



Press Release

For immediate release 31 August 2010

Consumer watchdog asks Culture Minister Ed Vaizey to act on broadband speeds concerns

The Communications Consumer Panel, the independent communications sector watchdog, has written to the new Culture Minister Ed Vaizey asking him to support action to compel internet service providers (ISPs) to advertise average or typical broadband speed information rather than ‘up to’ speeds.

The Panel believes that advertising ‘up to’ speeds misleads and confuses people, and has been campaigning for some time to get ISPs to provide user-friendly information about the speeds consumers are likely to get.

Anna Bradley, Panel Chair, writes: “Recent Ofcom research shows that the differential between advertised and promised speeds and actual speeds is actually growing.”

The Panel Chair goes on to say: “We do not think this is acceptable. Ofcom has introduced a new voluntary code of practice which commits ISPs to give consumers more accurate information on the speeds they should expect on their line and which allows consumers, in certain circumstances, to leave their provider if they get a lower speeds than they were led to expect.”

She says that it is clear to the Consumer Panel that the most consumer-friendly approach to regulation would be for ISPs to provide information about speeds both pre and post-sale that is clear and easy to understand.

She advises the Minister that the best way to address the problem would be “to give customers a discount or allow them to move provider within contracted periods if consumers are not getting the speeds they were led to believe”.

Anna Bradley concludes by telling the Minister: “We believe ISPs should change their advertising practices in order to avoid the danger of misleading consumers,” adding: “We hope we can count on your support in underscoring to the industry the unacceptability of the current situation and the need for them to do more.”

Ends

CONTACTS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- 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

A copy of the letter is available on the Communications Consumer Panel website

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/CCP%20letter%20to%20Ed%20Vaizey%20160810.pdf>