



Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Minister for Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

9 July 2007

Dear Minister

On behalf of the Ofcom Consumer Panel, I would like to congratulate you on your new post.

The Ofcom Consumer Panel is the statutory independent research and policy advisory body established to advise Ofcom and others on consumer and citizen interests in the communications. As such, we had close links with the Department of Trade and Industry and we look forward to working with you. If you would like a briefing on the Panel's work I would be delighted to do this.

We worked with the DTI on many issues, including Digital Switchover, consumer protection and representation, and the Telephone Preference Service. It is with regards to this last issue that I am writing to you today.

At its most recent meeting, the Ofcom Consumer Panel considered the operation of the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) on the basis of a report from Ofcom colleagues.

The Panel has been concerned for some time that, not least by comparison with the US 'do not call' system, the TPS scheme has been showing patchy and rather slow progress.

The Ofcom report suggested, however, that determined action taken by the DTI had pushed forward a number of measures designed to improve the experience of customers who are obliged to complain to the TPS about breach of its rules.

The Panel strongly commends these endeavours and has urged Ofcom not only to monitor very closely the statistics and performance of the scheme, but also to

Ofcom Consumer Panel
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

T +44(0)20 7783 4021
F +44(0)20 7981 3406
contact@ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk
www.ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk

Ofcom

operate test complaint systems to make sure that customers are receiving a proper service and their complaints do not disappear into a black hole.

[Withheld from letter]

Proper functioning of the TPS system is clearly very important, not least to a number of old, disabled and vulnerable consumers for whom intrusive sales calls, which turn out to be of no value to them, cause disproportionate disturbance to their daily life at home.

The Panel would be very happy to work alongside your officials in making sure this important scheme is working properly, that complaints data are published, the scheme tested and reviewed regularly and careful observation made of its performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colette Bowe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

COLETTE BOWE
Chairman, Ofcom Consumer Panel