



News Release

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New rules to prevent the mis-selling of fixed-line phone services are a good move says Consumer Panel.

The Communications Consumer Panel says that new Ofcom rules on fixed-line mis-selling will provide better protection for vulnerable consumers. The new rules should prevent consumers from being switched to another fixed-line provider without their explicit consent or entered into a new landline contract without understanding the terms and conditions.

“Mis-selling of fixed-line phone services is one of the longest-standing problems affecting consumers in the communications sector,” commented Panel chair Anna Bradley, “so we welcome this move to strengthen the rules and to allow Ofcom to enforce them more effectively.”

But the Panel warns that the communications sector will need wider-ranging changes in future to keep up with the way consumers buy products.

“Consumers are buying bundles of services, such as fixed-line telephone, mobile and broadband, in increasing numbers and each element of these bundles have a different switching process,” said Anna Bradley. “We want industry to develop a single, quick and easy switching process that can be used for all these products as soon as possible.”

Ends

Mis-selling covers a range of sales and marketing activities that can work against the interests of consumers. It includes giving false and/or misleading information, or applying unacceptable pressure on a consumer to change telecoms providers, such as refusing to leave until the customer signs up or using threatening behaviour; and ‘slamming’ – where customers are simply switched from one company to another without their knowledge and consent.

For a copy of the Ofcom statement on fixed-line mis-selling go to <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/telecoms/ioi/nwbnd/statement.pdf>

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:

- 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

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