



# News Release

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## Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform welcomed

New consumer protection laws aimed at making it easier for shoppers to resolve disputes with online retailers have been welcomed by Powys County Council.

Online retailers must signpost dissatisfied consumers towards an online dispute resolution (ODR) service. The new laws came into force earlier this week (Monday 15 February).

The measures being online retailers in line with the high street, which has been offering alternative dispute resolution (ADR) since last October.

The latest development has been welcomed by the council's Trading Standards Service, who want to ensure that consumers who shop online are aware of the ODR service. Three ADR schemes have been approved for the property sector by the National Trading Standards Estate Agency Team, which is part of the council's Trading Standards Service.

Consumers who have a problem with a purchase from a European suppliers can also get help thanks to the Chartered Trading Standards Institute operated European Consumer Centre.

Cllr John Powell, Cabinet Member for Trading Standards, said: "EU legislation has given stronger rights to consumers but the majority of legislation requires the consumer to enforce it themselves through the court system. Very few consumers are prepared to do this because of the cost, time spent and perceived formality of the court process.

"Creating an ADR environment of cheaper, quicker and less formal processes, to pursue consumer rights, is a logical and very helpful first step towards reducing this issue.

"The creation of an online tool, the ODR platform, to assist consumers in accessing these processes, is a further useful step and one that we welcome."

Traders are not mandated to use either ODR or ADR but it is believed that the potential customer relations benefits encourage them to do so.

Since ADR regulations came into force, 30 per cent of traders said they were willing to use it and 70 per cent of EU consumers were satisfied with how their complaint was handled by an ADR.

The new ODR platform was set up by the European Commission and is available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/odr/>