

Colette Bowe
Chairman
Ofcom Consumer Panel
2a Southwark Bridge Road
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19 December 2007

Thank you for your letter dated 18 December setting out the Consumer Panel's suggestions on how to deal with the advertising of broadband speeds.

As mentioned previously in my letter dated 10 December, we very much welcome the contribution made by the Consumer Panel in the current debate about the advertising of broadband speeds.

We agree that it is a vital issue for consumers and Ofcom has already been looking at these issues. Our initial proposals, on which we will be engaging with consumer groups and industry early in the New Year, are very much in line with the measures set out in your letter.

We also believe that consumers should have access to accurate information so that they can make an informed decision and sign up to the most appropriate broadband package available. We have already started discussions with leading ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to see how meaningful information can be provided to consumers. The discussions will consider in more detail the following proposals;

- ISPs providing consumer specific information prior to sale on the estimated maximum speed a customer's access line can support (using BT Line Checker and/ or equivalent).
- ISPs providing consumers with data early within the contract period on the actual (rather than estimated) maximum speed being achieved
- ISPs offering consumers the choice to move, penalty free, onto a different speed package based on the information provided.

We are keen that any measures are implemented in the shortest time frame possible. At this stage, we have not ruled out the possibility of using formal powers if we consider it would be more effective in delivering our objectives.

We agree that consumers may find comparative Quality of Service information very helpful in choosing the most appropriate ISP for their needs. To this end, we have already initiated a project that will identify the most useful indicators to consumers and establish the best possible method of providing this information to consumers. This project is currently underway and we look forward to continuing to engage with the Consumer Panel on its progress.

Finally, we agree that consumers would benefit from information on how best to set up their broadband connection at home. We plan to publish a consumer guide next summer that will include some useful and clear advice on how best to maximise the quality of a broadband connection within the home.

We very much welcome your valuable input on this issue and look forward to continued dialogue on the forthcoming developments,

Yours sincerely,

Ed Richards
Chief Executive
Ofcom