

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 2.00pm at the Offices Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU**

Present:	Neil Robinson Dave Shedden Barry Allsop Mark Pardon Richard Sage Raj Ganatra	Chairman MD NPA PPA Independent Retailer Independent Retailer
In Attendance:	Dorothy King	PDRP Administrator

**1. Apologies for Absence**

1.1 Apologies were received from Rajiv Chotai and Debbie Dalston.

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting - 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30/1/2014 were adopted.

**3. Matters Arising**

3.1 As requested in meeting held 30/01/2014, wholesalers and publishers are now forwarding the Stage 2 complaints paperwork onto the Administrator when a complaint has been escalated onto Stage 3

3.2 The Panel is giving consideration to reviewing the restitution flat payment of 40p per copy, as retailers on the panel consider this does not cover their real cost in today's market. They suggest 45p – 50p per copy. DS has forwarded copies of MD's Customer Service Pledge (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) onto DD and NR.

3.3 On behalf of the NPA, BA advised the Panel that discussions on restitution are being held. The NPA has a meeting scheduled for next week, so it is hoped that he will be able to report back to the Panel if NPA are able commit to the standardisation of the restitution payments.

- 3.4 At the January meeting the Chairman had proposed that DS and DD compare the wording of their respective companies' restitution payments with a view to formulating an industry standardised form of wording, but unfortunately this had not been undertaken yet.

The Panel requested that this be completed and circulated by the end of May 2014. Once drafted it is to be circulated to the Panel for comments or amendments. If necessary a conference call will be arranged to discuss the matter further.

Once the wording has been agreed by the Panel, it is proposed to present the document to the PDF Board for their information and to the NPA/PPA to seek their co-operation in making it an industry offer.

DK to advise DD of the process and time frame.

DK to circulate to DD & DS the PDC Restitution and the MD Restitution.

It was agreed that the final agreed copy should be ready for circulation by the middle of June.

- 3.5 The Chairman reported that timeliness of supplying the Stage 2 and 3 data had greatly improved with the exception of the NPA, however there has been a change of personnel at News UK and the Stage 2 and 3 statistics are now being received a timely manner.

#### **4. Standardisation of Restitution Payments**

- 4.1 DS requested clarity on what constitutes late arrival of newspapers. In the existing restitution document it states cut off minus 15 minutes however MD work to scheduled delivery time in preference to cut off times.

Publishers state that if their arrival is before cut off but after schedule delivery time, then they are not late, therefore they are not responsible for payment of re-runs or late deliveries. Restitution is only considered if they have arrived after the agreed cut off time.

The minus 15 minutes was agreed for instances where several publishers arrive within minutes of each other causing bunching at the wholesale depots, which can cause delays.

RDT's were drawn up and agreed based on the scheduled delivery times being achieved by the publishers.

It was generally felt that most retailers are unaware of their actual RDT/SDT, but are aware of their expected time of delivery and their routine delivery time. It is when their routine delivery time changes that they complain about receiving papers later than their RDT and experiencing loss of sales and turnover.

- 4.2 It was pointed out to the Panel that the definition of 'persistence' – originally referred to retail claims for publisher lateness and not to wholesale claims for the same. However

both wholesalers had adopted the same or similar wording to cover their own retail claims.

The current wording is:

Persistence is the instances where the retailer has experienced late delivery of a specific newspaper title on three occurrences in a two week period Monday – Saturday.

OR

Three occurrences from a specific publisher in a six week period for Sunday newspapers.

OR

Three occurrences in six issues for a specific magazine title.

The Chairman is seeking a form of wording that is applicable to all PDC standards and pertinent to wholesalers and publishers alike.

## **5.0 Stage 2 Complaints Audit**

- 5.1 At the January meeting it had been agreed to construct a questionnaire to carry out a Stage 2 Complaints Audit to be sent to everybody who had engaged within the complaints process.

The starting point for designing the content of the questionnaire is the questions which are given as examples within the minutes of the meeting 30/01/2014.

- 5.2 DS suggested that the design should be double sided; one side should be a summary of what the complaint process is and the reverse side questions as to whether the that process matches up to the retailers experience.

The Panel agreed a first draft of the questionnaire a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

## **6.0 PDC Training at Wholesale Level**

- 6.1 The Chairman suggested that a lack of wholesale Call Centre awareness of the PDC was contributing to failure in directing retailers to it. It was agreed that the wholesale representatives review their in house process of customer service training regarding the Press Distribution Charter and report back to the panel.

- 6.2 DS reported that MD's customer service departments have an unfolded version of the Charter in front of them. The same is displayed on the walls, and it is included within their training sheet.

## **7.0 Timeliness and Accuracy of Stage 2 and Stage 3 Complaint Data**

- 7.1 Despite in the previous minutes where the Chairman reported that timeliness had improved, the Chairman now reports that timeliness has slipped and requires further improvement.
- 7.2 The Chairman reported that accuracy was still not acceptable, and efforts need to be made to get it right as it is crucial for the reports which are audited, reported and published within the public domain of the PDF website.
- 7.3 The format of the data recording sheet has been amended to reflect the PDC Charter 2nd Edition, and now covers the additional sections and standards.

MD pointed out that it had not been using the new recording sheet and requested that it be re-sent to him.

## **8. Reports from Retail Representatives**

- 8.1 RS reported on poor delivery quality of magazines being sent and part works having sticky labels stuck to the front damaging the front cover of these collectables.

This causes issues with customers not wishing to purchase magazines and part works with barcoded labels etc defacing the front of the product, and when returning the unsaleable merchandise, the supply figures getting adjusted, leading to a possible shortage of supply for next edition. If it is necessary to use the labels, it is suggested that the labels are applied to the back of the product.

PPA acknowledged the comments and stated that it is not always the distributors fault as some of the part works backboards are so big, they will not fit into the tote boxes.

PPA appreciate the feedback, stickers are okay, but not on the face of the merchandise.

- 8.2 RG stated he had read MW's email on the way to the meeting, and its empathises that the complaint process is still not working effectively.

Communication – still not receiving communications back from wholesaler when credits are not being applied.

When RG initially complained about the lack of communication when credits were being disallowed, it was recorded that Borehamwood did not have a system in place to communicate back to the retailer.

This issue has been visited and a process implemented, but he is still not being communicated with from Borehamwood when credits are being rejected.

When he requests a Stage 2 complaint form, RG states that he receives reply stating "Sorry it is understood that Borehamwood is not as effective in communication as they should be" and apologise.

RG is reluctant to proceed to Stage 3, for correcting the issue.

NR reported that if the complaint was formally progressed the PDRP could refer the issue to the Chief Executive Officer of SN.

RG also reported that he is still experiencing issues with the quality and saleability of newspapers due to the condition of copies being received, especially with the Daily Mail.

RG stated that he was put on check by his wholesaler, to ensure that his papers are in a saleable-condition, however, he is still receiving supplies in a poor state. One day he contacted the distribution house to ask if he was still on QC check as he had received several copies of the Daily Mail unsaleable.

RG's normal supply is between 90 – 110 copies (2 bundles and odds); damage is always to the top and bottom copies and on occasions in the middle. What transpired was that the QC check was being conducted on the odds supply and not the bundles.

Customer Service is also a problem when reporting shortages. RG complained that he had called SN to claim for 1 Daily Mail and spoken to someone who stated that the shortage was impossible as he had packed his odds. RG asked if he had checked the full bundles and was told no, because they are never wrong as they are weighed. After being on the phone for approximately 30 minutes RG, told the person on the other end to forget it, because the duration of the call had cost him the equivalent of 10 copies of the Daily Mail. Three days later he received the credit for 1 Daily Mail.

This morning RG had received 6 Sun over and contacted SN accordingly. He received a thank you for letting them know and was requested to send the extra copies within his returns.

## 9. Report on Complaints Resolved Via PDF Help Line

9.1 The PDRP Administrator reported that all the complaints handled by the PDRP Help Line are conducted in the nature of a Stage 2 Customer Complaint; she informed the panel that there had been:

14 complaints received

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Other	Total
Smith's News	11	2	0	13
Menzies	0	0	0	0
NPA	1	0	0	1

Breached of Standards – 23 Breaches

T&C	DT	O&S	SBR	RM	Invoice	VP	CS
2	5	3	2	6	0	0	5

## 10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 NR reported that Mark Williams had tendered his resignation with immediate effect. NR formally thanked MW for his contributions to the PDRP whilst serving on the panel.
- 10.2 The Chairman reported that under the PDRP Constitution an election was now due for all the retail representatives.

Industry supply chain representatives are nominated by the PPA, NPA and the wholesalers.

The Appointments Panel will be advertising for retail representatives in the Trade Press and conducting interviews for short listed candidates. Sitting retail representatives were advised that they could apply for a second term if they so wished and were encouraged to do so.

The PDF has approved the necessary finance to advertise and assemble an appointment panel.

- 10.3 The PDRP Administrator informed the Panel that there was to be a PDF Round Table event at Trinity Mirror, Watford, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.

It is to be a smaller event than previous PDF Retail Forums, aiming to have approximately 10 retailers sitting round a table and discussing issues that retailers face on day to day basis.

RG stated he would like to attend as a retail representative of PDRP and speak with other retailers about the aims and work of the PDRP.

At the Round Table, it will also be brought to the attendees attention that the PDRP is about to embark on a recruitment campaign.

RG advised that he will be happy to re-apply for office, but if the uptake from retailers is good, is equally happy to stand aside for new blood.

## 11. Dates for Meetings 2014

- 04/09/2014 2pm Blue Fin Building
- 27/11/2014 2pm Blue Fin Building

Meeting closed at 15.55pm with thanks to the Chairman.

## Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 14:00 at the Marketforce Offices – Blue Fin Building.

### MEETING –8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Item	Action	By Whom
3.3	BA to report back after discussions with NPA in relation to the restitution limit of £30.	BA
3.4	MD & SN to compare wording of their respective restitution payments and formulate an industry standard wording.	DD/ DS
6.1	MD & SN to review their customer service training and report back	DD/DS
7.3	The amended data spread sheet to be resent to DS for MD to implement their recordings accurately.	DK

## PDRP COMPLAINTS AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

- How were you made aware of the complaints process?
  - Wholesaler
  - PDF
  - Trade Body
  - Other
- How easy was it to obtain a form to begin the process?
  - Very Easy
  - Easy
  - Hard
  - Very Hard
- Please indicate which of these deadlines were met.
- Acknowledged within 48 hours  Met  Not Met
- Reply within 28 Days (Stage 2)  Met  Not Met
- Arbitration 14 Days (Stage 3)  Met  Not Met
- Were you given access to a guide for the complaints process?  
Y/N
- Were you satisfied with the Stage 2 resolution?  
Y/N
- In not, did you proceed to Stage 3?  
Y/N
- How did you feel about the process as a whole?
  - Very Satisfied
  - Satisfied
  - Unhappy
  - Very Unhappy