



IMMEDIATE: 29.09.2011

MEDIA INFORMATION

FSCS steps in to protect customers of Wilmslow Financial Services PLC (formerly trading as Freedom Finance)

Customers of Wilmslow Financial Services PLC may be entitled to compensation now that the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) has declared the financial services firm in default.

The FSCS is the UK's statutory compensation scheme for customers of regulated financial services firms. A declaration of default means the FSCS is satisfied the firm is unable, or likely to be unable, to pay claims against it. This opens the way for customers to apply to the FSCS for compensation.

The main activity of Wilmslow Financial Services PLC was advising on and arranging financial products, including Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) to its customers. The FSCS has written to potential PPI claimants, who may have lost money as a result of their dealings with the firm, inviting them to apply for compensation. For claims relating to insurance advice or arranging, the FSCS can pay 90% of any eligible claim with no upper limit, and does not charge individual consumers for using its service.

Kate Bartlett, Director of Operations at the FSCS says, "We are encouraging anyone who believes they may be owed money as a result of their dealings with Wilmslow Financial Services PLC to complete and return their application form to us. Anyone who does not receive an application form by 31 October 2011, should get in touch via our dedicated helpline, or our Initial Contact Team."

The dedicated helpline can be contacted by telephoning 020 7007 9892. The FSCS Initial Contact Team can be contacted on 0800 678 1100 or 020 7741 4100, or at enquiries@fscs.org.uk. Further information about the FSCS is available on its website at www.fscs.org.uk.

Press Enquiries:

Suzette Browne: 020 7892 7372
Michael Monk: 020 7892 7540
Sarah-Jane Savage: 020 7892 7896

suzette.browne@fscs.org.uk
michael.monk@fscs.org.uk
sarah-jane.savage@fscs.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. About FSCS

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is the UK's statutory compensation scheme for customers of authorised financial services firms. It protects investment business, deposits, home finance (mortgage) advice, general insurance and insurance broking. The FSCS can pay compensation for financial loss if a firm is unable, or likely to be unable, to pay claims against it. The FSCS is an independent body, set up under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), and does not charge individual consumers for using its services.

2. Declaring a firm in default

Before the FSCS can pay compensation it must be satisfied that a firm does not have sufficient assets to meet claims. It describes this as being 'in default'. The Scheme will declare a firm in default if:

- it has received at least one claim; and
- it is satisfied that the firm is unable (or likely to be unable) to pay claims against it.

The FSCS is required to do this before it can pay compensation to eligible claimants.

Declaring a firm in default allows consumers who believe they may have lost money as a result of their dealings with that firm to apply to the Scheme.

3. Authorised firms

Dealing with an FSA authorised firm gives consumers access to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) and the FSCS. Consumers can check that the firm they are dealing with is authorised by contacting the FSA's Consumer Helpline on 0845 606 1234.