

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 201 at the Offices of Menzies Distribution – South East London, 75 Bugsby’s Way, London SE10 0QJ**

Present:	Neil Robinson Dave Shedden Barry Allsop Carrie Rooks Debbie Dalston Richard Sage Raj Ganatra	Chairman MD NPA PPA SN Independent Retailer Independent Retailer
In Attendance:	Dorothy King	PDRP Administrator

**1. Apologies for Lateness**

Neil Robinson and Raj Ganatra

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Mark Williams  
Rajiv Chotai

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

The minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

4.1 6.1 Snippets from trade press are being circulated to panel.

6.6 DS informed the meeting that he would be happy to discuss with RC (who has sent his apologies for today’s meeting) off line, as the topic is not covered within the PDC.

**5. Issuing PDC Stage 2 Complaint Forms**

5.1 NR reported that he had received a letter from Mike Newman, PDF Chairman, regarding the issuing of Stage 2 Forms.

During the drafting of the PDC2, it was proposed by the PDRP that the PDF Administrator issue Stage 2 Complaint Forms, due concerns that the current procedure may not be capturing all the complaints.

The PDF Board pointed out that there is not a requirement to log all Stage 2 Complaint Form requests, only the returned completed form from the retailer, as it is only when the completed form is returned that the complaint becomes formal.

The PDF and its constituents undertook to ensure that in future the Stage 2 complaint data is provided by their companies in an accurate and timely manner to meet the timetable.

The PDF pointed out that since the request from the PDRP MD has revised its complaint handling procedure, by centralising its handling of Stage 2 Fast Track Resolution Forms (FTR), which has been effective.

5.2 A letter of response had been sent to the PDF Chairman, noting with regret that the proposal, for at least for the time being, has not been accepted and bringing to the attention the following concerns:

- **Completed complaint forms being ignored**
- **Timeliness and accurate data**
- **Transparency**
- **Fairness**

5.3 DK reported that the PDF want the process to be self-dependant rather than centralised.

The PDF does not want to collect data on requests for Stage 2 Complaint Forms, only on the completed form being received as a formal complaint.

The PDF is apprehensive with regards to centralisation as it could mean the retailer would initially contact the wholesaler/publisher, and then be given an alternative contact number or details for the PDF Administrator which could exasperate retailers further.

5.4 For its part the PDRP firmly believes that it is a body to oversee the complaints procedure of the PDC and to ensure transparency of the process for retailers. Furthermore, retailers may be reluctant to instigate complaints by having to contact the company it is complaining about.

5.5 The Chairman pointed out that Stage 2 Fast Track Resolution Forms (FTR) are available to download via the PDF and wholesaler websites, for the retailers that have access to the internet.

RG commented that when he speaks with wholesale customer service in order to request a Stage 2 FTR Form, he has not been advised that he can down load the form direct from either the wholesale or PDF website, he is only aware of this by participating with the panel.

DS reminded the meeting that Menzies Distribution (MD) has published, within its Customer Service Pledge Booklet – Second Edition, copies of both their Restitution Form and Resolution Forms, to copy and utilise, with a step by step guidelines for all retailers.

- 5.6 BA recently went on the PDF website to research the complaints procedure, and found the process, complicated and not clear for retailers to follow.

The reason for BA to research the system was due to personnel changes within Mail Newspaper Group, no formal complaints issued against them since June 2009, personnel changes and the process and its paperwork not having been refreshed internally. When a retailer had requested a FTR in January or February an out of date form was used.

DK informed the meeting that the website Stage 1 is being redeveloped aesthetically to coincide with the launch of PDC2 and be much clearer process to follow.

The 3 Step Guide to the Complaint Process is published on the home page of the website.

- 5.7 DS stated that when early discussions on centralising the complaint process where taking place he opposed it but went on to centralise MD's own complaint handling, and registering and monitoring formal complaints. The internal process had proved effective and MD is disinclined to engage with an alternative as this keeps dialogue direct with its retailers.

DS suggested that the issuing of FTR forms should be a simple process for the retailer to follow whether it is via the wholesaler/publisher or downloading from the website or associated websites of SN/MD/PPA/NPA.

- 5.8 The panel was advised that there has been an issue with a member of the PDRP Panel who has raised two Stage 2 Complaint Forms, without the data appearing on the wholesaler's monthly statistics submissions.

The wholesaler concerned undertook to investigate as to how this may have happened and will respond at the next meeting.

The panel considered that there were three ways this may have occurred:

- The wholesale house had not declared the information.
- The wholesale house had declared the complaint correctly, but an error had occurred with the publishing of statistics to the PDRP.
- The retailer had not returned the complaint form to the correct address or personnel; therefore it had not been recorded.

- 5.9 It was agreed that:

- The PDF decision not to centralise the process of issuing and recording Stage 2 Complaint Forms be noted with regret.

- The PDRP will continue to monitor the situation and will comment at a latter stage.

Retail representatives on the PDRP felt strongly that the process should be handled centrally in the interests of transparency.

- 5.10 It was suggested that there has been confusion issuing forms to retailers due to terminology. When retailers are requesting a Stage 2 Resolution Form, Restitution form was sometimes being issued in error.

The form name was debated and it was felt that the name should be standardised as a 'Formal Complaint Form'.

- Stage 1 Informal Complaint – no form
- Stage 2 Formal Complaint

The PDC has no ownership of the forms as they are the internal documents of each of the associations and their members in accordance with their own company procedure.

- MD Stage 2 Form – known as Customer Complaint Form
- SN Stage 2 Form – known as Customer Complaint Form
- NPA Stage 2 Form – known as Fast Track Publisher Restitution Claim Form
- PPA Stage 2 Form – Retailer Complaint Resolution Form

- 5.11 BA undertook to raise the matter at the next NPA Circulation Executive meeting and will propose to rename the Stage 2 form as:

- Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Form

## **6. Quarterly Reports 01/08/2012 – 31/10/2012 Annual Report 01/11/2011 – 31/10/2012**

- 6.1 Reports adopted as a true representation.

- 6.2 It was noted that no voucher complaints were recorded in the report 01/11/2010 – 31/10/2011, however, in report period 01/11/2011 – 31/10/2012 there are 31 complaints identified, which equalled Order Supply Management complaints.

- 6.3 DS reflected that over the last 12 months MD had reviewed its Voucher Handling Process, which may be reflective to the noted spike.

Historically, pouches were sent to retailers for the return of vouchers, but MD had observed that vouchers were being posted, and/or sent back in envelopes. Accordingly it was decided to supply pouches to customers upon request.

When conducting a Customer Satisfaction Survey, MD noted that the customers were not happy with the change in process. The practice is currently being reviewed. It is expected that there will be an improved performance within the next annual report.

The panel noted that:

- MD processes the vouchers internally.
- SN engages a third party externally to process vouchers.

## **7. Reports from Retail Representatives**

- 7.1 RG – Still experiencing problems with his supplying wholesale house, but, when they acknowledge that there is a problem and RG is able to speak with the Customer Service Manager (CSM), the issue is resolved immediately. RG feels this is reflective on the CSM getting to know him.

He had requested a Stage 2 Form which had not materialised; RG is of the opinion that this is an internal matter with his supply house. As soon as RG had spoken with the CSM, the form had been posted and received the following day.

The panel was of the opinion that wholesalers should consider continually updating their training of procedures so that issues can be addressed and resolved expediently and not held in abeyance due to part-time staffing issues, holidays, sickness, and new recruits.

- 7.2 RG also raised an issue that he had experienced regarding magazine supply. On a Tuesday, when bulk magazines are delivered, he is sometimes receiving less than 40% of his magazines ordered. Supplies were cut for the first time within four years. Consequently, shelves were virtually empty, with some titles only getting one or two copies.

- 7.3 RS - Reported that he had received a second edition of a magazine title, but was unaware of receiving a recall note for the first edition of the title. Contacting Customer Service, they had confirmed that they were unable to trace the appropriate recall note.

It was agreed that an email would be sent to Nottingham Helpline to investigate. RS had made two calls and been informed that his emails have not been read. Four weeks on the matter is still unresolved.

DD suggested that after two days the issue should have been referred to the Manager to investigate. RS has agreed to take this step and will report his findings at the next meeting.

It appeared to the panel that the issue is indicative of poor communications.

- 7.4 RS also reported that the new Costcutter shop that had undergone major refurbishment merging two outlets together that he had referred to at the previous meeting, had traded for five weeks and ceased trading on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013. He is observing the demand for additional titles.

## **8. Reporting on Complaints via PDF**

- 8.1 DK received 16 issues via the PDF Helpline, the analysis of the stats:

### **Complaints and Breaches**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Breaches</b>
SN	7	10
MD	7	4
NPA	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

#### **Source of Complaints**

	<b>T&amp;C</b>	<b>DT</b>	<b>OSM</b>	<b>Returns</b>	<b>Inv</b>	<b>Vouchers</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>SN</b>		1	4	1	2	1	1	10
<b>MD</b>		3	1					4
<b>NPA</b>		1			1			2
<b>Total</b>	0	5	5	1	3	1	1	16

8.2 DS reported that MD had received 2 complaints from the general public:

- A Country Hotel trying to obtain foreign titles via a retailer.
- A member of the public representing Tesco

8.3 MD had also received 1 complaint from a retailer not within the remit of the Charter.

8.4 DK advised that an NFRN retailer had reported within the 'Area Committee Meeting' pages of the RN that he had engaged and held dialogue with the PDC after he had used the complaint resolution process and found it to be a fair process.

8.5 An email has been received from a retailer thanking the PDC process for the resolution of the issues they had with their wholesalers over a two year period.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

9.1 No other business reported.

NR closed the meeting at 3.40pm, thanking Menzies Distribution for their hospitality.

The meeting was followed with a tour around the magazine packing facilities of MD South East London.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 13.30pm at the NPA Offices.

**MEETING –21<sup>st</sup> February 2013  
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
<b>5.8</b>	Stage 2 complaints not captured on monthly stats	<b>DS</b>
<b>5.9</b>	Note PDF decision not to centralise process of issuing and recording Stage 2 complaints	<b>NR/DK</b>
<b>5.11</b>	Circulation Executives Meeting to propose renaming the Stage 2 Form	<b>BA</b>
<b>7.1</b>	Wholesalers to review and update training on new staff/ part-time staff of process of complaint handling in timely manner.	<b>MD/SN</b>
<b>7.3</b>	Magazine recall note – 1 <sup>st</sup> edition was not on RS recall note – to update panel at next meeting	<b>RS</b>

**Dates of Meetings for 2013**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Comments</b>
30.05.13	1.30pm	NPA Offices	
26.03.13	1.30pm	PPA Offices	
28.11.13	1.30pm	PPA Offices	