

Minutes of the 83rd meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel
on 7 December 2011 at 9.00

Riverside House, 2A Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA

Present

Consumer Panel

Bob Warner (Chair)
Kim Brook (ex-officio member)
Colin Browne
Roger Darlington
Chris Holland (co-opted member)

In attendance

David Edwards
Fiona Lennox
Ofcom colleagues (items 4 - 6, 8 and 9)

Apologies

Fiona Ballantyne
Maureen Edmondson

1. Declarations of interest

- 1.1 Colin Browne had become a non-executive director of CEDR - the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution. CEDR had just acquired IDRS Ltd, which runs the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS).
1.2 Chris Holland was acting as a consultant across all dispute resolution schemes offered by IDRS, including CISAS.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2011, matters arising and progress on actions

- 2.1 Members **APPROVED** the draft minutes for signature by the Chair.
2.2 Members had received an updated actions list.
2.3 Members **NOTED** the information in the latest Panel Implementation Plan, providing a summary and strategic overview of Panel activities.

3. Feedback

- 3.1 Members had received a note from Chris Holland reporting on the *Local Growth Through Broadband* conference he had attended in November.

4. Consumer quarterly

- 4.1 Members had received a paper updating them on key Ofcom consumer policy projects and work streams, showing progress in the last quarter and planned activity for the next quarter. An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting for discussion and the key points **NOTED** were:
- as part of a strategic review, an Ofcom consultation on switching processes was expected to be published shortly;

- options for switching processes were not straightforward and the Panel encouraged Ofcom to take steps to ensure that the options were explained clearly to consumer groups and to encourage responses to the consultation;
- a statement on relay services was expected in February;
- the review of General Condition 15 would result in a consultation in Q1 2012 proposing to update existing telecoms provisions for disabled people;
- the next Ofcom telecoms complaints quarterly report would be published later in the month; members felt that publication made good use of Ofcom's 'soft powers';
- the Panel expressed its concern, amongst others, that delays to 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz spectrum auctions could have a negative impact on consumers by delaying the roll-out of 4G services.

5. Mobile apps - privacy and security

5.1 An Ofcom colleague delivered a presentation to Panel members on mobile apps, covering market characteristics, range and diversity of offerings, issues related to purchase and refunds, and the risks for consumers, e.g. from malicious software. Members **NOTED** the information.

6. Mobile e-commerce

6.1 Members had received a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to brief the Panel on emerging mobile marketing and payment services. Members **NOTED** that there were a number of potential issues for consumers, including security and use of personal data, dispute resolution and switching.

7. Colette Bowe

7.1 The Ofcom Chairman joined the meeting for discussion. It was **AGREED** that the Panel would renew its engagement with digital switchover as DUK entered the phase of switchover in the London area; that Panel briefing sessions should be arranged on Ofcom's 2012 Olympics project and on the interaction of Ofcom and Advertising Standards Authority powers; that a mid-year joint session with the Ofcom Nations Committee to discuss notspots would be useful; and that Ed Richard's recent speech at the European Competitive Telecommunication Association (Ecta) regulatory conference should be copied to members.

8. Micropayments

8.1 Members had been provided with information in relation to micropayments. Members **NOTED** that the project would feed into Ofcom's work relating to the Communications Bill and would be discussed with the Policy Executive in January. The work was at an early stage and key points from discussion with Ofcom colleagues were:

- the difficulty in arriving at a precise definition of micropayments;
- the question of regulatory jurisdiction;
- where multiple regulatory bodies were involved, the Panel stressed the

<p>importance of clear signposting and efficient handovers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the importance of consumer confidence in micropayments if such payment mechanisms were to succeed;• in addition to data from Ofcom’s Advisory Team, information from Consumer Direct, Trading Standards and ADR schemes could be a useful source highlighting emerging consumer concerns. <p>8.2 It was AGREED that the Panel would re-engage with this project once Ofcom had worked-up the project further.</p>
<p>9. Non-geographic numbers</p> <p>9.1 Members received a briefing on Ofcom’s project on non-geographic call services by Ofcom colleagues, the focus being on the current consumer experience and on how more informative and consumer friendly advertising of call costs might operate. Ofcom expected to publish a consultation on non-geographic numbering in January, including proposals on an unbundled tariff approach for revenue sharing number ranges.</p>
<p>10. 2012/13 Panel work plan</p> <p>10.1 Members discussed possible areas of focus for the Panel’s 2012/13 draft workplan and AGREED a number of work areas, some proactive and some for which the Panel would maintain a watching brief. The draft plan would be worked-up and brought back to the January meeting, prior to being published and consulted upon. The document would make reference to the future of the Panel. The consultation exercise would include a stakeholder event to be held in February.</p>
<p>12. Any Other Business</p> <p>12.1 There was no other business.</p>

.....ChairmanDate