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MEDIA INFORMATION

FSCS can help consumers claim up to £48,000 in compensation

Consumers can claim compensation of up to £48,000 if they have lost money as a result of their dealings with any one of 21 firms that the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) has recently declared in default. FSCS is the UK's statutory fund of last resort for customers of regulated financial services firms. It provides a free service to consumers.

Declaring a firm in default is the final part of a process whereby a regulated firm (such as a financial adviser) has been found by FSCS to be unable, or likely to be unable to pay claims against it. This means that customers who have lost money as a result of dealings with one of these firms can make a claim for compensation to FSCS.

"FSCS' primary role is to ensure the public are not left out of pocket after doing business with an authorised firm. If a firm is unable to meet claims made against it, we are responsible for stepping in," comments Loretta Minghella, Chief Executive. "It is important consumers are aware of our services and that FSCS may be able to help if they have nowhere else to turn."

The kinds of investment claims FSCS handles usually relate to advice – for example, if somebody has been advised to buy an investment product such as an endowment policy, but it was unsuitable for them and they have lost money as a result of the advice they received. FSCS can also pay compensation for financial loss arising from negligent investment management and fraud, or if an authorised investment firm stops trading and cannot return its customers' investments or money.

A list of the 21 investment firms FSCS has recently declared in default is attached. Consumers who believe they may have a claim should contact FSCS on 020 7892 7300, or by email at enquiries@fscs.org.uk. Further information about FSCS' work is available from its website at www.fscs.org.uk.

FSCS covers investments, deposits, insurance, mortgage advice and arranging (from 31 October 2004), and advice about general insurance and the arranging of policies (from 14 January 2005).

ENDS

For more information about FSCS see Notes to Editors section or visit www.fscs.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

1. About FSCS

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is the UK's statutory fund of last resort for customers of authorised financial services firms. This means that FSCS can pay compensation if a firm is unable, or likely to be unable, to pay claims against it. FSCS is an independent body, set up under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA). Our service is free to consumers.

2. Declaring a firm in default

Before FSCS can pay compensation it must be satisfied that a firm is unable 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.

FSCS is required to do this before we 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 us for compensation.

3. Authorised firms

Our rules are made by the Financial Services Authority (FSA), the independent watchdog set up by government under FSMA to regulate financial services in the UK and protect the rights of consumers. The rules tell us which types of claim are eligible for compensation, and limit how much compensation we are allowed to pay. Firms need permission from the FSA to carry out a regulated activity, which covers activities such as accepting deposits, insurance business and investment business.

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

4. Fund of last resort

As a fund of last resort, FSCS can only pay compensation for financial loss where a firm is unable to meet claims. For investment claims, compensation aims to put consumers back into the position they would have been in had they not invested. The compensation limit for investment claims is £48,000 per person.

Declarations by FSCS

4th September 2007

Midlands

Independent Financial Advisory Service, 28 BORNEO STREET, WALSALL, WS4 2HY

Western Investments Consultants (Hereford) Limited, 53 ST. OWEN STREET,
HEREFORD, HR1 2JQ

North

Custodian Financial & Insurance Services, 111 CATERAN WAY, COLLINGWOOD
GRANGE, CRAMLINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE23 6EZ

Portfolio Management Services Plc, BARNETT HOUSE, 53 FOUNTAIN STREET,
MANCHESTER, M2 2AN

The Mortgage Bureau, 77 FOWLER STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS, TYNE & WEAR, NE33
1NT

Northern Ireland

K J McMullan Financial Services Limited formerly T H Graham & McMullan Limited, 81-
85 MAIN STREET, BANGOR, COUNTY DOWN, BT20 4AF

Scotland

LMS Mortgage Consultants Limited, formerly Shields Financial Services Limited, 183
ST VINCENTS STREET, GLASGOW, G2 6QD

Macfarlane Bruce & Company Limited (formerly t/a Nairn Estate Agents), 1-1A FRIARS
STREET, INVERNESS, IV1 1RJ

**P A Management Limited formerly Munro Financial Consultants Limited, formerly
Munro & McKenzie (Life & Pensions) Limited, formerly Munro & McKenzie Limited**, 27
GLASGOW ROAD, PAISLEY, RENFREWSHIRE, PA1 3PA

South East

Chris Westcott Financial Services, 238 SOUTH COAST ROAD, PEACEHAVEN, EAST
SUSSEX, BN10 8JS

Butterfields Financial Services, 12 THE MARSH, HYTHE, HAMPSHIRE, SO4 6AL

Danamere Financial Services Limited (formerly the Square Insurance Services Limited), 12A HOMEWELL, HAVANT, HAMPSHIRE, PO9 1EE

Houghton Marsh Financial Services Limited, SANDFORD HOUSE, CATTESHALL LANE, GODALMING, GU7 1NQ

Investment & Mortgage Centre (Essex) Limited (formerly Royston Smith Investment, Mortgage and Property Centre Limited, formerly t/a Investment & Mortgage Centre, formerly t/a The Property Centre), 601 LONDON ROAD, WESTCLIFFE ON SEA, ESSEX, SS0 9PE

Leonard Beaumont (Insurance Brokers) Limited, 54 SHIP STREET, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX, BN1 1AF

P M P Financial Services Limited, 216 ADDINGTON ROAD, SELSDON, SURREY, CR2 8LD

Russell Brewer Investments Limited, PO BOX 66, WEST HORSLEY, LEATHERHEAD, KT24 6YB

Westminster and Overseas Insurance Services Limited, 55 FULHAM HIGH STREET, LONDON, SW6 3JJ

South West

Read & Rhone (Insurance Brokers) Limited, RAGLAN HOUSE, 2 MIDDLE STREET, TAUNTON, TA1 1SH

Wales

Arian Financial Services Limited, 31 HIGH STREET, WREXHAM, LL13 8HY

David Rees Finance & Insurance Services Limited, 42 HOLTON ROAD, BARRY, SOUTH GLAMORGAN, CF6 6HD