

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 20 November 2014 at 10.30

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

PresentConsumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chair)

Kim Brook

Jaya Chakrabarti

Rick Hill

Chris Holland

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

In attendance

Jenny Borritt

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

External visitor from UKRN (item 5)

Other Ofcom colleagues

Apologies

Bob Twitchin

<p>1. Welcome and introduction</p> <p>1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting. As the completion of Kim Brook's term approached, Members NOTED that a recruitment exercise was underway to appoint a new Panel/ACOD member to represent the interests and opinions of people living in Wales.</p>	
<p>2. Declarations of Members' interests</p> <p>2.1 Of relevance to item 11, Chris Holland reminded Members of his role as chairman of the Council of the Postal Redress Service. Rick Hill noted that although he remained Chairman of The Consumer Council NI which, amongst other things, promotes and protects the interests of postal consumers across Northern Ireland, he was no longer involved in discussion of postal matters.</p> <p>2.2 No other interests were declared that were not already listed on the Panel's website.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of the meeting on 23 October 2014 and matters arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes were APPROVED for signature by the Chair.</p> <p>3.2 The Panel had written to DCMS and to mobile network operators (MNOs) about lost and stolen phones and the letters would be copied to</p>	FL

<p>Members for information. Some responses had already been received from MNOs.</p> <p>3.23 The Panel hoped to meet the BBC Trust in the near future to discuss access issues related to the iPlayer. Following that session, consideration would be given to meeting broadcasters.</p>	
<p>4. Panel research</p> <p>4.1 Members had received a paper to outline proposals for a Panel research project on inclusive communications. The project was at the scoping stage and work had begun to identify relevant methodologies.</p> <p>4.2 As the Panel was keen to avoid duplication, Ofcom colleagues outlined Ofcom research (undertaken or underway) on issues including interactions between communications providers (CP) and their customers on affordability and on CP compliance with General Condition 15 (special measures for end-users with disabilities), employing methods such as mystery shopping and desk research.</p> <p>4.3 It was AGREED that the scope of the project should go beyond CPs to provide context, eg to include the ease, or otherwise, of older and disabled consumers’ interactions with other organisations like banks, government departments and the NHS. Members made comments/ suggestions on the scope and proposed inclusion of people with mental health problems in research samples and on segmentation by age. A research brief would be drafted and copied to members for comment.</p> <p>4.4 The Panel had planned also to conduct a project into privacy concerns. It was AGREED that this research exercise should be carried forward to the Panel’s 2015/16 workplan.</p>	<p>VH</p>
<p>5. PSB review new audience research</p> <p>5.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to brief Members, who had received a paper on audience research undertaken by Ofcom to explore what UK citizens and consumers wanted from PSB now and in the future and to identify differences in views between age groups, life stages and other demographic groups.</p> <p>5.2 There was discussion of summary research findings and issues including on-demand PSB provision; cost savings and a potential impact on drama production - a genre valued by older people in particular; and availability and discoverability of PSB content.</p>	
<p>6. UK Regulators Network</p> <p>6.1 A colleague from the UK Regulators Network (UKRN) joined the meeting and had provided a paper to brief Members on the work of the UKRN; its membership; objectives; methods of working; and its projects covering a range of cross-sector issues, eg understanding affordability, and including two projects led by Ofcom.</p> <p>6.2 There was discussion of issues including potential cross-sector learning related to lost and stolen bank cards/phones; engagement between the UKRN and sector consumer panels; and consumer research</p>	

<p>undertaken by different regulators.</p>	
<p>7. Switching</p> <p>7.1 Members had received a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting. The Panel NOTED that Ofcom was considering a range of responses following its call for inputs on processes used to switch providers of bundled voice, broadband and subscription Pay TV services, and mobile voice and data services.</p> <p>7.2 There was discussion of the responses and of issues including save offers; whether there were different switching costs associated with fixed and mobile; a desire for common switching processes across services and sectors, examples being energy and financial services; early termination charges; and timescales to achieve harmonised switching processes, the Panel expressing frustration with the slow speed at which the initiative was progressing.</p>	
<p>8. DAB radio</p> <p>8.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and briefed the Panel on the latest position of DAB radio. Members NOTED that a date for switchover had yet to be determined; that DAB coverage continued to be extended; that progress was being made on adaptation of FM radios in motor vehicles; and that a possible future use of FM was for local community radio.</p>	
<p>9. Ofcom update</p> <p>9.1. An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and briefed members on a number of issues affecting Ofcom. Members NOTED recent changes in the membership of the Ofcom Board; that an exercise was underway to recruit a new Chief Executive; that Steve Unger, Ofcom’s Group Director, Strategy, International, Technology and Economists, would be Acting Chief Executive from the year end and until appointment of a new Chief Executive; and that Ofcom had submitted evidence to the Smith Commission, set up to consider further powers for Scotland following the referendum vote.</p>	
<p>10. Consumer update</p> <p>10.1 The Panel had been provided with a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting. There was brief discussion of issues including a project that Ofcom was scoping on contract release e.g. a consumer’s ability to exit a mobile contract due to a deterioration in coverage; Next Generation Intermediaries; and relay service metrics on voice performance. The Panel wished to be kept up-to-date on the project on contract release.</p>	<p>FL</p>
<p>11. Post - review of complaints and redress</p> <p>11.1 Colleagues from Ofcom joined the meeting to brief members on</p>	

<p>preliminary thinking on a new Ofcom project on post complaints and redress and provided background on previous and related work undertaken by Postcomm. Issues discussed included data on complaints, numbers/ levels and categories; alternative dispute resolution; and the monetary values involved in postal disputes. The Panel wished to engage with the project as it progressed.</p>	<p>FL</p>
<p>12. Any other business</p> <p>12.1 Members NOTED that the Which? taskforce on nuisance calls would issue recommendations at an event on 8 December and Members were invited to attend; and that a draft response to the DCMS consultation on national roaming would be circulated to Members shortly for comment.</p>	

.....ChairmanDate