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**USWITCH.COM COMMENTS ON THE OFT ANNOUNCEMENT ON MISLEADING
SURCHARGING PRACTICES IN THE TRAVEL SECTOR**

Michael Ossei, personal finance expert at uSwitch.com, says: “Holiday makers are too often stung by an unexpected booking fee for using a debit or credit card while making an online travel booking. These cards are extremely convenient, but a lack of transparency over the hidden surcharges and the fact that the most cost effective means of paying are not used by the majority of consumers has meant that travellers have been caught to the tune of around £300 million in 2009 alone^[1]. The fact that consumers will now know where they stand with fees, and how to avoid them, is great news for those looking to bag a bargain holiday online.

“But while the OFT’s action is great news for consumers and should lead to a fairer and easier way of paying, the travel industry will potentially be losing out. The worry is that they will look to recoup the loss of these fees through other means, such as higher prices or other hidden extras that could catch the unwary consumer out. Holiday makers should keep their eyes open for this so they don’t get caught out.

“However, any initiative and change in the law that puts the power back in consumers’ hands and helps them make a well-informed decision on their purchases, based on clear pricing and comparisons of the options available is great news.”

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 0607

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Notes to editors

¹ According to OFT announcement 28/06/2011 <http://www.oft.gov.uk/news-and-updates/press/today?prid=804589>

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital

television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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