

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 17 July 2013 at 10.30

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

**Present**

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chairman)

Kim Brook

Jaya Chakrabarti

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

In attendance

David Edwards

Karen Keany (items 11 to 12)

Fiona Lennox

Jonathan Pillinger-Cork

Pamela Learmonth - CEO, Broadband Stakeholder Group (item 6)

A colleague from Ipsos Mori (item 11)

Other Ofcom colleagues

Apologies

Chris Holland

Libby Kinney

Bob Twitchin

**1. Declarations of interest**

1.1 There were no interests to declare.

**2. Minutes of the meeting on 27 June 2013 and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes were **APPROVED**, subject to minor amendment, for signature by the Chairman.

2.2 The Panel would write to EE and the other MNOs by the end of the week to highlight concerns about mast rationalisation.

2.3 The Panel's Annual Report was in the process of being translated into Welsh and would be published by the end of the month.

2.4 Members had provided written comments on Ofcom's Disability Working Group paper of recommendations for making Riverside House more accessible for disabled people.

**3. Online privacy**

3.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to outline Ofcom's data security and privacy programme and to provide an update on Ofcom's Smartphone Operating System Security Study (Smartphone Study). The Ofcom team was in the process of scoping a project to understand the Apps Environment, which might involve consumer research, and a project with a focus on the Data Economy. The Smartphone Study had been shared with the Panel and with the

Information Commissioners’s Office, PhonepayPlus and OFT at a recent roundtable. Members **NOTED** that at the roundtable future joint working had been agreed: consideration was being given to publication of consumer guidance on the steps to stay safe using a smartphone and a Consumer Protection & Mobile Security Working Group would be established.

3.2 The Panel requested the opportunity to comment on the guidance prior to publication. Members commented that it would be important to include vulnerable groups and children in consumer research; raised Apps related issues including portability, integrity and provenance, age rating and pre-pay accounts; and suggested that it could be useful to discuss smartphones with academics at the Computer Laboratory at Cambridge University. The Chair requested an Autumn update on Ofcom’s work on online data and privacy.

#### 4. Update on relay services

4.1 Members were joined by an Ofcom colleague to update them on Ofcom’s work related to Next Generation Text Relay (NGTR) and video relay.

4.2 Members **NOTED** that BT’s NGTR was in development and that BT would be seeking Ofcom approval of its service shortly. Members discussed issues including personal data and measures to ensure the confidentiality of communications between end-users [Note: the approval criteria for a text relay service set out in GC15 includes a requirement on confidentiality]. Members **NOTED** that for people lacking an internet-enabled device (who are more likely to be older), there would be limited NGTR benefits.

4.3 Members **NOTED** that Ofcom was continuing to engage with the voluntary initiative on video relay, led by the UK Council on Deafness (UKCoD), and that progress was being made.

#### 5. Emergency calls

5.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to inform Members of the issues that Ofcom proposed to raise in a ‘Call for Input’ regarding the provision of enhanced location information from emergency calls made using mobile phones. Members **NOTED** that there were a number of technically feasible solutions and approaches to improve accuracy of location information. There was discussion of issues including the positive value of accurate location data, hybrid approaches in which handsets and networks co-operate and an App-based approach. The Ofcom team agreed to return to the Panel with details of responses to its Call for Input.

#### 6. Broadband rollout

6.1 Pamela Learmonth, CEO of the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG), delivered a short presentation on fixed and wireless broadband developments, including 4G. Reference was made to the DCMS BDUK Urban Broadband Fund Consultation on Connection Vouchers and the Panel **AGREED** to submit a response.

#### 7. Traffic management

7.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update Members on the research and policy work that Ofcom had been progressing in relation to the

transparency of traffic management information. Members **NOTED** the low awareness and understanding of traffic management amongst consumers and welcomed the work that Ofcom was doing in this area with ISPs and the BSG, and aimed at addressing these issues.

## 8. Consumer update

8.1 Members had been provided with a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to update the Panel on issues including consumer switching; ADR and redress; broadband quality of service; mobile coverage and quality; consumer complaints; nuisance calls; mid-contract price increases; and Royal Mail quality of service. Members **NOTED** that invitations to a joint Ofcom/Panel hosted 'Consumer Conference', scheduled to take place on 16 September, would be sent out by Ofcom shortly.

## 9. Telecoms debt and affordability of essential services

9.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to inform Members about an Ofcom project looking at whether affordability was a barrier to participation in essential communications services. The Panel welcomed the study and discussed a number of issues including the protocols/checks that communications providers had in place to identify and manage the accounts of vulnerable consumers; the social value of telecoms services; credit ratings; and correlation between debt and disconnections. Members **NOTED** that Ofcom had published disconnection/debt management guidance and a link to the document would be copied to Members.

## 10. White spaces

10.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update Members on Ofcom's work on TV white spaces. This included a planned October pilot to test the systems and processes that would need to be in place to allow licence exempt use of spectrum. Members **NOTED** that location-aware wireless devices assisted by databases to provide information on white space availability, would allow use of under-utilised frequency bands and that the pilot would be about proof of concept.

## 11. Consumer Journey Research

11.1 Colleagues from Ofcom and Ipsos Mori joined the meeting. Members had been provided with the elements of a draft report which included the Panel commissioned Ipsos Mori qualitative research and related documentation on the quantitative research context, standards of complaints handling, and a conclusions and recommendations chapter. Members made a number of comments on these components and **NOTED** that the report would be prefaced with an executive summary from the Panel. Fiona Lennox, Karen Keany and colleagues from Ofcom and Ipsos Mori would work together to finalise the research report. Publication was expected to take place in September.

## 12. Any other business

12.1 As he was unable to attend the meeting, Alan Mather, from at800,

would provide the Panel with a note to update Members on recent at800 activity. A representative from at800 would be invited to meet the Panel in September. Members noted the contents of various information papers, including papers on recent developments in the communications sector and on Panel business to date in 2013/14.

.....Chairman .....Date