

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 27 June 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

Mairi Macleod

Craig Tillotson

Bob Twitchin

In attendance

David Edwards

Karen Keany (items 6 to 12)

Fiona Lennox

Jonathan Pillinger-Cork

Other Ofcom colleagues

1. Declarations of interest

1.1 There were no interests to declare.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 23 May 2013 and matters arising

2.1 The minutes were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chairman.

2.2 Members **NOTED** that the Panel's draft research report on the 'consumer journey' would be a focus of discussion at the July Panel meeting.

2.3 The Panel had concerns about Everything Everywhere's (EE) mast rationalisation and **AGREED** to write to EE. The Panel would also highlight its general concerns about mast rationalisation with other MNOs.

2.4 Members **NOTED** that Alan Mather of Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited would update the Panel on DTT clearance activity at the July meeting and that the "refresh" of the Panel's Consumer Interest Toolkit would be an activity for September.

2.5 The previous day, Panel Members had attended a series of briefings by Ofcom colleagues on issues including mobile coverage; local TV; and the work of the Ofcom Spectrum Policy and the Strategy, International, Technology and Economists Groups. The Panel had found the discussion of mobile coverage of particular interest and would continue to give attention to this matter.

2.6 Reference was made to Arqiva, the telecommunications company that had been appointed to deliver the Governments Mobile Infrastructure Project. It was **AGREED** that Arqiva should be invited to meet the Panel.

3. Communications Market Report (CMR)

3.1 Members had received a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the

meeting to brief Members on key points arising from Ofcom's CMR 2013, including trends for the Nations. Members NOTED a number of trends and that publication was planned for the summer.

4. Adult media literacy report

4.1 Members had been provided with a paper on key findings from Ofcom's *Adults' media use and attitudes report 2013* and were joined by Ofcom colleagues for discussion. Members NOTED that the next research questionnaire was at the design stage, with field work due to take place over September and October 2013, and that the emphasis of Ofcom's work in the media literacy space was on research. There was discussion of issues including online security and the use of passwords; the importance of Ofcom's research findings in driving stakeholders' media literacy agendas; consumers' frankness about the type of internet services/content they accessed; and the use of government online services.

4.2 Members NOTED that Fiona Lennox would continue to discuss with Ofcom colleagues a possible joint Panel/Ofcom Autumn stakeholder event related to the latter's online citizen project.

5. Complaints bulletin

5.1 Members had been provided with a paper and charts from Ofcom's *Telecoms and Pay TV Complaints Q1 (January to March) 2013*, covering complaints reported to Ofcom. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion of issues including complaints about EE mobile coverage; from business customers related to changing suppliers and billing; and the availability of data on complaints handled by the ADR schemes. Members NOTED that nuisance (abandoned and silent) calls had been the highest consumer complaint category, other main areas being billing, complaint handling and service faults.

6. Nuisance calls

6.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and provided an oral update on Ofcom's current and planned work to tackle nuisance calls. There was discussion of issues including call tracing and CLI enforcement; the activities of claims management companies and the Telephone Preference Service.

7. Update on General Condition 9

7.1 General Condition 9 (GC9) sets out the requirement on telecoms providers to offer contracts with minimum terms. Members had been provided with a paper and an Ofcom colleague joined the meeting to update Members on Ofcom's work on GC9 related to price rises in fixed term contracts. Members NOTED that following stakeholders' responses to its recent consultation Ofcom was considering measures to address consumer harm and expected to publish a statement this year. Any new measures would come into force three months later. Members questioned whether a reduction in mobile coverage available to a consumer would equate to material detriment and this point would be clarified with Ofcom.

8. Broadband Speeds Code of Practice mystery shopping

8.1 Members had been provided with a paper and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update them on work to improve the information available to consumers about broadband speeds. Members NOTED that Ofcom had completed a round of mystery shopping research; was in the process of verifying the data; and that Ofcom expected to publish the research in July.

8.2 Ofcom was planning to research/measure the performance of 3G and 4G mobile networks and Members AGREED that it would be useful to invite an external provider of coverage information to meet the Panel.

9. Tariff Complexity

9.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for a discussion of tariff complexity in the communications sector. The issues discussed included tariff variety; the benefits/disbenefits of complexity; price comparison websites; and tariff complexity arising from the bundling of services.

10. Annual Report

10.1 Members provided comments on the latest draft of the Panel's Annual Report 2012/13. Members were requested to provide any additional comments by email and by the end of the following week. The Panel Annual Report was expected to be published in July.

11. Communications Plan update

11.1 Members had been provided with a paper to update them on communications activity, including a review of the Panel's stakeholder list which Members discussed and to which they were invited to contribute. Members would email any additions or amendments to Karen Keany.

12. Any other business

12.1 The Panel/ACOD had been approached by Ofcom's Corporate Responsibility Coordinator seeking to provide an update on work being carried out by Ofcom's Disability Working Group (DWG). The DWG had carried out an accessibility audit of Riverside House and a request that the report be shared with the Panel/ACOD would be made to Ofcom.

12.2 Members NOTED that Deaf Access to Communications would be holding a workshop on video relay in July and Bob Twitchin would attend the event.

12.4 Members NOTED that the Panel had been invited by Ofcom, along with other consumer representatives, to participate in a 'virtual working group' to provide input on communication and marketing issues related to changes to the display of charges for non-geographic calls.

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

.....ChairmanDate