



NOVEMBER 2017 BULLETIN

Update on Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD activities

Jo Connell, Panel Chair, Fiona Lennox, Executive Director, and Jenny Borritt, Panel Coordinator, met with the [International Longevity Centre-UK \(ILC-UK\)](#), the independent think-tank dedicated to addressing issues of longevity, ageing and population change. ILC-UK Director David Sinclair outlined their ideas to bring together stakeholders to stimulate innovation in technology that can help older people.

In Belfast, Panel member for Northern Ireland, Rick Hill, accompanied by Jenny, attended the [Ofcom Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland](#), where they presented the Panel's recent research; 'Access to Broadcast and On Demand Content - Time to Catch Up' and discussed the findings and recommendations with attendees.

Rick also attended a number of stakeholder events in Northern Ireland, including the NI Telecoms Stakeholder Forum and BT's Northern Ireland Regulatory Compliance Committee.

Representatives of the Panel also met with [RNIB](#) this month to discuss the access services research with particular regard to audio description and speaking electronic program guides (EPGs) and what can be done to progress improvements. This is the latest in a series of stakeholder meetings that kicked off with [Action on Hearing Loss](#) and will continue with Ofcom representatives and communication providers next month and in the new year. If you are interested in setting up a meeting with the Panel please [email us](#).

Amanda Britain, Panel member for Scotland, attended a [Competition and Markets Authority](#) seminar on digital comparison tools, which focused on ways to ensure they were effective and accessible, and addressing the areas that require improvement. For example, there are some issues regarding privacy of data and transparency in regard to the business model used. More information can be [found here](#).

The Panel was represented at the [UK Council on Deafness \(UKCoD\)](#) annual conference, which looked at ways to enhance and improve deaf access to telecommunication and broadcasting. Amongst the speakers was Ofcom Chair,

Patricia Hodgson, who referenced the Panel's access services research in her calls for improvements to subtitling on video-on-demand programming.

Panel member for Wales

We are looking to appoint a new member to the Panel with specific responsibility for representing the interests of consumers, citizens and micro-businesses within the communications sector in Wales. The ability to speak and write Welsh in desirable and applications in Welsh or English are welcomed.

Closing date is midnight on 10 December 2017. Interviews will take place in Cardiff on 18 December 2017.

Please apply in confidence by completing the [application form](#) (RTF, 156.9 KB) and submitting the form, CV and a covering letter to:
contact@communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

For further information please contact:
contact@communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

The Panel and ACOD's consultation responses

Response to Ofcom's consultation on its Broadband Speeds Codes of Practice

The Panel has long called for the advertising and promotion of broadband speeds to be fair, meaningful and realistic. We have been pleased to see Ofcom, broadband providers and the [Advertising Standards Authority's CAP and BCAP](#) work towards this and welcome the opportunity to comment on the revised codes of practice.

We strongly support the commitment by code signatories - across all broadband network types - to provide information on broadband speeds that offers a minimum guaranteed speed and a realistic indication of service capabilities at peak times. We consider that the terminology used in advertising should be updated from 'up to' to 'at least', to reflect the minimum guaranteed speed.

Furthermore, we agree with the strengthening of the consumer's right to exit from a contract (including a bundle) if their provider has not improved their service within 30 days, without penalty, and we urge providers to consider this a minimum target.

We consider proportional billing a reasonable alternative remedy in situations where the right to exit is meaningless (where there is no realistic competitor, or the consumer does not want to switch provider).

The Panel welcome Ofcom's commitment to monitor compliance regularly and act promptly on behalf of consumers, and we look forward to contributing to Ofcom's 'customer guide'. In this regard we drew Ofcom's attention to the needs of

specific consumers, such as users of video and text relay/Next Generation Text services, and those of micro businesses.

Our [response is here](#).

Response to Ofcom's consultation on revising the guidance for the provision of CLI

The Panel has placed a focus on the importance of tackling nuisance calls for a number of years and during this time has called on communication providers (CPs) to offer free CLI.

In our response to this consultation we outlined our support for the clarification of Ofcom's guidance to ensure that the Calling Line Identification (CLI) information is correct and passed safely between providers, to ensure that the consumer receives only valid and accurate information.

As well as urging CPs to comply with the Secure Telephone Identity Revisited (STIR) standard, once it is implemented in the UK, we stated our support for Ofcom's proposals urging CPs to protect their customers in the interim by only passing on authentic CLIs. We recognize that there are technical challenges in tackling spoofing, but it is essential that CPs keep up with the spoofer to maintain the integrity of their network - and in the case of the CPs that are still charging their customers to receive CLI, to be unable to authenticate the data would seem to be a double injustice.

[Our response is here](#).

Other news

Ofcom statement regarding its review of alternative dispute resolution schemes

Ofcom currently approves two Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) schemes: Ombudsman Services: Communications (OS) and the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS), which it is required to keep under regular review.

The [statement](#) published this month concludes Ofcom's latest review, which began in March 2017. Ofcom stated that it considers that the performance of both Schemes meets the required criteria and are that they are re-confirming their approval of both OS and CISAS.

In our response to the previous call for inputs to the review we suggested a review of methods by which consumers' awareness of the ADR schemes could be

improved, and encouraged further research of the complainant's journey, including barriers, reasons for not following a complaint through to completion and use of independent reviewers: our own next piece of research will cover some of these.

Government's Industrial Strategy updated

This month saw the Government publish its [updated Industrial Strategy](#), which outlines its plans to promote investment in new infrastructure and reiterates Budget announcements regarding funding for telecoms infrastructure. The Strategy also announced that Government will work with Ofcom to facilitate infrastructure investment for 5G and includes the goal to extend full-fibre networks to 10 million premises.

Government launches review into future telecoms infrastructure investment

The government has also launched a [review of the UK's telecoms markets](#), to investigate how it can support investment in the world-class connectivity of the future. The cross-government Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review - led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport - will explore what makes investment in full fibre and 5G networks attractive. It will establish what, if anything, government can do to promote the right conditions to achieve widespread coverage.

Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2017

Ofcom has released its annual research on [children's media literacy](#). It provides detailed evidence on media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 5-15, as well as about the media access and use of young children aged 3-4.

The report also includes findings relating to parents' views about their children's media use, and the ways that parents seek - or decide not - to monitor or limit use of different types of media.

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