

INFORMATION FAIR TRADER SCHEME: -

The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) plans to assess LPS for accreditation to the Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS). This accreditation is reviewed annually. The information below describes the processes that LPS must observe to achieve this accreditation.

The public sector is the largest producer of information in the United Kingdom, helping to underpin an information industry worth an estimated £18.37 billion in the year 2000. *

Public sector information is therefore a very valuable resource, which currently is underused. The government is committed to improving access to this information and having organisations accredited to the IFTS is part of the effort to improve availability of information such as that held by LPS.

Openness: In principle, the Chief Executive (who has published his **commitment** to IFTS) expects that all information, created by the organisation, will be licensed for any legitimate re-use by any customer. While there might have to be exceptions to this, whether limiting the material licensed, prohibiting uses or limiting the customer base, the Chief Executive will be reluctant to allow exceptions and will explain where they are necessary. Currently there are only two exceptions, which LPS retains the right to exercise. The first is that LPS reserves the right to refuse to supply data/hard copy to customers who have outstanding invoices, beyond our usual commercial operating parameters. The second is that customers using our data will not be allowed to simply reproduce products identical to those produced by LPS.

Transparency: Applying for a licence should be as simple as possible. Pricing, the considerations influencing pricing policy and any exceptions to the principle of openness, should be explained clearly and simply in accessible public statements.

Licensees and applicants for licences should be given reasons for decisions, which should be consistent with public statements and Information Fair Trader principles.

Fairness: All applicants and licensees should be treated alike for the same type of licence. LPS has agreed a "Quid Pro Quo" policy whereby we will consider representations from customers to offset the cost of LPS data against a clearly demonstrable and quantifiable benefit that customers can provide for LPS.

The organisation should not use its market power to compete unfairly.

Compliance: Chief Executives agree to test their organisations by an independent verification to find out whether they have the infrastructure to deliver their commitments to openness, transparency and fairness.

The verification tests whether the internal processes are actually followed in practice.

Challenge: The organisation has a **complaints process** empowered to reconsider apparently incorrect licensing decisions.

OPSI can investigate the organisation's licensing decisions, if a complaint is received and internal processes have been exhausted.

* Source: Publishing in the Knowledge Economy: Competitiveness analysis of the UK publishing media sector by Pira International on behalf of the Department for Trade and Industry and the UK Publishing Media, 2002.