

## Press Notice

Immediate Release

2 October 2017

### Baroness Wilcox NCF President



The National Consumer Federation is delighted to announce the return of Baroness Judith Wilcox of Plymouth as National Consumer Federation President. Lady Wilcox was awarded her peerage in 1996 for her services to Consumers. She championed the consumer cause for many years as Chair of the National Consumer Council and as President of both the NCF and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. However, because of her substantial business experience she was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Business, Innovation and Skills in the coalition government in 2010 which necessitated in her withdrawing from most of her direct consumer activities. Now she is back where we believe she belongs!

Baroness Wilcox says:

*"I believe a strong consumer voice is essential as the United Kingdom leaves the European Union and I am pleased to give my support to delivering an effective consumer programme. We need innovative policies to maintain and improve consumer protection and to ensure the economy benefits from Brexit. I believe the National Consumer Federation is playing an independent and influential part in achieving these goals."*

These are challenging times for consumers. Much has been achieved in the last 40 years in ensuring the safety and fitness for purpose of consumer products. However, recent concerns over the safety of e.g. white goods (washing machines and fridges), and the safety of consumer services where improvements have been slow, indicate that much remains to be done. Brexit is dominating the agenda with one essential focus on trade and business issues. But it should not be forgotten that consumers contribute over 65% to developed economies. In the UK this equates to a contribution to the economy of £1.2 Trillion per annum. Hence, for the United Kingdom to maintain and enhance competitiveness, a balance needs to be struck between the needs of business and those of consumers.

Arnold Pindar, NCF Chairman says: *"I am so pleased that Baroness Wilcox has accepted our invitation to be the NCF President. Her vast experience of both consumer and business interests is of vital importance for us to get the balance of interests right for a successful post Brexit economy. Everyone is talking about consumer rights and interests as we leave the European Union but the active focus appears to be directed at business interests. We aim to put consumerism back on the political agenda to ensure our rights are not diminished and that we achieve consumer (and business) benefits from Brexit."*

Baroness Wilcox is a member of the European Union Select Committee working closely with Government departments planning the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Prior to her ministerial appointment, Baroness Wilcox held various Spokesperson portfolios, including Energy and Climate Change (2008-10), Trade and Industry/Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (2006-08), the Cabinet Office (2005-06) and the Treasury

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(2003-05). As such she is well positioned to help the consumer movement regain the proper influence needed for a successful United Kingdom economy post Brexit.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

## **NATIONAL CONSUMER FEDERATION**

The National Consumer Federation (NCF) represents the voice of UK consumers. We are an independent, not-for-profit charity, with over 50 years' experience of tackling issues that affect large numbers of consumers, and campaigning for positive change. We work to influence Government, regulators and businesses to ensure that the consumer voice is at the heart of decision-making.

We provide a platform for everyone interested in consumer protection – from individuals, to local groups and national consumer organisations - bringing them together to share their knowledge, skills and experience. We provide a safe environment for people with common interests to be heard, and feel supported, by others.

Our expertise adds value to the collective consumer voice, making it a more powerful force for change.

We consider issues that affect large numbers of consumers and we aim to make things better!

We are known for our:

- **Expertise** - we help volunteers to develop their skills and experience in areas of consumer interest
- **Thinking** - the NCF is a home for consumer experts to share common views and values and provide detailed analysis and solutions
- **Voice** - consumers need to be heard. We provide consumer volunteers with a platform for addressing issues that may not be well covered elsewhere

## **BARONESS JUDITH WILCOX OF PLYMOUTH**

Lady Wilcox has been a member of several committees during her time in the Lords, including the European Select Committee for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs in 2000 and the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology four years earlier. In addition to this, she has held a number of non-executive roles outside Parliament, working with the Automobile Association, Port of London Authority, Cadbury Schweppes, Carpetright and Johnson Services. Before her elevation to the Lords, she was chairman of the National Consumer Council, the public body that then represented the interests of consumers (subsequently subsumed within Consumer Focus and then Citizens Advice). For much of her six years with the organisation, she was also involved in business, as Chair of Morinie et Cie from 1991 to 1994 and President of Pecheries de la Morinie from 1989 to 1991. Prior to joining the latter firm, Wilcox headed her own company, Channel Foods Ltd, in Cornwall.

## **CONTACT**

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