

***TODAY**

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SINGAPORE — An accreditation scheme for direct selling businesses was launched today (Jan 8) by the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and Direct Selling Association of Singapore (DSAS).

The CaseTrust Accreditation Mark was also awarded to 14 direct selling companies — including Amway (Singapore), Herbalife International, Nu Skin Enterprises and Qnet—at the launch event held at Safra Toa Payoh.

Companies under the scheme — which is open only to DSAS members — have to give consumers a cooling-off period of seven working days, during which they can seek full refund of any payment without being penalized, produce an order form at the time of sale that clearly states the direct seller's contact details, and put in place a well-defined system to address conflicts.

Internal assessments will be conducted every two years, and an external audit every four years, to ensure compliance.

The scheme was first mooted in July 2013 when both associations signed a memorandum of understanding to promote fair and ethical conduct in the direct selling industry and better protect consumers.

It comes on the heels of increasing complaints against the sector. CASE received 82 complaints involving direct sales last year, up from 46 in 2012. Most of these involve consumers complaining about hard-selling tactics or having problems getting refunds. Out of 187 complaint cases over the last three years, 9 per cent, or 17 cases, were targeted at DSAS members.