

Who Looks After the Consumer?

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WHO LOOKS AFTER THE CONSUMER?

- Local Authority
- Central Government
- The Law
- Competition
- Consumers themselves

LOCAL AUTHORITY

- In the past this was the main protection
- Now more commercial though still largely a regional monopoly
- User pays
- Conservation
- Resource Management Act
- Benchmarking

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- Writes the law
- Social objectives
- Audit of what is happening
- Referee of the rules
- Provides redress
 - Ombudsman
 - Environment Court
 - Disputes Tribunal
 - Human Rights Commission
 - Privacy Commissioner

COMPETITION

- The holy grail
- Theory and reality
- Does it fit for utilities?
 - Electricity
 - Water
 - Roothing
 - Refuse
 - Telecommunications

CONSUMERS THEMSELVES

- Respect
- Representation
- Resources
- Review

RESPECT

- Contracting partners
- Disparate – bargaining power
- Understanding needs
- Keeping in touch
- Social obligations

REPRESENTATION

- **Obstacles**

- Weak representative base
- Competing claims
- Accepting compromises
- Staying “Legitimate”

- **Benefits**

- Ownership
- Understanding
- Full debate
- Safety valve

REPRESENTATION (continued)

Five models of consumer involvement

- Appointees or delegates
- Open consultation
- Public participation
- Research based
- Legal powers

RESOURCES

- Training
- Funding
- Back-up
- New blood
- Interaction

REVIEW

- Accountability
- Benchmarking
- Keep in touch with reality
- Amending the Rules