



News Release

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Communications Consumer Panel calls on Ofcom to enable consumers who buy bundles of communications services to switch provider more quickly and easily

The Communications Consumer Panel has welcomed Ofcom's proposals to strengthen the rules to protect consumers against mis-selling of fixed-line telephone services.

Mis-selling of fixed-line telephone services is a long-standing problem affecting many consumers. Consumers may be switched to another provider without their consent or may enter into a new contract without fully understanding the implications. This can mean that their existing provider charges them an early termination charge.

At the same time, the Consumer Panel has called on Ofcom to enable consumers who buy bundles of services – such as fixed-line telephone plus broadband – to switch provider more quickly and easily. In a letter to Ofcom's Director of Consumer Affairs, Claudio Pollack, Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that:

“In parallel with strengthening and enforcing the rules on fixed line mis-selling, we believe that Ofcom should be working towards a single process to enable consumers who buy bundles of services to switch provider quickly and easily. We would like to see Ofcom develop a strategy to move to a single switching process as soon as possible.”

The Consumer Panel says this should involve a detailed examination of the possible options, as well as engagement with industry to develop the process. But central to Ofcom's strategy should be a clear understanding of the requirements of consumers.

Anna Bradley concluded that the Panel also wanted Ofcom to ensure that its enforcement activity to prevent mis-selling is resourced properly and that, “Where possible, Ofcom should impose on providers that break the rules financial penalties that have a wider deterrent effect. This would help to raise the level of compliance across the industry.”

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

For a copy of the Communications Consumer Panel report *Not online, not included: consumers say broadband essential for all* go to www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

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