

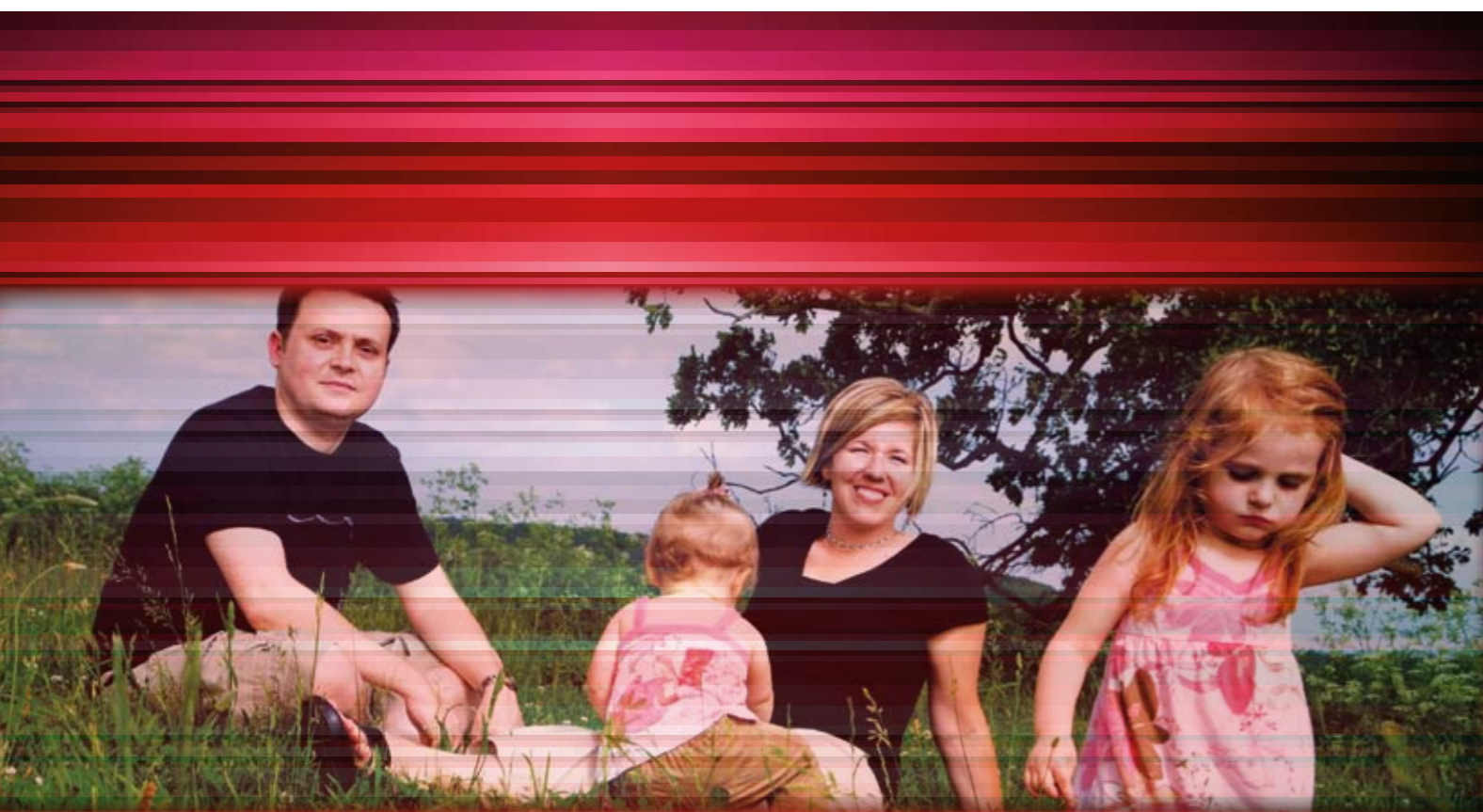


# CONTENTS

- 03 Council Chairman's statement
- 04 Chairman of the Board's statement
- 05 Chief Executive's statement
- 06 Products
- 08 Research & testing
- 10 Trusted voice
- 14 Adding value
- 16 Financial summary
- 18 Council and Directors



This has been the first full year of our ambitious 5-year strategic plan. We are making excellent progress against our objectives: to achieve positive change for, and be the trusted voice of, UK consumers; to strengthen our subscription business while significantly increasing our income beyond it; and to develop the organisation we need to deliver success. Others will say more about our business performance. All I'll say here is that achieving a 9% increase in subscriptions to over 1.3 million, when most publishers are losing readers, is an exceptional achievement.



**Our work on financial services continues and has delivered further results, detailed later. We are now also adopting an increased focus across the organisation on energy, another important area where consumers are systematically disadvantaged. From advising individuals on the best ways to minimise their energy bills, to bringing the consumer perspective to the important questions of long-term energy security and affordability, there is much for Which? to work on.**

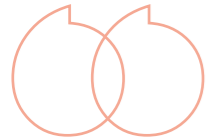
Meanwhile, the landscapes for competition and the consumer face significant reform, with the proposed merger of the OFT and the Competition Commission, a greater role for Trading Standards in enforcement, and the abolition of Consumer Focus. These reforms are not yet final. We aim to ensure that the end results serve all consumers well and, in particular, that the new institutions act flexibly to address problems rather than focusing on arbitrary distinctions between competition and consumer issues.

Of course we promote positive, as well as tackling negative, consumer experiences. Our Which? Awards celebrate the best consumer products and services. This year's ceremony was the biggest ever, with 16 categories and 54 shortlisted companies. The attendance of 30 chief executives, managing directors and company chairmen is testament to the growing impact and influence of this event.

Finally, I would again like to thank our staff for their very high levels of energy and commitment, which most organisations would envy.

*Patrick Barwise*

**Patrick Barwise**  
Council Chairman



The trading results for Which? this year underline its continuing strength and appeal. Indeed, the 9% increase in overall subscriptions and 7% rise in revenues were particularly strong given the economic climate and at a time when the traditional publishing industry was suffering almost uniform decline.

**This has been another strong year for Which?'s existing and new businesses. Our core business has continued to progress: For the fifth year running, both revenue and subscriber numbers have grown; so, too has the financial contribution that Which? Ltd has been able to give back to the charity to invest in policy and advocacy activities.**

The approach driving this growth remains the same; to offer our members an unrivalled package of impartial information and advice that puts them in control. And we continue to add value to that package, in particular offering ever-more tailored ways to support members' interests and needs.

So our core business remains in good health and this year we have also continued to accelerate the development of new income streams. This diversification is vital if we are to be able to further strengthen our vital advocacy work in the future. Turning to these new businesses, the Board has focussed on three significant initiatives this year: Further testing and development of Right Choice, a consumer magazine for the Indian market; a pilot test of Which? Mortgage Advisers; and the launch of a new switching service for consumers, Which? Mobile. Right Choice offers Indian consumers the Which? blend of impartial advice based on rigorous research and testing. We already know from early customer reactions that the product is seen as distinctive and relevant in this huge and fast-changing consumer market. Now the results of intensive testing give us confidence that we can market this product in a sustainable way and start

to build a significant subscriber base in India. As a result, the Board agreed to support our expansion of this venture in the upcoming year.

The pilot test of Which? Mortgage Advisers also drew a positive response and demonstrated that we are able to offer a high-quality independent advice service in a way that could ultimately drive significant new revenues for the organisation. Again, the Board has decided to continue its investment in this venture and now offer it to potential customers beyond the existing Which? membership base.

Finally, we launched Which? Mobile, seeking to offer consumers an impartial guide to the complex world of mobile phone choices, by enabling users to find the right network, tariff and handset for them. However initial results have been disappointing and we are continuing to make improvements to this service and will be closely monitoring its progress.

All this would not have been possible without the efforts of our staff, both in improving our existing services and in exploring new ideas and making them a success.

**Mike Clasper**  
Which? Limited Board Chairman



This year's rise in subscriptions to over 1.3 million is a fitting reflection of the commitment and determination shown by teams across the business. Having over 600,000 Which? magazine subscribers is a significant milestone, and there are other notable successes, including reaching over 250,000 Which? Online subscriptions. We have also made real progress getting compensation for people who have been mis-sold payment protection insurance. We hope the end is finally in sight for this £8 billion selling scandal, more than 10 years since Which? first raised its concerns.

**In a tough publishing environment it's essential that we continue to maximise value for money. Our range of subscriber benefits now includes three helplines for Computing, Money and Best Buy advice, plus Which? Local, Which? Legal Service and Which? Switch. Our efforts to ensure that subscribers take advantage of these benefits are paying off, with sizeable rises in awareness and usage this year. We have also promoted the Which? brand more widely with a successful national TV and online brand advertising campaign demonstrating how we go the extra mile when testing products.**

Last year Which? set up the Future of Banking Commission (FoBC). Its report was widely welcomed, and this year we have taken forward the key recommendations. An early success was Financial Services Authority chairman Lord Turner announcing a review of reward structures for in-house bank sales staff to assess whether their design guards effectively against mis-selling. An important FoBC proposal was ring-fencing of banks' retail operations from investment banking, and in June the Chancellor stated his support for this. If implemented, this would deliver real benefits for consumers in the form of safer deposits and less risk for taxpayers in the event of future bank failures.

We have also taken a close interest in the plans for the new Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) focusing on consumer protection and markets. We are pleased to report that the proposals reflect several of the FoBC's recommendations, including the FCA taking a more proactive and interventionist approach to regulation, with an increased focus on competition. Consumers are being put at the centre of the regulatory process, along with greater transparency of decision making and publicising of warning notices and enforcement actions against firms. Major reforms of course take time, but whilst there is more to do, the signs are that consumers' money will be safer in the new financial landscape.

**Peter Vicary-Smith**  
Chief Executive

We exist to make individuals as powerful as the organisations they have to deal with in their daily lives.



### Mystery shoppers

A series of investigations by Which? mystery shoppers revealed that staff at some of the UK's biggest high street stores were giving shoppers poor or misleading advice. In response, Carphone Warehouse, Comet and PC World agreed to retrain staff.

**Which? magazine has had an outstanding year.** Subscriber numbers increased by 8% from 573,000 in June 2010 to 617,000 in June 2011.

The Which? magazine research team has delivered a series of hard-hitting investigations that resulted in positive change for consumers. These included:



**An undercover investigation into the way patients are treated in private care homes** which revealed such poor standards that the industry regulator immediately suspended admissions to one of the four homes our researchers stayed in. Local authorities are now investigating two more of the homes for potential abuse and to safeguard the residents.

**A report that led to hire tool firms including Jewson and Hire Station (Homebase) withdrawing tools from their shelves** after we revealed safety faults with some of them. Half of the tools we hired from major companies and independent firms failed safety tests in our labs. When we presented our findings to Hire Station, Jewson and Speedy Hire, they agreed to ensure that staff followed safety procedures.



**Vote with your feet**, our campaign to encourage Which? subscribers to ditch poor-value energy firms, broadband suppliers and banks, led to 5,000 extra switches being made during 2010/11 compared with 2009/10.

### Which? Travel

In January 2011, as a result of member feedback, we re-launched Which? Holiday as Which? Travel, a new-look magazine that helps readers choose the travel companies, services and products that are right for them. Already, the feedback has been positive. Our first issue received a customer satisfaction score of 61% (up from 54% for October's Which? Holiday). And 24% of members thought our January issue was excellent (up from 15% for our October issue).

At the same time, we launched our new Travel helpdesk, a personal advice service, which is free to use. We've so far answered more than 1,000 travel queries, much to the delight of readers.

### Which? TV adverts

We launched our new brand TV adverts on Christmas Day last year, showcasing our digital camera, washing machine and carpet cleaner testing as examples of how we go the extra mile when testing products. The ads were designed to promote the Which? brand to a wider audience and raise awareness of what we do.



### Which? Books

Which? Books had a fantastic financial year despite a very tough economy and book trade. Our bestselling Made Easy series did particularly well, both in sales to Which? members and to key retailers.



## Research & testing

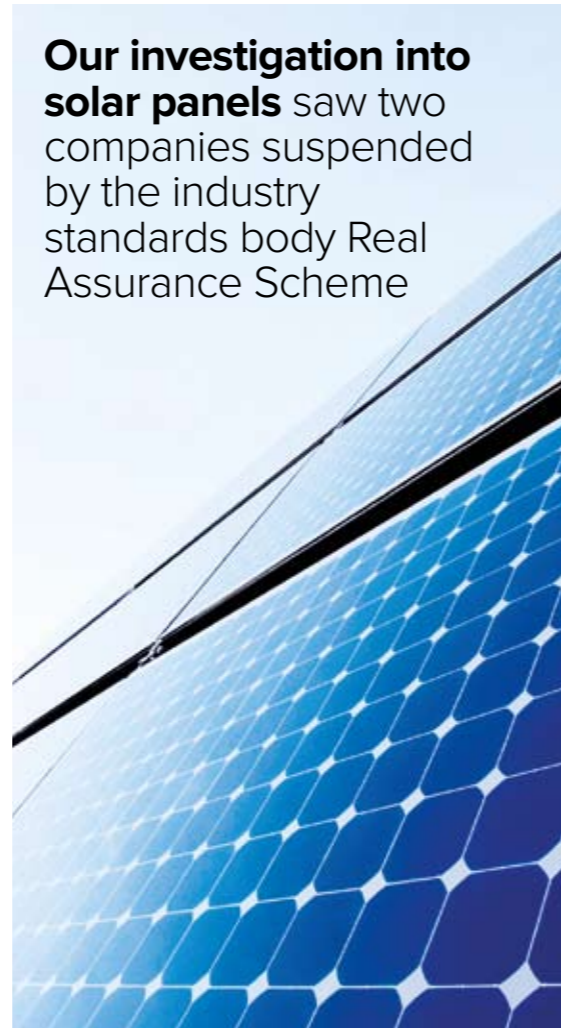
### Testing times

We now test around 1,300 products and services every year to ensure that our members always know which to choose – and which to avoid! We've developed new ways of testing to keep up with fast-moving technology in areas such as tablet computers and electric cars. And following member comments, we've returned to an old favourite topic by looking at drills and updated our popular breadmakers test.

### Revealing the truth

Our news teams exposed that there's no evidence that washing machines 'live longer with Calgon', and submitted a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority. We highlighted a shocking series of exploding Candy washing machines and revealed that poor advice from providers of cash ISAs could mean savers lose interest on their money. We've doubled the number of car reviews available online, while the Which? Gardening team are testing more lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and barbecues than ever before. And when we revealed that T-Mobile's plan to change the data allowance in its mobile phone tariffs was possibly in breach of its existing customers' contracts, the company quickly backed down.

**Our investigation into solar panels** saw two companies suspended by the industry standards body Real Assurance Scheme



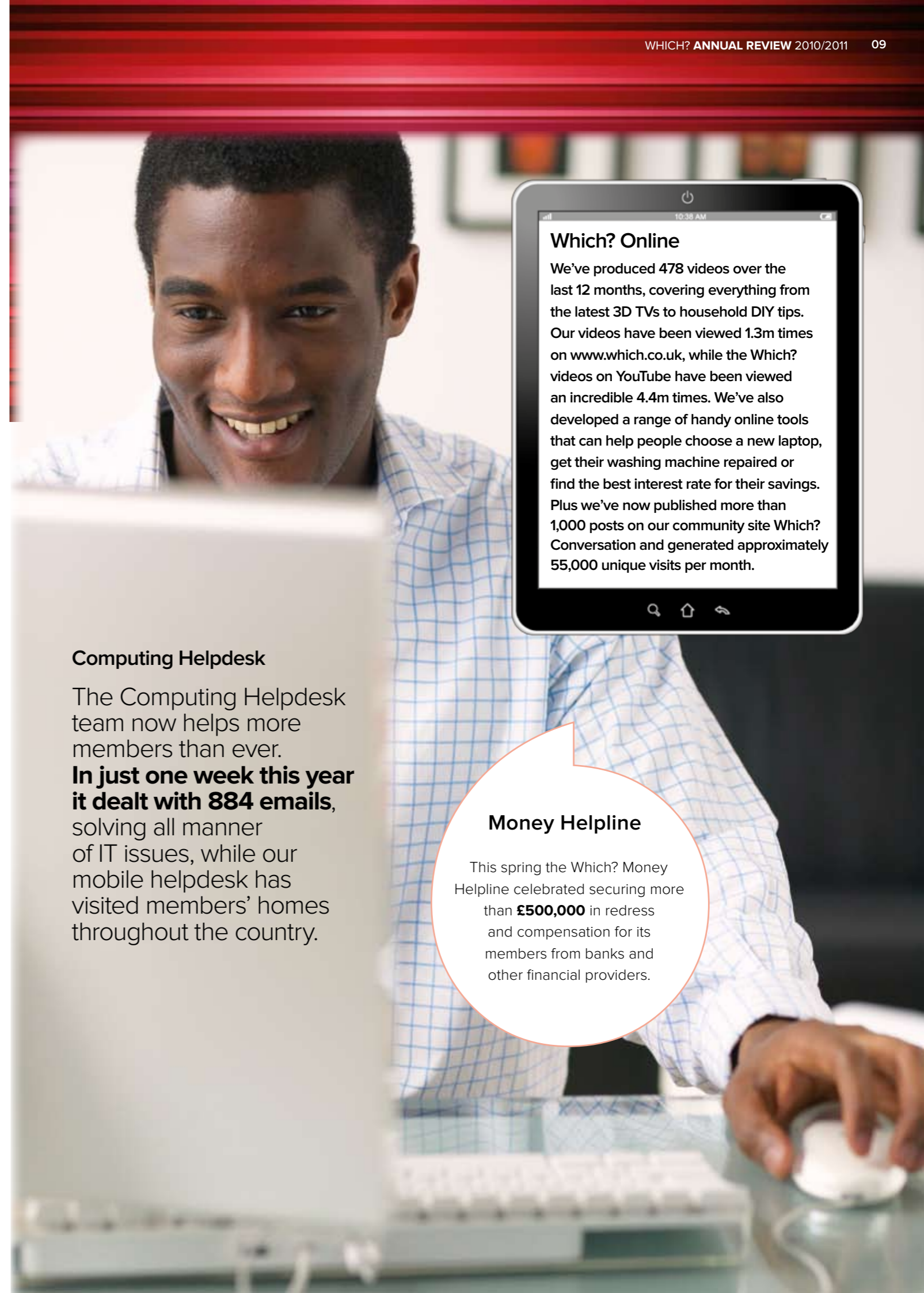
### Listening to your views

We've run live blogs on topics as diverse as this year's Budget and the launch of the iPad 2, and have held a series of live online Q&As giving advice on everything from **how to buy the best pushchair** to **how to bake the best bread.**

### Ahead of the game

We've sent researchers around the globe to ensure we always provide the very latest information on new products and services. We tracked down the next generation of digital cameras at the Photokina trade show in Cologne, and Samsung flew its top technology

engineers from Korea to give us an exclusive demonstration of the Galaxy Tab long before it went on sale. Panasonic has given us access to a number of its cutting-edge cameras, allowing us to review them before anyone else.



### Which? Online

We've produced 478 videos over the last 12 months, covering everything from the latest 3D TVs to household DIY tips. Our videos have been viewed 1.3m times on [www.which.co.uk](http://www.which.co.uk), while the Which? videos on YouTube have been viewed an incredible 4.4m times. We've also developed a range of handy online tools that can help people choose a new laptop, get their washing machine repaired or find the best interest rate for their savings. Plus we've now published more than 1,000 posts on our community site Which? Conversation and generated approximately 55,000 unique visits per month.

### Computing Helpdesk

The Computing Helpdesk team now helps more members than ever.

**In just one week this year it dealt with 884 emails,** solving all manner of IT issues, while our mobile helpdesk has visited members' homes throughout the country.

### Money Helpline

This spring the Which? Money Helpline celebrated securing more than **£500,000** in redress and compensation for its members from banks and other financial providers.



As a consumer champion for more than 50 years, we aim to be the **trusted voice** for all consumers. This means offering advice and information, and campaigning for **positive change** on issues that really matter to the UK public.

### Campaign successes

Our research and campaigns have helped consumers across markets including financial services, food and retail, legal services, utilities, health services, and consumer rights.

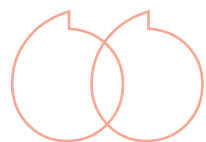
We also use evidence from our research and investigations to underpin our advocacy and deliver positive change for all consumers. We work to influence business behaviour, legislation and regulation by representing the consumer view to businesses, government and regulators in the UK, EU and internationally.



### Super complaint success

In February 2011 Which? submitted a surcharge super complaint to the Office of Fair Trading over the fees that retailers charge consumers for paying by credit or debit card, with low-cost airlines among the worst offenders. We asked for upfront costs, fair charges and for retailers to absorb the cost of the fee to process a debit card payment. More than 43,000 consumers signed our pledge of support in June.

In a victory for consumers, the OFT upheld our super complaint, providing recommendations for short and long-term solutions including price transparency.



**Well done Which?** keep on with the good work.”

Which? Conversation commenter

### PPI victory

Which? has been campaigning hard for an end to poor-value financial protection products and to help secure fair redress for those consumers who have been mis-sold insurance.

We have influenced change at both industry and government level to help achieve this. A key issue for consumers who feel they have been mis-sold PPI (payment protection insurance) has been how their complaint has been handled. This is why we pushed for better complaints' handling processes, and worked with the FSA to try to improve the way banks handle PPI complaints. The banks disagreed with the FSA, and so went to court to try to get the measures quashed. We continued to support the improved complaints handling measures the FSA put forward, and subsequently the banks lost their case.

The banks are now required to review the way they have been selling PPI in the past, and give compensation where they have systematically failed to meet the regulator's rules. We have been pressing the industry to be more transparent about how they plan to refund consumers who have been mis-sold PPI.

We have also undertaken a public awareness campaign to help consumers make a complaint themselves. As a result, Barclays was the first bank to step forward to undertake a joint initiative to help promote our online complaint tool. This means that consumers have been able to make their complaint in a quick and straightforward way, without the need to go through a claims management company which would charge for its services. About 5,000 people have now used our complaints tool, with compensation ranging from £179 to £8,000.

**We have been pressing banks to be more transparent** about how they plan to refund consumers who have been mis-sold PPI.



### Being the trusted voice for all consumers

- ✓ Our free Consumer Rights app has been downloaded 100,000 times
- ✓ 110,000 consumers used our online Savings Booster tool
- ✓ We offer almost 1,000 free advice guides
- ✓ We've provided over 700 videos in the last few years offering information on a range of subjects
- ✓ Our switching sites offer a free switching service to all consumers
- ✓ All of our money content is freely available to consumers



### Taking on energy

There's a lot of consumer confusion in this area, whether people are looking for the best energy tariff, wanting to make their homes more energy-efficient or investigating technology to generate electricity at home. We need substantial improvements in information and sales practices if consumers are to be able to make decisions about energy with confidence. And we're already seeing successes that will make a real difference, including suppliers now having to

tell their customers about price rises in advance rather than being able to wait until 65 working days after the event.



### With rising energy bills

the top consumer concern and new initiatives such as feed-in tariffs and the Green Deal on the way, we're increasing our work across the energy sector.



### Legal services in Scotland

The Act introduces important changes that Which? has campaigned for since launching its super complaint in 2007. At the time the Office of Fair Trading supported our complaint but the Bill proved contentious among the profession.

Last year the Scottish Parliament voted to allow external ownership of legal services, and there will also be a new Regulatory Committee,

with a lay Chair and a majority of lay members to protect the public interest and make the consumer voice heard.

And for the first time McKenzie friends – lay supporters or representatives – will be permitted in Scottish courts. This is a huge step forward for anyone who can't find or afford a lawyer to represent them.

We achieved another campaigning win when the Legal Services (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent in November 2010. **This new Act removes restrictions on the way solicitors operate, driving up consumer choice, competition and standards.**



We now look forward to seeing **more choice and a better deal** for people using legal services in Scotland.

## which? Local

Which? Local has gone from strength to strength this year. **Member log-ins have increased by more than 60%** on the previous year, and new registrations also grew by 40%.

### Which? Local

In June we reached the milestone of our 100,000th review on the site. We continue to receive great feedback from members who use the service and also from traders, some of whom now prioritise work for Which? members.

We know that members want to see more recommendations and more traders – but that means more members have to join in and post their own reviews.

Our aim over this year is to encourage more members to use the service and to post their own reviews. We are also looking to increase the advice we give on the site – particularly on home improvements and repairs.



**70%** of consumers now recognise our icons and of those who do, **75%** agree that they help them choose the right products.



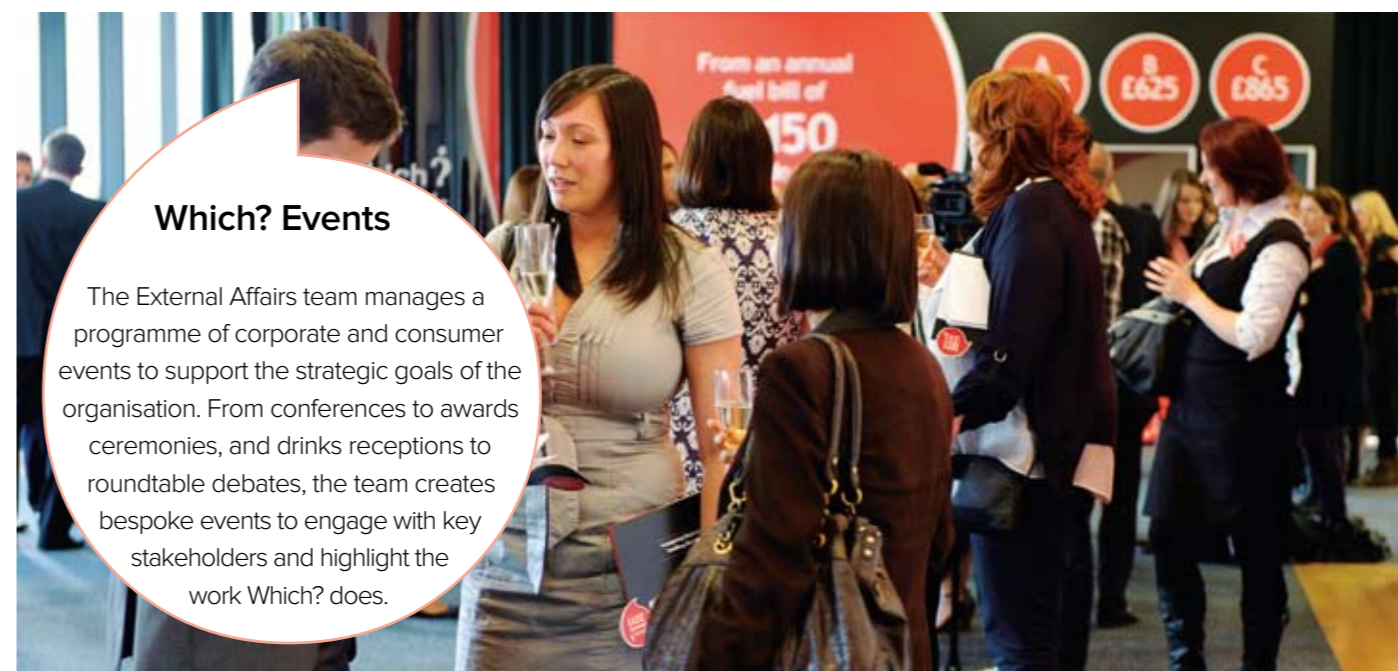
### Best Buy icon scheme

Our Best Buy and Recommended Provider icon schemes continue to be important channels for Which? in extending our reach to all consumers and helping them when they need us. 70% of consumers now recognise our icons and of those who do, 75% agree that this helps them choose the right products.



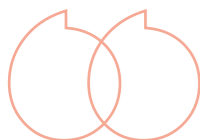
### Which? Events

The External Affairs team manages a programme of corporate and consumer events to support the strategic goals of the organisation. From conferences to awards ceremonies, and drinks receptions to roundtable debates, the team creates bespoke events to engage with key stakeholders and highlight the work Which? does.





# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Consumers' Association, which trades as Which?, is registered in England and Wales (company number 580128) and is a charity (number 296072). Which? Limited is its wholly owned trading arm (company no. 677665).

**Which? is completely independent,** receives no government funding and does not accept advertising. The vast majority of income comes from subscriptions to our products and services, with profits funding our advocacy activity and informing the public on consumer issues.

In 2010/11 our revenues increased by 7% to £75.6m, reflecting continued growth and strong performance from our subscription products. This growth has again been within a wider publishing climate of little or no growth and often decline. We spent £72.1m in the year which resulted in net incoming resources of £3.4m. This excellent operational performance combined with investment gains and a reduction in our estimated pension scheme deficit resulted in an overall net increase in funds of £9.7m.



### Income & subscription numbers

2010/11 has been another excellent year for subscription sales across the organisation. Overall our subscriptions closed the year on 1,331,000, a level 9% higher than the previous year. Our flagship title, Which? magazine, led the way with an 8% rise, while Which? Online, Which? Computing, Which? Money and Which? Legal Service all closed the year at all time high subscription levels. During the year the Good Food Guide celebrated its 60th anniversary and commemorated the occasion with a special recipe book. Sales of this title and continued popularity of the Made Easy titles helped drive strong growth in books.

### How we spent our money

Expenditure during the year of £72.1m was up 6% year on year, reflecting additional direct costs associated with the higher revenue, an uplift in our advocacy activity and increased investment in our new products (especially mortgage advice and our Indian magazine 'Right Choice') which we hope will help to drive our growth in the future. Of our charitable expenditure, 71% related to the research carried out for our magazines and website, where we continue to strive to be the leading provider of such advice and support in each area. The remaining expenditure was on promoting consumer interests through our advocacy and media activities and our support for other consumer organisations. In addition, all our publications play a vital role in promoting our advocacy to consumers.

### Group balance sheets and reserves

Our reserves at 30 June 2011 were up £9.7m year on year to £44.2m, driven as outlined above by a combination of underlying strong business performance, an increase in investments plus a reduction in the estimated pension deficit. We believe that our strong balance sheet gives us an excellent base from which we can grow and expand our influence in the coming years.

This financial summary contains information from our financial statements for the 2010/11 financial year but is not the full statutory report and accounts. The full financial statements were approved by the Council of Management on 4 October 2011 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House. They received an unqualified audit report. Ordinary Members of Which? receive the full statements automatically. If you are not an Ordinary Member and would like a copy, go to [www.which.co.uk](http://www.which.co.uk) to read them online or write to us at the address on the back of this review.

### Spending on advocacy

**38%**

Personal finance

**17%**

Energy

**8%**

Education

**7%**

Food

**5%**

Health

**5%**

Environment

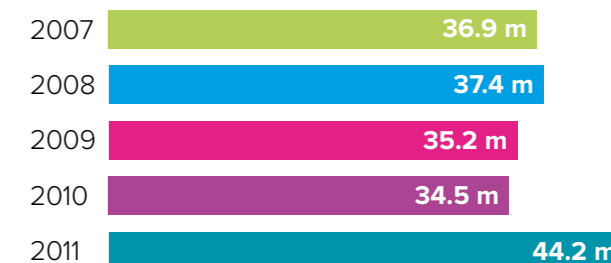
**2%**

Conferences, events & launches

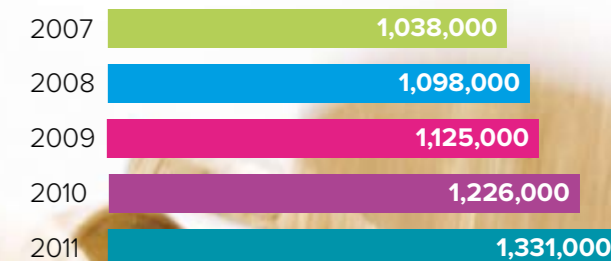
**18%**

Others (including online)

### Reserves (£)



### Total number of subscriptions



How the charity spends its money

**CONSUMER RESEARCH**

**71%**

**PROMOTING CONSUMER INTERESTS**

**29%**



# COUNCIL AND DIRECTORS



Patrick Barwise

## 2010/11

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Patrick Barwise (Chairman)  
 Mark Addison  
 Anthony Burton (Deputy Chairman) (until February 2011)  
 Melanie Dawes (from February 2011)  
 Neville Duncan (until July 2011)  
 Margaret Ginman  
 Tanya Heasman (Deputy Chairman)  
 Sue Leggate  
 Natalie Macdonald  
 Jennifer Oscroft (from February 2011)  
 Roger Pittock  
 Paul Preston  
 Richard Thomas (Deputy Chairman)  
 Alison Thorne  
 Gary Waller (until February 2011)  
 Steve Woolgar  
 Brian Yates (from February 2011)  
 John Zealley

### VICE PRESIDENTS

Sir Philip Goodhart  
 Mr Raymond Goodman  
 Mrs Dorothy Goodman  
 Dame Jennifer Jenkins  
 Mr John Rimington  
 Ms Alma Williams  
 Mr Christopher Zealley

### WHICH? LIMITED BOARD

Mike Clasper (Chairman)  
 Claudia Arney (from March 2011)  
 Patrick Barwise  
 Jacques Cadranel (Group Finance Director) (from October 2010)  
 Neil Cameron  
 Chris Gardner (Commercial Director)  
 Tanya Heasman  
 Andrew Mullins (from March 2011)  
 Helen Parker (Assistant Chief Executive)



Mark Addison



Anthony Burton



Melanie Dawes



Neville Duncan



Margaret Ginman



Tanya Heasman



Sue Leggate



Natalie Macdonald



Jennifer Oscroft



Roger Pittock



Paul Preston



Richard Thomas



Alison Thorne



Steve Woolgar



Gary Waller



(from October 2010)  
 Jonathan Thompson (until August 2010)  
 Peter Vicary-Smith (Chief Executive)  
 Kevin Wall  
 Gary Waller (until February 2011)  
 John Zealley (from February 2011)



Brian Yates



John Zealley

### GROUP AUDIT COMMITTEE

Nick Castro FCA (Chairman)  
 Margaret Ginman MBA  
 Gary Waller MBA (until February 2011)  
 John Zealley MA (from February 2011)

### INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Brian Yates (Chairman) (from February 2011)  
 Gary Waller (Chairman) (until February 2011)  
 Patrick Barwise  
 Roger Pittock  
 Mark Tapley

### TERMS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE

Patrick Barwise (Chairman)  
 Anthony Burton (until February 2011)  
 Mike Clasper  
 Tanya Heasman  
 Paul Preston



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Peter Vicary-Smith

Helen Parker

Chris Gardner

Richard Lloyd

Kim Brosnan

Jacques Cadranel

## Executive Management Team

**Peter Vicary-Smith**  
 Chief Executive

**Helen Parker**  
 Assistant Chief Executive

**Chris Gardner**  
 Commercial Director

**Richard Lloyd**  
 Director of Consumer Action

**Kim Brosnan**  
 Director of Talent

**Jacques Cadranel**  
 Group Finance Director

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