



A new vulnerability register for consumer credit

Vulnerability is at the heart of many creditors' agendas right now and in a timely fashion the Vulnerability Registration Service (VRS) has been created, with plans to launch in the new year.

Helen Lord, co-director of VRS, discussed how the platform will work at the Consumer Credit Trade Association's (CCTA) Going Forward conference in Nottingham this month.

The VRS is an independent private sector data processor with the purpose to protect consumers and provide organisations with a tool to help deal with vulnerable people.

It is run by seven co-directors who all have backgrounds in the consumer credit market.

Vulnerable customers will use the platform to record their personal circumstances when they are looking to protect themselves from further debt or related financial problems.

When vulnerable consumers fill in the register it can be as simple as only having to

fill in their name, address and date of birth.

The system will automatically remind consumers they are on the register every three months. This means the consumer can update their personal situation or remove themselves from the list altogether.

Lenders and creditors will be able to subscribe to the platform and therefore access all of its data.

VRS said the platform could be used as a starting point when companies make decisions on customer engagement strategies such as arrears and collections.

Because the register is a data processor it does not need to be regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

However, VRS said it has had a "positive dialogue" with the regulator during the register's development.

Bruce Turnbull, co-director of VRS, said: "Data sharing between financial services and utilities and telecoms is unheard of but they all have vulnerable customers so could be using just one platform."