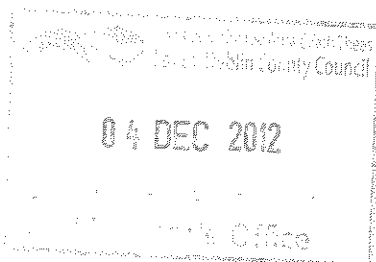


national consumer agency
gníomhaireacht náisiúnta tomhaltóirí

putting consumers first

Our Ref: DIR 1657
Your Ref: M4/1112



Emer O'Gorman
Meetings Administrator
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Tallaght
Dublin 24

28th November 2012

Dear Ms O'Gorman

Thank you for your letter dated 19th November concerning a Motion passed by SDCC concerning Greyhound Recycling and their pricing structures. As you may be aware, the National Consumer Agency has had concerns about the domestic waste collection sector in Ireland for some time and has also been in contact with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in this regard. I enclose for your information a copy of the NCA press release on the issue from April 2012.

As you will see from the release, the Agency also wrote to all local authorities at that time requesting them to provide a list of domestic waste collectors on their websites to enable consumers to see which companies are operating in their area, and to allow them to make an informed purchasing choice when choosing a collector. The Agency is working with the Department of the Environment with a view to further improving the information available to consumers about the sector and its prominence on local authority websites.

I understand that the Minister for the Environment, Mr. Phil Hogan, has written to operators in the sector requiring them to adopt a standard Customer Service Charter which will address the matter of provision of charging, price structure and other information on terms and conditions by firms to households. The NCA will be engaging with the industry on this in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely

John Shine
Director
Commercial Practices Division

NCA announces initiatives to improve consumers' experience in the waste collection market

- NCA writes to waste providers to improve information available to consumers
- Requests local authorities to provide details of waste providers in each area
- Advice to consumers on their rights when using waste collection companies

3 April 2012

In response to difficulties experienced by consumers regarding waste collection, the National Consumer Agency (NCA) has today written to companies operating in the sector and local authorities requesting them to provide more information to householders.

Typical difficulties experienced by consumers include: uncertainty about which service providers are operating in local authority areas, confusion about charges, a lack of information in relation to cancelling services and the procedures for handling billing disputes.

To address these issues the NCA has written to all waste permit holders to remind them of their obligations under consumer law, particularly in relation to distance selling legislation. The NCA has also advised waste companies on the type of information that should be made readily available to customers.

Commenting on the initiatives, Ann Fitzgerald, Chief Executive of the NCA, remarked: "Consumers must have access to full and clear information so they know what they are signing up to. We are aware that consumers are having a number of problems in the waste collection sector and we believe that many of these issues can be resolved by ensuring that consumers have access to better information. We have written to the waste collection providers today and expect that full and transparent information will be provided by all operators in the future."

In addition the NCA has written today to all local authorities requesting them to provide a list of domestic waste collectors on their websites, with contact information and details of the areas the providers operate in.

This action will help consumers to identify which waste providers are operating in each local authority area and empower them to make an informed purchasing choice when choosing a waste collection provider.

The Agency is also today reminding consumers of their rights under consumer law, for example, their right to cancel, and also how to complain

if problems arise. Detailed information in relation to their rights is available at www.nca.ie.

Ms Fitzgerald concluded: "The Agency understands that the future of the waste collection market is currently under review by the Government. In the meantime, we want to ensure that consumers have a better experience in the current market and if they wish to switch service provider, they have easy access to the list of providers in their areas so that they can compare the options and get the best deal possible."

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