

Appendix A

Evidence from Plans and Reports, 1999-2013

1. History to 2010

- 1.1. From 1997 the FSA published Business Plans for each coming year and Annual Reports for the year past – all still available on its website. The information in this appendix is abstracted from those documents.
- 1.2. In 1999 the FSA introduced the consumer section to its website. Over the period to 2005 a range of initiatives were mentioned; among them: 'Education for Financial Capability'; 'Adult Learning Programme'; 'Consumer Publications'; 'Consumer Help Website'; 'Consumer Campaigns'; 'Consumer Research'; Consumer Helpline; 'Comparative Tables'; 'Interactive adult learning programme'; and 'tools to analyse consumer products and their inherent risks'.
- 1.3. The 2005/6 Business Plan included mention of a 'National Strategy for Financial Capability' and also 'launching a financial healthcheck tool on websites'
- 1.4. From 2006-2010 the FSA reported on the National Strategy each year under the heading: 'Financial Capability'
- 1.5. In 2009/10 the FSA announced 'government plans to create a Consumer Financial Education Body' (CFEB), with 'a new governance structure to facilitate roll-out of a national money guidance platform'
- 1.6. The same report announced MoneyMadeClear, a new 'money guidance pathfinder' to include an advice website.
- 1.7. The report concludes: *Over the last year, we have achieved most of our targets, and in some cases exceeded them. We estimate that so far our programme of work has reached 9.3m people. The programme is designed to reach 10m people by 2011, the end of our five-year strategy.*
- 1.8. In general quantified achievements were reported in terms of outputs, (i.e leaflets distributed, website hits, phone calls received courses delivered), not outcomes. Only rarely were measured achievements clearly reported against previously set targets.

2. Money Advice Service

- 2.1. The CFEB was re-branded as MAS. It was in fact just the old Financial Capability team, as evidenced by the words in its first Business Plan: *'This year marks the final phase of the five-year Delivering Change strategy, begun when we were a division of the Financial Services Authority'*.
- 2.2. The MAS has published three business plans – 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13. There ought to be two Annual Reports, but, oddly, these do not appear to be available to the general public: the website is silent; and Googling produces just two links – one from Hansard on 15/11/11 giving a parliamentary reply which refers to 'the published annual report for the

year to 31 March 2011' and one a response to a freedom of information request from Mr B Whittle dated March 26 2012 stating the reply was 'delayed'.

- 2.3. To guess what's going on we therefore have to rely on the Business Plans for hints of achievement in prior years.
- 2.4. This first Plan of the MAS (initially called the Consumer Financial Education Body – CFEB) starts with a clean sheet as though the previous five years of work on Financial Capability by the same people had never existed. It is wrapped up with the words; *'Over the course of that time a range of targeted interventions have been developed and delivered to people of all ages and all walks of life'*.
- 2.5. For the future: *'Our four key priorities for this year are to complete our Delivering Change strategy, to set up the national financial advice service, to work towards operational independence, and to develop our long-term strategy which we will deliver from April 2011'*.
- 2.6. The second MAS plan, to 31 March 2012, reports: *'2010/11 was a year of transition. Much of the last 12 months has been taken up with completing the FSA's five-year 'Delivering Change' strategic initiative.'* But there's no report on this. So five years of 'strategic initiative' have passed without any reportable outcomes.

3. Delivery

- 3.1. In the 2011/12 plan there is some quantified data For example: *'During 2010/11 we achieved over 1,500,000 contacts across a number of our key products and delivery channels, with current research confirming 45% of these users will have received completely new information and 8% of these will have taken specific actions'*. Whether or not this means anything depends entirely on the meaning of 'contacts', 'new information' and 'specific actions', and on evidence of cause and effect.
- 3.2. In the 2012/13 plan there is only one mention of 2011/12 performance. It is in a secondary area and, unfortunately, a good example of how to lie with statistics:

'We already have strong evidence of the successful impact of our 2011/12 advertising in getting people to use our Service. When our advertising is running we see, on average, a 62% increase in visits to our website. This same activity has resulted in an 87% increase in people visiting our health check.'

(Hint: if only 100 people visited the website before advertising, and 162 visited after, does that indicate an effective use of advertising – cost unspecified?).
- 3.3. This plan also sets out a long-term target of *'reaching 11.3 million people by 2016-17 out of the 19 million assessed as capable of benefiting from the service'*. Compare 1.7 above.