

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 11 December 2014 at 10.30

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

Present

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chair)

Kim Brook

Jaya Chakrabarti (by telephone)

Rick Hill

Chris Holland

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

Bob Twitchin

In attendance

Jenny Borritt

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

External visitor from PhonepayPlus (item 7)

Other Ofcom colleagues

1. Welcome and introduction

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting. This would be Kim Brook's last meeting, and the Panel thanked him for his valuable contribution to the work of the Panel representing the interests and opinions of people living in Wales.

2. Declarations of Members' interests

2.1 Craig Tillotson had been appointed as a member of the Payment Systems Regulator Panel.

2.2 No other interests were declared that were not already listed on the Panel's website.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 20 November 2014 and matters arising

3.1 The minutes were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

3.2 Members **NOTED** that attendees at a recent Consumer Panel Chairs' meeting had been alerted to the Panel's *Inclusive communications?* research project, currently out to tender; and that although the focus of the research would be to explore how accessible a range of communications providers were to their disabled customers, participants would be asked about their experience of organisations in other sectors, as appropriate, in the wider context of interviews.

3.3 Members **NOTED** that there had been a number of media stories

about industry consolidation.

3.4 The Panel had been represented at the first meeting of the Digital Accessibility Alliance, held on 8 December 2014. The Alliance was a DCMS initiative and would build on the work of the previous eAccessibility Forum.

3.5 Members **NOTED** that the National Assembly for Wales' Cross Party Group on Digital Communications had met recently and with representatives of Vodafone, EE and Three in attendance.

4. Smith Commission

4.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to discuss with Members the *Report of the Smith Commission for further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament*. There was discussion of the implications for other UK Nations and major English cities in particular. Members **NOTED** the report's recommendations related to the communications sector and Ofcom, including proposals around Ofcom's Board composition, party political broadcasts, and the Scottish Government's and Scottish Parliament's role in relation to setting Ofcom's strategic priorities.

5. Non-geographic calls

5.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to brief members on Ofcom's programme of work to establish a more transparent regime for non-geographic calls and which was moving towards its implementation phase, including rectification of the 0800 anomaly, ie introduction of free 0800 calls from a UK mobile.

5.2 Members **NOTED** that all the changes were planned to take place on a single day in summer 2015 and there would be an information campaign, UK Calling, to make telephone users aware of the changes in plenty of time. Draft communication materials copy would be shared with the Panel.

5.3 Members were alerted to work outlined in Ofcom's draft Annual Plan 2015/16 related to the future of voice services, anticipating the evolution of voice services and the increased use of IP-based voice networks. Ofcom planned to consider a range of issues, including the availability and capabilities of voice services, access to emergency services and the extent to which access networks would continue to operate in the event of a power cut, for example through the provision of battery backup.

6. Infrastructure report

6.1 Members had received a paper to brief them on the main findings in *Ofcom's Infrastructure Report 2014*. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion.

6.2 Members **NOTED** that despite good progress in deployment of superfast broadband there still remained some challenges in both rural and urban areas; and that Ofcom's analysis of mobile coverage would inform Government policy on national roaming.

7.2 There was discussion of issues including the balanced tone of the report, eg its recognition of the challenges; mobile coverage on the move

on A and B roads and its importance in the event of an emergency or breakdown, and for disabled vehicle users in particular; and coverage of superfast broadband for SMEs. Members expressed their concerns that there were significant limitations associated with the current universal service commitment of a broadband speed of 2 Mbit/s.

7. PhonepayPlus update

7.1 A colleague from PhonepayPlus (PPP) joined the meeting for discussion of a PPP six-monthly report providing information and metrics on the premium rate market for the period May to October 2014, including market indicators; and PPP key performance indicators, management information and tribunal information.

7.2 Members commented that it could be informative to include case studies in future reports plus details of cases resolved by industry and **NOTED** that regulation of in-App purchases paid for via a credit/debit card was not part of PPP's remit. PPP would return to the meet the Panel six months hence.

8. Children and parents: Media and Attitudes Report

8.1 Panel Members had received a paper summarising the key findings of Ofcom's recently published *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and also discussed a related qualitative study *Children's online behaviour: issues of risk and trust*.

9. Panel workplan

9.1. There was an initial discussion of the Panel's workplan for 2015/16, with Members suggesting work priorities for the coming year and raising issues including mobile coverage, nuisance calls, data security and lost and stolen mobiles. A workplan would be drafted for discussion at the next Panel meeting.

10. Draft Ofcom Annual Plan 2015/16

10.1 The Panel had been provided with a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting. There was discussion of Ofcom's proposed priorities and significant work areas that particularly related to consumers, citizens and micro businesses. Members made a number of comments on issues including nuisance calls, minimum fixed broadband speeds, microbusinesses and mobile coverage. Ofcom would consult on its Draft Annual Plan shortly and the Panel would submit a response.

11. Quality of Customer Service - annual report

11.1 A colleague from Ofcom joined the meeting to discuss a paper presenting the key findings from quantitative *Quality of Customer Service*

research commissioned by Ofcom, which detailed levels of satisfaction with the customer service of landline, broadband, mobile and pay TV providers.

11.2 Members **NOTED** the progress made by providers but felt more remained to be done, that it should be much easier for consumers to find the information they required to access customer services, ie contact details; and the importance of providers capturing the detail of complaints data.

12. Any other business

12.1 The next meeting in January would immediately be followed by Ofcom's Consumer Experience event. The Chair would be speaking about the Panel's micro business research and Members had been invited to attend.

.....ChairmanDate