

Minutes of the 86th meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel

on 21 March 2012 at 9.30

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

Present

Consumer Panel

Bob Warner (Chair)

Fiona Ballantyne

Kim Brook (ex-officio member)

Colin Browne

Roger Darlington

Maureen Edmondson

Chris Holland (co-opted member)

In attendance

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

Colleagues from DCMS (item 3)

Colleagues from Futuresight (item 6)

A colleague from BIS (item 9)

Other Ofcom colleagues (items 7 and 8)

1. Declarations of interest

1.1 Roger Darlington declared his recent appointments to the Board of the Online Centres Foundation and as independent Chairman of the Customer Challenge Group of South East Water. Colin Browne had been appointed as a non-executive director of the Voice of the Listener and Viewer.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 22 February 2012, matters arising and progress on actions

2.1 Members **APPROVED** the draft minutes for signature by the Chairman.

2.2 Current Panel member appointments were due to end on 31 March. The Chairman reported that Ofcom had a process in hand to extend appointments. He would raise this and the issue of Ofcom consultation processes at his forthcoming meeting with Graham Howell, Secretary to the Ofcom Corporation.

2.3 Members **NOTED** that: the Chairman had given evidence on mobile roaming at the House of Lords EU Subcommittee and he would be speaking at Nominet's annual policy forum debate the next day; Roger Darlington would attend an OXiS event on low and discontinued internet use by young people and Fiona Lennox would attend a UK Online/LSE digital inclusion symposium to discuss collaboration between academia and public, private and voluntary sectors, gaps in research and information exchange.

2.4 Members **NOTED** the information in the latest Panel Implementation Plan, providing a summary and strategic overview of Panel activities.

3. Broadband universal service

3.1 Colleagues from the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Rural Broadband Programme and from its Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) gave a presentation to members covering BDUK progress and deliverables and the MIP project.

3.2 In response to an enquiry raised by a member about take-up of broadband, BDUK offered to provide a note on its activities to stimulate demand, including details of activity with Race Online 2012 and LEAs.

3.3 There was discussion of mobile issues including use of micro-sites, of what could be expected in the Nations in the context of a mobile coverage target for the UK and the position of the UK when compared with other countries in Europe. It was **AGREED** that BDUK slides would be circulated to members.

4. Panel draft spectrum auction response

4.1 Members had been provided with copies of the Panel's draft response to Ofcom's *Second consultation on assessment of future mobile competition and proposals for the award of 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz spectrum and related issues*. Members commented on the draft and **AGREED** that it should be finalised in agreement with the Chairman.

4.2 There was brief discussion of Everything Everywhere's proposal to use some of its existing spectrum to deliver 4G services. Ofcom was consulting on the issue. It was **AGREED** that Ofcom colleagues should be invited to the next meeting to brief members further on this matter.

4.3 Brief reference was made to the Panel's Consumer Interest Toolkit and whether all Ofcom colleagues remained sighted on the Toolkit. It was suggested that Ofcom colleagues attending future Panel meetings could be asked how their work was aligned with the questions raised by the Toolkit.

5. Panel workplan

5.1 Members were provided with copies of the updated draft Panel workplan and copies of a number of responses to the published draft. Members made brief comments and, taking views into account, Fiona Lennox would finalise the workplan for publication on the Panel's website.

6. Digital participation research project

6.1 Members were joined by colleagues from Ofcom's consumer research team and from Futuresight. The agency introduced findings from the research and covered a range of issues, including key factors to overcome barriers to digital participation. Detail was provided on an element of the project that focussed on non-users of the internet in an area of extreme deprivation in Glasgow.

6.2 It was **NOTED** that the plan was to publish a research report in May. In the meantime members were invited to reflect further on research findings and send in views which would feed into a series of recommendations emerging from the project. The published research report would need to make clear, from the very start, the problems that could arise for people not online. It was **AGREED** that consideration would have to be given to a communications plan.

7. Consumer information remedies

7.1 Members were joined by Ofcom colleagues for discussion of Ofcom's consumer information remedies project. Objectives were to identify and evaluate conditions where consumer information remedies were/were not effective; to provide a framework for assessment and identify factors to consider; and to use learnings from desk research to produce a toolkit of considerations when designing information remedies. In addition, Ofcom had undertaken a number of stakeholder interviews. Ofcom intended to publish a discussion paper, but prior to that it would 'road-test' the toolkit with Ofcom colleagues and host a stakeholder workshop. Ofcom colleagues would circulate a draft of the toolkit to Panel members for comment.

8. Quarterly Ofcom consumer update

8.1 An Ofcom colleague updated members on a number of projects led by Ofcom's Consumer Group. Reference was made to the Consumer Interest Toolkit and members **NOTED** Ofcom's plan to review and ensure that the Toolkit was being used correctly.

9. Midata presentation

9.1 A colleague from BIS joined the meeting and briefed the Panel on the Government's midata project.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 This was Maureen Edmondson's last Panel meeting. Members placed on record their significant appreciation for her valuable contribution to the work of the Panel and wished her well in her future endeavours.

10.2 There was no other business.