

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 21 January 2016 at 10.30

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

**Present**

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chair)

Jaya Chakrabarti (item 8 onwards)

Rhys Evans

Rick Hill (by telephone)

Chris Holland

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

Bob Twitchin

In attendance

Jenny Borritt

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

Karen Keaney (items 1 to 5)

External visitors from Ipsos MORI (item 5)

External visitors from the Intellectual Property Office (item 11)

Other Ofcom colleagues

**1. Declarations of Members' interests**

1.1 Of relevance to item 11, Rhys Evans reported that on occasions he had delivered management training courses to staff at the IPO.

**2. Minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2015 and matters arising**

2.1 Subject to clarification, the minutes of the meeting of 16 December were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair.

2.2 It was suggested that the Panel's response to Ofcom's *Proposed Annual Plan 2016/17* could include comment on Ofcom recruitment policies. The Panel had flagged other issues with Ofcom in relation to the Single Equality Scheme and Diversity Report. A response had been received and it was agreed that dialogue on the issues should continue. Members were requested to provide comments on a draft letter that the Panel planned to send to the European Commission in relation to the proposed merger between H3G and O2. Members **NOTED** that Panel concerns about the inclusion of parents or children with disabilities and of Welsh speakers in media literacy research samples had been raised with Ofcom and dialogue would continue.

### 3. Consumer update

3.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting. Members had received a paper to update them on the recent activity of Ofcom's consumer teams and the latest iteration of Ofcom's Consumer Action Plan.

3.2 There was discussion of issues including Openreach quality of service (QoS) and minimum standards set in 2013, following concern about the time taken to respond and to undertake repairs following severe weather conditions. There had been improved performance but more remained to be done. It was the view of Panel members that Openreach performance measures ought to be significantly more challenging.

3.3 There was discussion of the TalkTalk cyberattack. Members **NOTED** that there had been positive engagement between TalkTalk and Ofcom. Discussion turned to CLI guidelines and Members **NOTED** that Ofcom was at the early stages of a review and seeking to make the guidelines technology neutral. Other issues raised included SIM takeover, for fraud purposes, and migration of Sky Talk customers, advice for Sky customers had been posted on the Ofcom website. An Ofcom colleague agreed to report back on one or two minor queries that were raised.

### 4. Monthly update report

4.1 Members had been provided with the latest iteration of the monthly report on stakeholder engagement activity related to the Panel's key policy issues. Members were pleased with the format, commented that the report was useful as an audit trail and suggested other potential refinements to the document.

### 5. 'Digital footprints' research

5.1 Colleagues from Ofcom and Ipsos MORI joined the meeting. This was an introductory session as Ipsos MORI had been commissioned to undertake new 'Digital Footprints' research which would include elements updating the 2011 Panel research report entitled *Online Personal Data: the consumer perspective*. The 2016 research would comprise of three component parts: desk research to evaluate current research insights in this area; a face-to-face quantitative survey among 1,000 UK adults; and 20 in-depth interviews recruited from the quantitative sample.

5.2 Members made a number of comments and suggestions. There was a number of actions to be taken forward including the sharing of interview questions and discussion guides with Panel members; and the Panel would provide some hypotheses and guidance to Ipsos MORI on the research's focus since the potential scope of the project was wide.

### 6. Broadband QoS, Ofcom WiFi app and mobile coverage maps

6.1 Members had received a paper outlining Ofcom's recent work to examine how the end-to-end internet connection chain could affect the overall performance of consumers' broadband experience and to summarise the development and functionality of Ofcom's Wi-Fi checker

app that had been launched in December. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion. Members **NOTED** that ISPs had differing levels of control over the entire connection and that the consumer experience would be impacted by the weakest link in the chain.

6.2 Members commented that ISPs could deliver a set of differentiated broadband products/prices in response to the service actually experienced by their customers; that speed should not be equated with QoS; that customers' location data could be explored as a source of information about mobile signal strength; and the need to provide coverage maps in a format accessible to people with a visual impairment. Members **NOTED** that Ofcom subscribed to an open data policy and that 3<sup>rd</sup> parties were free to make use of and add value to a wide range of Ofcom data available.

## 7. Panel annual workplan

7.1 Members discussed and suggested priorities for inclusion in the Panel's 2016/17 workplan. It was **AGREED** that Members would reflect further and by the middle of the following week email any further comments/suggestions. An initial draft of 2016/17 workplan key areas of engagement would then be circulated to Members. It was proposed that stakeholders be invited to share their research plans and highlight possibilities for Panel research topics, as part of consultation on the workplan.

## 8. Consumer Experience report (CER) and research update

8.1 Members had been provided a paper outlining the format of Ofcom's forthcoming *Consumer Experience 2015* publication and stakeholder event, both due to take place on 10 February. At the event the Panel's Chair would give a presentation on the Panel's recent Inclusive Communications research report, respond to the Ofcom publication and take part in a Q&A session. Members had also received a paper to update them on recently completed, current and forthcoming Ofcom research projects.

8.2 Ofcom colleagues were present for discussion and the Ofcom team agreed to give consideration to CER comments/suggestions made by Members. An Ofcom colleague agreed also to report back on one or two minor research queries raised by Members.

## 9. Non-geographic numbers update

9.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to brief members on Ofcom's initial assessment of the impact of changes to non-geographic call services, introduced on 1 July 2015. In summary, Ofcom findings suggested that overall there had been positive consumer outcomes. For most customers either the negative impact (price increase) was small or there were packages available offering low prices, and/or they had benefitted by the trend towards greater use of 03 and 080 numbers where previously premium service numbers had been used, and there was also benefit from calls to 080 from mobile now being free to the caller. The Panel would continue to monitor developments.

**10. Vulnerability and debt**

10.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting and a paper had been provided to give an overview of a range of issues related to consumers in vulnerable circumstances and other topics that included affordability, debt and disconnection.

10.2 Members raised issues including power of attorney; clarity in billing; suggested that there was value in producing a disconnections code of practice; and signal availability, its importance in an emergency and for consumers with a disability in particular.

**11. Intellectual Property Office**

11.1 Colleagues from the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) joined the meeting to discuss the European Commission’s proposals on the portability of digital services within the EU, i.e. the ability of a subscriber to access his/her digital content service when away from home elsewhere in the EU, on holiday or on business, and provided they have the right level of internet connection. The IPO had issued a call for views and was keen to receive a consumer perspective. Members made a range of comments and it was **AGREED** that the Panel would submit a written response to the IPO call for input.

**12. Any other business**

12.1 Jaya Chakrabarti had attended a BIS hosted Digital Single Market roundtable earlier in the day and would copy a summary note of the event to members for information.

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