they are established and how to access the rules
- Information on multidisciplinary activities and partnerships directly linked to the service in question and on measures taken to avoid conflicts of interest (this to be included in any information document used by the provider to detail their services)
- Codes of conduct to which the provider is subject and website address where the codes can be consulted, specifying language version available