

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 19 January 2017 at 10.30

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

**Present**

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chair)

Jaya Chakrabarti

Rhys Evans

Chris Holland

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

Bob Twitchin

In attendance

Jenny Borritt

David Edwards

Millie Hyde-Smith

Fiona Lennox

A colleague from E.ON (item 5)

Colleagues from Kantar (item 7)

Colleagues from the Phone-paid Services Authority (item 10)

Other Ofcom colleagues

Apologies

Rick Hill

**1. Declarations of Members' interests**

1.1 Of relevance to the E.ON and NAO items, Rhys Evans declared his membership of Ofgem's Consumer Progress Panel.

**2. Minutes of the meeting on 15 December 2016 and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of 15 December were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

2.2 Outstanding feedback on the Panel's queries related to Ofcom's affordability data would be followed up. It was **NOTED** that a Panel list of "unfair" consumer issues was in preparation and would be shared with Members for comment/any additions.

**3. Consumer update**

3.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting and an update paper had been provided to give Members an overview of Ofcom's consumer priority work areas, progress, next steps and milestones. There was discussion of a number of issues, including nuisance calls, mobile switching, Quality of Service (QoS) information, mobile coverage and broadband services.

3.2 It was **AGREED** that the Panel should schedule a discussion of review

of General Condition 14 (on complaint handling and dispute resolution) with Ofcom colleagues and it was **NOTED** that automatic compensation would be on the agenda of the next Panel meeting. Ofcom was working up QoS information infographics and interactive tools and these could be shared with the Panel at the March Panel meeting. Ofcom would be invited to meet the Panel to discuss its programme of work on mobile coverage. It was **NOTED** that Broadband Delivery UK would attend the February Panel meeting. A Member alerted Ofcom colleagues to a phishing scam which they would look into.

#### **4. Children's media use and attitudes**

4.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting and briefed Members on the latest findings, published in November 2016, from the children's strand of Ofcom's Media Literacy research programme, including how 3-15 year olds use and understand media and the ways that their parents manage their use of media.

4.2 A number of issues came up in discussion and Ofcom colleagues would report back on queries/questions that were raised on matters including the disabling of web filters; children that do not have access to communications technology and services; data on children with a disability or a disabled parent; and Ofcom's plans to make use of the findings.

#### **5. E.ON**

5.1 A colleague from the energy company E.ON joined the meeting to brief the Panel on its approach to identifying and supporting vulnerable customers, including the development of a Windows based care and assessment tool. Members were impressed by the tool and there was discussion following the presentation of issues including use of 'flags', sharing of vulnerability data and training for customer service agents. A Member asked about the percentage of E.ON customers who had a disability and this information would be provided. An E.ON slide pack would be copied to Members.

#### **6. Testing of assistive listening devices**

6.1 Members had received a paper and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update the Panel/ACOD on testing that Ofcom had undertaken related to possible interference, in adjacent bands, to radio aids, hearing aids and assisted listening devices arising from the 2.3 GHz spectrum award. Members welcomed the work undertaken in this area and **NOTED** that Ofcom had held a recent open day with equipment manufacturers and charities at Baldock and was in the process of analysing test results. Ofcom would publish technical and summary reports for stakeholders.

## **7. Access services research**

7.1 Colleagues from Kantar and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to discuss a Panel commissioned research project to explore usage, experience of and attitudes towards access services (subtitling, signing and audio description). Members were given an overview of progress so far, including some top-level insights from initial qualitative interviews undertaken. The Kantar team summarized the desk research, quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project and responded to Members' questions. Discussion touched on topics including speaking EPGs, participation of BSL interpreters and of Welsh speakers in interviews. Kantar would check on the latter and there would be another briefing for Members at the February meeting.

## **8. Panel work plan 2017/18**

8.1 Each Member provided input to a detailed discussion of Panel priorities for inclusion in the 2017/18 work plan. Comments included emphasis on fairness for consumers and mobile data coverage/availability and on which consumer issues should be kept under review. Members' views would be consolidated and a draft work plan would be drafted and circulated shortly for comment by Members.

## **9. Update on Access service (broadcast and on-demand)**

9.1 Members had received a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to update Members on current work on the accessibility of broadcast and on demand services and on headline results from last year's collection of data on VOD accessibility. Of particular and welcome interest to both Ofcom and the Panel were the positive signals that there would be a legal obligation to provide subtitles for on-demand content as an amendment to the Digital Economy Bill. Members **NOTED** that in February Ofcom would publish a report on VOD accessibility and a statement on future data collection. Members remained keen to take part in Ofcom's planned quality of live subtitling roundtable (with consumer groups and access service providers to look at user requirements) expected to take place in March.

## **10. Phone-paid Services Authority update**

10.1 Colleagues from the Phone-paid Services Authority (PSA) joined the meeting to update the Panel on activity in 2016 that had included consultation on, and revision of, the PSA Code of Practice; a rebrand from PhonepayPlus to the PSA; budget savings and office relocation to Canary Wharf; vulnerability guidance developed in collaboration with industry; and market research undertaken. Members were provided with PSA complaints data. The PSA and the Panel valued engagement and would meet on a six-monthly basis.

**11. Ofcom security policy**

11.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to brief the Panel on Ofcom's information security policy.

**12. NAO vulnerability study**

12.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and shared Ofcom's response to a National Audit Office information request related to Ofcom's work in the area of consumer vulnerability. It was **NOTED** that Ofgem had undertaken some research into the energy Priority Services Register and non-financial support for vulnerable energy consumers.

.....Chair .....Date