

Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel and ACOD

on 12 July 2018 at 10.30

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

Present

Consumer Panel/ACOD

Jo Connell (Chair)

Amanda Britain

Jaya Chakrabarti

Rick Hill

Chris Holland

Craig Tillotson

Richard Williams

In attendance

Adrian Ball

Jenny Borritt

Fiona Lennox

Colleague from Citizens Advice (for item 10)

Ofcom colleagues

Apologies

Karen Lewis

Item

Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed Members and attendees to the meeting.

1. Declarations of Members' interests

Jaya Chakrabati advised that she has been invited to be on the advisory panel for a Bristol retail bank.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2018 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 14 June were **APPROVED** for signature by the Chair with minor amendments.

3. Consumer update

The Panel was briefed on the latest updates to the consumer priority work. Issues arising from the update and related matters included:

- nuisance calls: the Panel sought the impact of calls beyond the volume data; and the quantity of numbers blocked by consumers.
- Complaints handling: the Panel noted that there is a difference in the proportion of complaints settled before a decision between the two Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) schemes; the Panel

discussed the difficulties around unlocking phones when switching Mobile Network Operators from a recent visit to an ADR Scheme.

- engagement: the Panel noted positive progress and sought details on the qualitative research on End of Contract Notifications.
- standalone fixed voice: the Panel noted the £1/month (8%) increase on the non-regulated price; the team advised that there was a 48% response rate to the letter sent to those with e-billing on the standalone fixed voice; the Panel sought details on how many consumers were paying £18.99 (now £19.99) tariff.
- review of call costs: the team explained the context around the service charge cap.
- automatic compensation: the team advised that there are ongoing discussions with Information Commissioner's Office about whether Porting Authorization Code codes are personal data under Data Protection Act 2018; the Panel noted that voluntary arrangements rely on negotiations within industry.
- Migration to Voice over IP: the Panel advised the team that there are issues with alarm systems and receiving centres.

4. Panel discussion: Modernising Consumer Markets

The Panel **DISCUSSED** its draft response to the Modernising Consumer Markets Green Paper.

5. Corporate Social Responsibility update

The Panel heard from Ofcom's team working on its Diversity and Inclusion Programme. Points raised by the Panel included:

- seeing distribution of all characteristics across seniority.
- limited data on disability within the organisation based on employees not filling in forms on Human Resources (HR) systems.
- the revision of HR workplace policies based on Business Disability Forum recommendations.
- age-groups' and people with other protected characteristics success at interviews and job applications.
- the ability to implement access solutions proactively.
- outreach recruitment for certain groups.
- exploring the underlying issues of bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- accommodating the effects of disabilities not necessarily the causes or definitions of disabilities.

6. 700MHz clearance programme update

The Panel heard about the measures developed to assist certain consumers who may be impacted by the 700MHz clearance. Points raised by Members included:

- estimates of homes requiring assistance were above actuals.
- the underlying issues of the 25% of those impacted who found the process dissatisfactory; this was mostly driven by consumers who did

not want to retune their devices; once shown, consumers found the process straightforward.

- engagement with groups beyond the Royal National Institute of Blind People who represent consumers with a variety of access needs.
- the licence requirement for a consumer support body to be appropriately branded and does sufficient outreach.
- the ability to access the database of consumers impacted by the 800MHz clearance.

7. Mobile coverage update

The Panel heard from the Ofcom team working on mobile coverage. Points raised by Members included:

- two geographic coverage obligations: 92% UK landmass and specific nations obligations; one premises obligation: 60% premises.
- operators differ in opinion of achievability of the 92% target.
- the use of actual and historic build/site information.
- targeting transport routes.
- the distribution of densities of premises that challenge the business case for network build.
- solutions for the areas lacking coverage (or competing coverage).
- links with technical solutions from TV white space to enable local coverage providers.
- the size of spectrum packages available in the auction with implications on coverage, capacity, and cost: using the assets differently based on different regional profiles.

8. Government & Parliamentary update

The Panel heard about the latest relevant Parliamentary issues. Points raised by Members included:

- the publication of the white paper on Exiting the EU; with a lack of clarity on the impacts of the latest policies on the digital economy.
- inviting the Brexit Ofcom team to the Panel in September.
- the priority for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to simplify ADR schemes.
- use of software to personalise retail pricing.
- consumer advocacy is being led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (through the Digital Minister, Margot James); DCMS has asked Ofcom's Consumer Group Director for a summary of the current role of the Panel and suggestions for how it could be enhanced.

9. Access Services update

The Panel were updated on Access services. Points raised by Members included:

- Video on Demand (VOD) accessibility: new regulations allowing Ofcom to act more strongly in this area; the Statement is being drafted with similarity of regulation on linear and on-demand

services. The Panel were concerned about the length of time to reach implementation under Ofcom targets.

- monitoring and reporting, contrasting the linear provisions against VOD provisions. [Ofcom to send over link to access & diversity hub where latest reports can be found].
- publication of Statement on Electronic Programme Guide requirements for sight-impaired consumers, allowing the possibility for innovative solutions that can be shown to be reliable and easy to use.
- piloting of apps for sight-impaired users of cinemas which show that content producers are accepting this shift away from securing their IP.
- researching the impact of campaigning about audio description services.
- updating the access services code, particularly the guidance section.
- the reduction of lag on subtitling.
- the shift of Ofcom's role from driving availability of services to improving awareness of services.
- enforcement continues in linear TV but progress was seen for the providers under investigation.

10. Citizens Advice update

The Panel was updated by colleagues from Citizens Advice (CA) on their general work and specifics on the telecoms sector. Points raised by Members included:

- the dual mission of CA: advice and advocacy.
- local bureau footprint is important to CA's work.
- web chat shown to be useful for the most vulnerable.
- the challenge of funding support across local charities.
- using data on trending advice being sought to inform priorities for advocacy.
- differences between sectors, regulators, and consumer advocates.
- CA and the Panel to share responses to the green paper.

11. Any other business

There was no other business.