

- CoPSO has represented the search industry on the Government's working groups reviewing the content of Home Information Packs, to be introduced in 2007.

In September 2006, CoPSO will launch the Search Code incorporating:

- A Code of Practice
- Training requirements
- Independent registration and compliance functions
- An independent adjudication scheme.
- Robust insurance provisions

The introduction of the Search Code underpins CoPSO's firm belief that, in the interests of consumer protection, only those search organisations which adhere to prescribed standards should be able to provide searches as part of the home buying process.

Council of Property Search Organisations

www.copso.org.uk

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Improved access to local authority information will be crucial to avoid delays in compiling HIPs says CoPSO

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The Council of Property Search Organisations (CoPSO) has welcomed the Government's commitment announced on the publication of the HIPs regulations, to make local searches cheaper and faster. Local searches will form an important part of the HIP and some local authorities consistently fail to provide reasonable access to search information resulting in unnecessary delays to the home buying process. Local authorities must allow improved access by both search providers and homebuyers, so that local searches can be compiled quickly and to avoid delays in producing HIPs.

During 2005, the Office of Fair Trading investigated the search industry and made recommendations aimed at improving competition and access to property information, in advance of the Government's home buying reforms due in 2007. The OFT's recommendations published last September have been endorsed by the Government and require local authorities to provide swift access to their information, to review the way in which they set their fees and to allow electronic access to search data.

Commenting on the Government's announcement, CoPSO Chairman Fiona Hoyle said:

The Government's commitment to create a framework for faster and more cost-effective local searches is long awaited and extremely welcome. But immediate action is required to ensure that local authorities improve access to data, to avoid delays in compiling HIPs.

Notes to Editors

- The Council of Property Search Organisations (CoPSO), is the leading trade association for the property search industry. Members provide a range of property information reports including local, environmental, mining, drainage and water data and produce over 2m searches each year. CoPSO's overall objective is to drive both market and product improvements to deliver the industry's vision of faster and better informed property transactions.