

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 23 May 2013 at 10.30

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

Present

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chairman)
Kim Brook
Jaya Chakrabarti
Chris Holland
Libby Kinney (via video conference, items 1 to 6)
Mairi Macleod
Craig Tillotson
Bob Twitchin

In attendance

David Edwards
Graham Howell (item 10)
Karen Keany (items 1 to 6)
Fiona Lennox
Jonathan Pillinger-Cork
A colleague from the Cabinet Office (item 6)
David Hendon, Chairman of the TV/4G Coexistence Oversight Board (item 7)
Other Ofcom colleagues

1. Declarations of interest

1.1 Chris Holland had been appointed as Chairman of the Council of the Postal Redress Service. No other interests were declared.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 25 April 2013 and matters arising

2.1 The minutes were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chairman.
2.2 Members **NOTED** that Ipsos Mori was working on the draft report of the 'consumer journey' Panel research and this would be shared with Members in due course. The Panel would not proceed with a quantitative supplement to the report, drawing instead on Ofcom data. The Panel subgroup working on recommendations arising from the research would be provided with a note on industry call centre service-level agreements, as an input to their thinking.
2.5 Members noted information supplied as a result of their enquiry into EE's mobile mast rationalisation activity. Members expressed concern about the apparent experience of consumers and asked for further detail to be provided to the next meeting.
2.6 The Panel would take part in an Ofcom consumer conference in September. The Panel Chairman would chair the event.
2.7 Enquiries would be made to update Members on current debates about spectrum sharing emanating from the European Commission.

3. Consumer update

3.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting. Members had been provided

with a summary note on Ofcom consumer empowerment and protection issues. Discussion included consumer switching on the Openreach copper network; an Ofcom consultation on changes to the price comparison calculator accreditation scheme; work to consider responses to the recent call for inputs on mobile quality of service and related discussions with mobile operators; relay services and an upcoming Deaf Access to Communications workshop in June.

4. Political update

4.1 Members were joined by an Ofcom colleague who provided an oral update on relevant and recent Government and legislative issues. Those **NOTED** included developments in relation to the Communications Review which was now expected to result in a publication by DCMS prior to the Summer recess; the recent Queen's Speech which had included Bills on consumers' rights, intellectual property rights and on gambling (licensing and advertising); non-geographic numbers and their use by Government departments; and the House of Lords' Communications Committee media plurality inquiry.

5. Research update

5.1 Members had been provided with a summary of recent research and there was brief discussion with an Ofcom colleague of the key trends in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This data would be included in each of the Nations Communications Market Reports, to be published in early August. Discussion touched on take up of tablets; mobile banking; and use of online public services. Members were given a roundup of recently completed Ofcom research projects and there was brief discussion of online copyright infringement tracker research.

6. Government Digital Service (GDS)

6.1 A colleague from the GDS (Cabinet Office) delivered a presentation on issues related to the Government's development of digital services, its strategy and capability; the Assisted Digital programme; and the use of services by citizens. There was discussion of topics including the availability of online public services of equal quality in different parts of the UK; interest from the devolved governments; privacy and authentication; and cost neutrality for services accessed via different channels, eg online or by telephone. It was agreed that the Panel would revisit this issue in the Autumn.

7. TV/4G Coexistence Oversight Board

7.1 David Hendon, Chairman of the Oversight Board set up to oversee the help to be offered to consumers affected by television interference caused by the rollout of 4G in the 800 MHz spectrum band, joined the meeting and reported on pilots and related activity. Members **NOTED** that DTT clearance was at an early stage but to date positive progress was being made. It was **AGREED** that the Panel would seek a further update from Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited in due course and from the Oversight Board at the September meeting.

8. Provision of telephone directories

8.1 Members had been provided with information on research undertaken by Ofcom on the use of, and reliance on, paper telephone directories based on a face-to-face quantitative omnibus exercise. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting and summarised the findings, which showed higher levels of use amongst those aged 65+ or without the internet in particular. There was a brief discussion of issues including the cost and profitability of the provision of phone books, how this could be affected by smaller print runs and the related topic of directory enquiry services.

9. Review of compliance with the Consumer Interest Toolkit

9.1 Members had been provided with a background paper and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion and to outline an internal review of Ofcom's compliance against the Panel's Consumer Interest Toolkit. Members **NOTED** that a 'gap analysis' had been undertaken; that it indicated that Ofcom satisfied the guidelines, with the exception of benchmarking Ofcom practice against other regulators; and that a number of actions had been undertaken to refresh related Ofcom documentation, resources and training. The Toolkit had been published by the Panel in 2006 and it was **AGREED** that consideration should be given to a refresh/republication exercise.

10. Ofcom update

10.1 Graham Howell, Ofcom Corporation Secretary, joined the meeting to brief Members on issues of current interest to the Ofcom Board, including spectrum strategy; market reviews; and nuisance calls.

11. Non-geographic call services

11.1 Members had been provided with a paper and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion of issues related to Ofcom's work to improve and simplify use of non-geographic number ranges. Members **NOTED** that the Ofcom team had engaged with industry stakeholders and that with implementation of policy decisions due in early 2015 the focus of activity would become the consumer. It was **AGREED** that careful consideration would need to be given to how information about the new regime would be communicated and the Panel's advice would be sought. It was noted that a study of the Government's use of non-geographic numbers was being undertaken by the National Audit Office, with a report expected in July.

12. PhonepayPlus report

12.1 Members **NOTED** the contents of the latest bi-yearly activity report provided by PhonepayPlus (PPP). It was **AGREED** that issues arising from the report would be communicated to PPP colleagues and discussed in more detail when they next attended a Panel meeting.

13. Any other business

13.1 Members **NOTED** the contents of an information paper highlighting recent developments in the communications sector of interest to the Panel.