

Minutes of the 90th meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel
on 25 July 2012 at 9.30

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

Present

Consumer Panel

Bob Warner (Chair)

Fiona Ballantyne

Colin Browne

Kim Brook (ex-officio member)

Roger Darlington

Chris Holland (co-opted member)

In attendance

Jo Connell - ACOD Chairman

Lucy Hopkins - Consumer Focus (item 3)

David Edwards

Fiona Lennox

Other Ofcom colleagues (items 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Apologies

1. Declarations of interest

1.1 Roger Darlington reminded members of his membership of the Board of the Online Centres Foundation in anticipation of discussion under agenda item 9, the Age Action Alliance Digital Inclusion proposal.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 20 June 2012, matters arising and progress on actions

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

2.2 The Chairman reported on a recent roundtable he had attended on the Open Internet, hosted by Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries.

2.3 It was **NOTED** that the Broadband Stakeholder Group had published an Open Internet Code of Practice.

2.4 Kim Brook reported that he had attended a recent Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology seminar: *ICT for Disabled People*, held on 5 July.

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

3. All that's digital isn't gold

3.1 Lucy Hopkins of Consumer Focus delivered a short presentation on potential challenges around digital engagement.

4. Technical update

4.1 Members were provided with a technical demonstration of the latest communications technologies.

5. Update on General Condition 9

5.1 Members had been provided with a background paper about Ofcom's own-initiative monitoring and enforcement programme into compliance with General Condition 9 (GC9) by communications providers. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update members further.

5.2 Members **NOTED** that Which? had raised a complaint with Ofcom, about price rises experienced by customers during the life of their contract, and that Ofcom had identified a number of GC9 related policy issues. Ofcom's Consumer Steering Group would discuss the preliminary findings of the initial assessment of standard terms and conditions and would be asked by the Ofcom team to agree to an extension of the GC9 programme for a further six months to deal with the compliance and policy issues identified. It was **AGREED** that the Ofcom team would keep the Panel informed of developments and that the Panel would remain engaged with the issues.

6. Consumer Online Security

6.1 Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion. Members had been provided with a paper about Ofcom's work to co-ordinate its understanding of consumer online security issues and Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting for discussion. Ofcom had concentrated on three areas of work: consumers' perspectives, risks and industry issues; the relevant legislative framework including a proposed draft EU Data protection Regulation; and gaps, ie risks and issues not addressed by the existing regulatory framework or organisations. Members **NOTED** that Ofcom's next steps, subject to internal approval, would include further research and work with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to update the MoU between the ICO and Ofcom. The Panel wished to be kept informed of Ofcom's progress with its work on online security.

7. Political update

7.1 An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and provided an oral update on relevant Government and legislative issues. These included the progress of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill; evidence given by Ofcom to the inquiry by the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications into the Government's superfast broadband strategy; parliamentary interest in 4G and in DTT coexistence issues; and the Leveson Inquiry and further evidence provided by Ofcom including relating to media plurality.

7.2 There was discussion of the Communications Review and related recent DCMS seminars, one of which had focussed on the consumer perspective and had been chaired by the Panel Chairman. Members **NOTED** that there was an opportunity to respond to seminar discussion papers, with a deadline of 14 September, and consideration would be given to submission of a short Panel response on issues including micropayments and personal data security.

8. Consumer Bill of Rights

8.1 Members had been provided with a briefing paper on three consultations related to a Consumer Bill of Rights - two relating to BIS consultations (one on the transposition of the EU Consumer Rights Directive

and another on goods, services and digital content) and a third a Law Commission consultation on its review of unfair terms in consumer contract regulations. An Ofcom colleague joined the meeting and elaborated further on the various consultations. It was **AGREED** that advice would be taken from Ofcom about which of the consultations and consultation questions would be of relevance to the Panel.

9. Age Action Alliance Digital Inclusion proposal

9.1 The Age Action Alliance Digital Inclusion Group (AAA_DI), of which the Panel was a member, was in the process of developing a strategy to engage with and support older people to allow them to make the most of digital technology and services. The Panel discussed a draft of the AAA_DI's strategy document. A number of comments were **NOTED** and would be passed on to AAA_DI.

10. Any other business

10.1 This being the final Panel meeting for the Chairman and a number of Panel members there was brief discussion of near-future Panel priorities in the transition to new Panel chairmanship and membership.

10.2 Jo Connell took the opportunity to express her thanks to the outgoing Chairman and the retiring members of the Panel Roger Darlington, Fiona Ballantyne and Colin Browne for all their valuable contributions to the work of the Panel.

10.2 There was no other business.