

25/01/16 – To all members of the Service Management Forum

## End Customer Consultation Working Group

Following the discussions at the Service Management Forum (SMF) on Tuesday 12 January 2016, we would like to kick off setting up the industry working group on end customer contact. A proposed structure is outlined below for the working group. Please note that this is not prescriptive and we'd welcome suggestions for changes to the structure and the agenda.

There are two main objectives for this working group.

1. **Ensuring your end customers get a better experience.**

From the consultation that ran in November, we know that you are happy for some existing services for end customers to continue but do not feel that Openreach should radically enhance the scope of its end customer contact. That said, we have evidence of too many cases [- on average, 7000 a month -] where end customers simply do not know where to go to get the answers they are looking for, or become frustrated with the processes they face.

Therefore, the challenge for the working group to solve is this: -

**How can we all improve our processes so that end customers receive a better experience in getting the information/support they need?**

2. **Defining when end customers can contact Openreach, and when/how they should be referred back to CPs**

We face numerous questions from stakeholders, including the government and media, asking why end customers are not able to contact Openreach. We need to be able to answer this question satisfactorily, not just for these stakeholders, but more importantly for end customers. We believe if we are more "black and white" with end customers about what we can and cannot do for them, then they will ultimately receive a better service - which has to be a good outcome for our industry. We would like to explore ways to make joint improvements with you. Therefore the second challenge for the working group to solve is this: -

**Under what circumstances should end customers contact Openreach directly and how should Openreach respond to those queries that fall outside these criteria?**

With these two objectives in mind, there are a number of specific questions we would like the working party to cover. These include:

- If an end customer contact into Openreach is related to a topic that should be handled by a CP, then how should end customers be directed back to you?
- If an end customer is raising a service escalation or complaint, what is the best way to direct that end customer – in what circumstances should they be directed back to you and how?
- What changes can Openreach make to its websites to make it easier for end customers to get the information and answers they need and know who to speak to?

- Should Openreach introduce new digital contact channels for its existing services? For example social media or e-chat, so that end customers can directly 'talk' to Openreach?
- What information can Openreach provide CPs with so that end customers are not frustrated when Openreach cannot answer or support directly because incorrect expectations have been given as to our role and on what we can/ cannot do?

This is not an exhaustive list and we would welcome any other specific areas you feel should be included. We will have a chance to discuss this during the SMF interim call on Tuesday 26 January 2016.

Once we have the list, we will set up the first session. This is anticipated to be in early February 2016 and we will come to that session with some proposals to deal with the question(s) being covered on the agenda. We would be delighted if you were also able to bring your ideas for solutions to the session with you. The sessions will be facilitated by Openreach and the OTA and will be held in London; either at the Ofcom building or in Openreach's offices. The first session will be 2 – 3 hours; subsequent sessions will be scheduled as per the outcomes at the first meeting. At this stage the expectation is that there would be fortnightly sessions lasting two hours each and we would complete the working group within two – three months. The working group will be open to all CPs. We will not be setting "quotas" for different types of CP. Output would be shared with all CPs via the portal so that even if a CP does not attend, they are able to contribute to the outcomes.

We hope that you will participate in this important project to improve the service we jointly offer to end customers.

We look forward to speaking with you about this on the SMF interim call on Tuesday.

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