

Minutes of the 96<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel  
on 27 February 2013 at 10.30

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

**Present**

Consumer Panel

Jo Connell (Chairman)  
Kim Brook  
Jaya Chakrabarti  
Chris Holland  
Libby Kinney  
Mairi Macleod  
Craig Tillotson  
Bob Twitchin

In attendance

David Edwards  
Karen Keany  
Fiona Lennox  
Jonathan Pillinger-Cork  
A colleague from Ipsos Mori (item 8)  
Tony Neate, CEO 'Get Safe Online' (item 9)  
Other Ofcom colleagues

**1. Welcome and introduction**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Karen Keany who had been appointed recently as the Panel's media adviser.

**2. Declarations of interest**

2.1 Chris Holland declared his individual membership of the Voice of the Listener and Viewer and his temporary membership of the Postal Redress Service Council. There were no other declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the meeting on 23 January 2013 and matters arising**

- 3.1 Minutes were APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.
- 3.2 Members were encouraged to provide a brief note of meetings or events they attended on behalf of the Panel for inclusion in a regular update to members.
- 3.3 An update on Ofcom's WebFirst initiative would feature in a future Panel meeting.
- 3.4 Ofcom research on nuisance calls was expected to be available for discussion at the April meeting.
- 3.5 Members were requested to provide email comments to Fiona Lennox on the Panel's draft response to the Consumer Focus consultation on the proposed work programme of the new Regulated Industries Unit (RIU).
- 3.6 Members were provided with a note on Ofcom's proposed traffic management survey and requested to provide any feedback by email.
- 3.7 Members were given an update on nuisance calls and discussed the latest

developments.

**4. SCAP update**

4.1 Members had been provided with a paper and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update the Panel on the recent 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz spectrum awards (4G) and on related spectrum clearance and coexistence issues. There was discussion of 4G coverage targets; Panel concern about the monitoring of O2's 4G rollout obligations and an apparent absence of milestones; reporting on coverage and mobile broadband speeds; progress in setting up Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited (DMSL); the new DMSL website at [www.at800.tv](http://www.at800.tv); and messages in the media and communications related to households that could experience 4G interference with their television service. Members **NOTED** that Simon Beresford-Wylie, DMSL CEO, would meet members at the next Panel meeting.

4.2 Following the discussion with Ofcom colleagues, members **AGREED** the need for an in-depth Panel session on 4G and related mobile issues. Members were requested to email Fiona Lennox details of relevant questions to be raised and challenges to be addressed.

**5. Ofcom research update**

5.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion. Members had been provided with a paper giving an overview of the planned research for Ofcom's Communications Market Report 2013 (CMR). Members **NOTED** the inclusion of 'use of online services' (including use of 'e-government' to access welfare benefits) as a proposed research topic and raised a concern that some citizens in need of such services were likely to be offline.

5.2 It was **AGREED** that Ofcom colleagues would provide the Panel with further details of CMR demographic breakdowns; it was **NOTED** that Ofcom did not expect to be able to include 4G issues in the CMR report due to an insufficient sample size; and there was discussion of issues including trends and analysis of data. Members also **NOTED** that there would be discussion of an Ofcom disability analysis at the next Panel meeting and a further discussion of the CMR at the May meeting.

**6. Consumer Update**

6.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and colleagues were provided with a summary note on consumer protection and empowerment issues. Discussion included switching; mid-contract price increases; nuisance calls; next generation text relay (NGTR) and video relay; review of General Condition 15; and the Consumer Focus consultation on the RIU workplan. It was **AGREED** that the agenda of the next meeting should include an update on NGTR.

**7. Unexpectedly high bills**

7.1 Members had received a paper to update them on Ofcom's work on 'bill shock', undertaken since its March 2012 statement and including consumer research, engagement with BEREK and with DCMS. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion of issues including use of SMS alerts and vulnerable

groups, a Panel suggestion being that appropriate third parties could be SMS recipients in addition to the handset holder; billing difficulties associated with lost and stolen handsets; consumer understanding about 0800 mobile call charges and their awareness of mobile data charges. Members NOTED that in March 2013 Ofcom would publish an update on unexpectedly high bills and new consumer guides for consumers.

**8. Panel research update**

8.1 Colleagues from Ofcom and a colleague from Ipsos Mori joined the meeting and updated members on the Panel's qualitative research project. Members were taken through a pilot test of the recruitment screener and content outline and the results of five bill payer interviews. Members were content with the pilot and the direction that the research was taking.

**9. Get Safe Online**

9.1 Members were joined by the CEO of 'Get Safe Online', who gave the Panel a presentation on his organisation's work to provide the Government's preferred online security advice channel and a source of unbiased, factual and easy-to-understand information for consumers and small businesses on online safety. Members discussed their concerns in this area and were updated on Get Safe Online's strategy, Get Safe Online week, forthcoming campaigns and his view on top priorities in this area.

**10. Call for inputs: mobile experience**

10.1 Members had been provided with a paper to update them on Ofcom's recently published 'call for input' entitled *Measuring mobile voice and data quality of experience*. This work was supported by research on the extent that mobile reception issues affect consumers and findings were outlined in the paper. Members NOTED that as part of this exercise Ofcom intended to host a workshop in March to discuss options for improving the provision of consumer information, involving mobile network operators, government departments and consumer organisations. The Panel had been invited to take part in the workshop.

**11. Any other business**

11.1 Members were updated on developments in relation to nuisance calls.  
 11.2 There had been media reports that the European telecommunications commissioner had told the Mobile World Congress of her plans to create a single market for telecoms. It was AGREED that Ofcom's view be sought on the proposal and on its impact on the mobile sector.  
 11.3 Members NOTED an information paper providing an update on key developments in the Communications sector since the last Panel meeting.

**ACOD item: Postal research**

1. Members had been provided with a paper on summary findings of the first two waves of Ofcom's residential postal tracking survey. Interviewing in the third wave was underway. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion, which touched on members' wish for age breakdowns for older

consumers, data breakdowns by gender and a split between those online and those offline. Members requested discussion of the survey at the September meeting, following analysis of the data by Ofcom.

**ACOD item: Postal affordability**

2. Members had been provided with a paper and there was discussion with Ofcom colleagues who joined the meeting. Members NOTED that it was Ofcom's intention to publish a report on the affordability of universal postal services. The paper included summary details of key findings. Evidence indicated that services were generally affordable for both residential consumers and SMEs and Ofcom did not propose regulatory intervention at this time.

.....Chairman .....Date