

PET(4)-14-12 : Tuesday 16 October 2012

P-04-370 : Petition for the improvement of Psychic and Intuitive services in Wales

Llais Defnyddwyr
Cymru
Gwarchod Buddiannau Defnyddwyr



Consumer Focus
Wales
Wales' Consumer Champion

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Your ref **P-04-370**
12th September 2012

Dear Mr Powell,

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition that your Committee received regarding concerns about psychic services.

In response to your question, Consumer Focus Wales has not undertaken any work on this area or subject.

The formulation of our workplan is dictated by those areas for which we have statutory responsibilities – post and energy – and via consultation with stakeholders and groups of consumers.

The aim of the workplan consultation is to try and ascertain what the key areas of concern are for consumers and, in particular, to identify where we feel we can make the greatest difference for disadvantaged or vulnerable consumers.

The issue of psychic services has not, at any time in the last 3 years since our inception, been raised with us as an issue either by stakeholder groups or by consumers directly.

To further assist your enquiry I have spoken directly to Citizens Advice Cymru to see if they have ever had this issue raised with them as a problem and, if so, what the scale of the problem might be.

I'm afraid they told me that it was not an issue that they could find on their database for Wales.

I also asked our investigations team here in Cardiff to take a retrospective look at the Consumer Direct database for a 12 month period up until March 2012 (when the service transferred to Citizens Advice). Consumer Direct, as you may know, was the UK Government's consumer advice phone line which acted as an access point for all Trading Standards Departments.

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Unfortunately this also returned no reported incidences or cases involving psychic services in Wales.

However, this lack of evidence may not mean that there is no problem at all, in fact your petition points to the contrary, but it is clearly not something that is being brought to the attention of the obvious consumer protection organisations.

This may be because the victims are reporting concerns elsewhere, to another trusted intermediary, or that they are simply not reporting incidents. Experience tells us that this can often be the case if a victim is embarrassed about their behaviour and doesn't want to be seen as foolish. Most often this happens when victims realise they have been victims of scams.

I am not sure if it is within the remit of the Committee but, in light of the above, you may wish to take this forward by writing to the Welsh Heads of Trading Standards, asking them to advise their members to be mindful of this issue and to be alert to it within their own constituencies. Trading Standards Departments will have their own network of local organisations and contacts and so may be better placed to identify and investigate individual incidents.

I hope that the above is of use and helps you in your considerations. If I can be of any further assistance please let me know.

Yours Sincerely,



Rhys Evans
Senior Director, Consumer Focus Wales

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