

From: "Seymour Fortescue"
To:
Date: 20/01/2008 14:19
Subject: RE: UK National Payments Plan - public consultation
CC: "Martin Alsop"

I am pleased to reply to the consultation paper on behalf of the UK Remittances Task Force.

The Task Force was established by the Department for International Development in 2006. Its aims are to promote:

- Greater transparency in UK remittance markets
- More competitive remittance markets
- Better informed consumers
- Greater use of 'formal' channels

The Task Force's activities are funded by DFID, but its membership is drawn entirely from the private sector - from high street and ethnic banks, from money transfer organisations, from trade associations and from consumer bodies.

At its meeting on 10 January, the Task Force considered its response to your consultation. Its views are limited to the second part of Section 3.8, Cross-Border Payments, where there is a specific reference to the Task Force.

In the light of the Task Force's aims for greater transparency and more competitive remittance markets, a Remittances Customer Charter has been developed. This was launched on 10 January and a number of leading players have agreed to be bound by the Charter, a copy of which is attached.

The recommendation of the Task Force is that the provisions of the Charter should become the norm for all retail cross border payments. A similar recommendation was made to the Independent Reviewer of the Banking Code and he recommended to the Code sponsors that the Charter should be incorporated into the Banking Code.

Unfortunately, the sponsors did not accept this recommendation. We hope that the Payments Council will accept that greater transparency in this important market is desirable and will mandate compliance with the Charter to its members.

Seymour Fortescue
Chairman UK Remittances Task Force

Remittances Customer Charter

Any organisation that displays this Charter agrees to meet the following standards when sending money abroad (in a foreign currency) for individuals.

Our commitment to you is:

Before agreeing to undertake a transaction we will provide you with:

- ✓ An estimate of the total fee that you, the sender, will be charged by us for the transaction. If we believe that the receiver may also have to pay a fee, then we will tell you
- ✓ An indication of the exchange rate that we will apply to your transaction, if requested. If a further exchange rate may be applied we will tell you to expect this
- ✓ Information on where the receiver should collect the money from and what they have to do
- ✓ An indication of when the funds will be available at the organisation to which you are sending the money
- ✓ Information on cancellation procedures and any charges for cancelling or amending a transaction.

Upon completion of a transaction we will provide you with the following in writing:

- ✓ A transaction reference number that is unique to your payment
- ✓ Confirmation of the exact amount we are sending for you
- ✓ The fees that you have paid to us for this service
- ✓ The estimated amount that the receiver will receive and the currency that the money will be paid/credited in
- ✓ The exchange rate that has been applied to your transaction where this is available. Where this is not available or where additional rates will be used we will tell you how the foreign exchange conversion will be calculated
- ✓ Information on where the receiver collect it or confirmation of the bank to which the money has been sent
- ✓ When the money will be available for the receiver. Whether this timescale is definite or the best estimate that we can make
- ✓ In the case of cash collections, what the receiver has to do in order to collect the money.
- ✓ The procedure to follow if you have a need to query this transaction. We will advise you how long it will take us to provide an answer or an update.

Should you have any queries concerning this charter please contact Seymour Fortescue, Chairman UK Remittances Task Force, c/o Archie Laing, DFID, 1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE

