

Ofcom Consumer Panel reaction to latest Directory Enquiries research

18 March 2005

The Ofcom Consumer Panel - the independent body set up to advise Ofcom on consumer interests in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors – commented today on the latest round of Ofcom/ICSTIS Directory Enquiry market research.

Colette Bowe, Chairman of the Panel said:

“Over the past year, the Ofcom Consumer Panel has been tracking the development of the directory enquiries market closely. The latest results reveal headline trends of consumer confusion about costs and which number to call, accompanied by decreasing consumer use.

"We have made two recommendations to Ofcom. First, that it must now learn some lessons from how this was handled by Oftel.

"Second, that Ofcom should consider ways in which the consumer confusion in this market can be remedied. Whilst we note that Ofcom is planning to publish price and performance data to help consumers make effective choices - a welcome acknowledgement by Ofcom of an information problem in this market place – they must proceed to this quickly if consumers are to be in a position to get the best deal.”

Ends

Notes for editors

The Ofcom Consumer Panel is the independent advisory body set up under section 16 (2) of the Communications Act 2003 to advise Ofcom on the consumer interests in broadcasting and telecommunications.

The Panel's eleven members appointed by Ofcom are:

Colette Bowe, Chairman

Ruth Evans, Deputy Chairman

Azeem Azhar

Fiona Ballantyne

Nainish Bapna

Roger Darlington

Simon Gibson

Graham Mather

Kevin McLaughlin

Kate O'Rourke

Bob Twitchin

For further details please visit www.ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk.