

## Comparison sites fare poorly in Which? survey

Comparison sites are not providing their users with a good enough service for financial products, according to new research from Which? Money.

In its first ever comparison site satisfaction survey, Which? Money found that the average customer score for these websites was lower for than any other financial sector it has surveyed; no site scored higher than 50%.

Which? members expressed a lack of trust in comparison sites. Only three in 10 said they trusted them to find the best price available, while two thirds thought they would be presented with products that make the websites the most commission.

A quarter of people said they did not buy through a comparison site because they found a cheaper quote elsewhere and 12% said they were unhappy with the quotes they were given. Even after searching for products on comparison sites, more than half said they bought the product directly from the provider.

Several sites also set quite high default voluntary excesses when a Which? Money expert looked at them in detail. These voluntary excesses are often then combined with the insurer's compulsory excess on the results page, making it difficult for customers to make comparisons between sites and find the best policy to suit their needs.

The most popular sites were Moneysupermarket.com, Confused.com and Gocompare.com. Car insurance, home insurance and savings accounts were the most searched for products on the comparison sites.

James Daley, editor, Which? Money, said: "We found that using financial comparison sites is clearly not a happy experience for many - all the sites in our survey got low customer scores.

"If you're shopping around for a good deal, it makes sense to go to more than one site and be aware that some companies aren't featured. Watch out for things like voluntary excess, and make sure the policy you're offered is what you actually want."

an Williams, director of communications at moneysupermarket.com, said: "Even though we have topped Which?'s survey, we don't recognise its portrayal of moneysupermarket.com.

"Our own customer satisfaction survey, which runs monthly, shows 83% of our customers are extremely satisfied or satisfied. What's more we are making steady and continual improvements to our satisfaction score. A YouGov survey showed that moneysupermarket.com was the most trusted by customers to help them find the best money products - ahead of other price comparison websites and major banks.

"Which?'s survey was done in August - September 2009 so it is out of date as we've made a number of changes to our site since then to enhance the customer experience. For example, we have changed the way we display motor insurance excesses on the site and how customers choose the excess levels they want. We show total excess, voluntary excess (which defaults to £250 unless the customer selects otherwise) and compulsory excess.

"We add more providers to our comparison tools every month - yesterday we offered customers quotes from 108 motor insurance companies and 63 for home insurance, and we aim to be the most comprehensive comparison site. Of course the number of companies who return quotes is dependent on a number of factors, including whether the insurer will insure for a particular customer risk profile."

Carlton Hood, chief executive officer, at Confused.com, said: "It might be an idea for Which? to compare their reviews! Earlier this year it congratulated Confused.com on our market-leading position. In fact its insurance expert Dan Moore said: 'Confused.com has shown that it is possible to give consumers what they want, a fair quote based on criteria they selected. Other sites should follow their lead.'"

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