



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 31st March 2016 at 1.15pm at the Offices of News UK & Ireland Ltd, 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF.**

Present:	Neil Robinson Trevor Hudson Linda Gardner Jason Ingold Raj Chotai Paresh Vyas	Chairman PPA MD NMA Independent Retailer Independent Retailer
In Attendance:	Dorothy King Jac Roper	PDRP Administrator Observer from Convenience Store

**1. Apologies for Absence and Welcome**

- 1.1 Andy Smith (SN), Graham Read, Steve Archer and Mark Gilhespie.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Trevor Hudson of Marketforce, Jason Ingold of News UK and Jac Roper of Convenience Store.
- 1.3 The Chairman expressed his disappointment at the relative poor meeting attendance.

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

- 2.1 The draft minutes of 10th December 2015 were adopted.

**3. Matters Arising**

**3.1 PR Sub Group**

AS to internally enquire to Smiths News protocol when a retailer requested his RDT or STD.

As AS was not present, it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting.

The Chairman reminded the panel that the whole issue of RDT/STDs required urgent attention as there was a need for greater retail awareness of timeliness of delivery. Retailers are often

receiving supply well in advance of their RDT/SDT and if that 'usual time' is not met they consider the delivery as late when, in fact, the delivery only becomes late if it is outside of the RDT/SDT.

News UK has advised that they print the customers RDT/SDT on the delivery paperwork and Menzies Distribution and Smiths News were urged to follow that example.

- 3.3** Due to the inactivity of the PR Sub Group it was agreed to disband it. Press releases should revert back to the Administrator and Chairman to facilitate.

**3.4 Sub Standards Group**

LG reported that bunching is currently a major problem for wholesale. On occasions 75% of the product is arriving within 30 minutes of cut-off. This obviously impacts on achieving RDTs/SDTs. From the publishers prospective the product is not late, but it is a logistical problem for wholesale to off load, pack reload and deliver within the tight timeframe of the live product.

LG has spoken with newspaper account managers within MD, who have agreed to feedback to the publishers, although there appears to be a reluctance to renegotiate publisher delivery times until contract renewal.

During March bunching at wholesale had been worse, impacting on service to retailers. Historically March is a steady month with September traditionally being the month where there have been issues.

The next publisher/wholesale contracts are staggered over a period of time and some may already be in the early stages of negotiation.

AS to report on bunching issues at SN.

NR enquired if the PDF is aware of bunching issues and whether anything is being considered. DK responded that there is some activity being worked upon.

- 3.5** AS to confirm SN position on deferred payment for stickers and collectables. MD has introduced deferred payment to help increase sales. This item to be carried forward.

- 3.6** AS to report back to the next meeting if SN are able to assist with crediting vouchers within 7 days rather than the current 14 days, helping retailers with their cash flow. This item to be carried forward.

- 3.7** MP/TH to redraft the reviewed standards comparison document of the Charter and MD Customer Service Pledge.

This has been delayed as the sub group is still waiting for a response from AS on certain issues.

It was agreed at the meeting to proceed with the redraft of the Sub Group document, and circulate ahead of publishing.

- 3.8** NR to write to the PDF when the final copy is ready for their consideration.

### **3.9 PDRP Office Tenure**

The PDRP Constitution had been circulated with the agreed amendment permitting existing serving representatives to sit on the panel for two consecutive terms of office if they so desired.

It was noted that a number of panelists had been absent for two successive meetings. In the case of industry representatives, substitutes had attended, but this was not possible for the retail representatives as they held office in an individual capacity.

The panel considered that it is important to maintain consistency in its work thereby ensuring quality of output. As there are only four pre-diarised meetings per year, it was decided to further amend the constitution to include a provision that should a panelist miss three consecutive meetings without good reason, they be deemed to relinquish their position.

NR to amend the constitution to include the above clause and present to the PDF Board.

### **3.10 Regional Press Alignment With Restitution Process**

NR had corresponded with Mike Newman, Chairman of PDF, with reference to the regional press being aligned with the Charter and its restitution process.

DK advised the panel that there has been communication with the NMA, and she will request MN to formally respond back to NR with the conclusion.

### **4.0 Standards Sub Group**

**4.1** As noted in item 3.7 above, TH and MP will redraft the final document and circulate to the panel by the end of April.

Upon receipt of the document NR will write to the PDF, presenting the work carried out on behalf of the PDRP by the Standards Sub Group. (See action point 3.8)

### **5.0 Report of PR Sub Group**

**5.1** The PR Sub Group is now formally disbanded, but unfortunately there is some work required regarding RDT /SDTs. As soon as the outstanding information becomes available from Smiths News DK/NR to draft a press release and circulate

### **6.0 Open Letter From Brian Murphy NFRN**

**6.1** NR had received an open letter from Brian Murphy (Head of News - NFRN) in his capacity of PDRP Chairman, which was circulated with the agenda.

The letter raised concern about inbound deliveries to wholesalers, with the most affected areas being, Ashford, Birmingham, Slough and York.

Looking into these areas, the most obvious factor is bunching of publisher vehicles with most titles arriving within 45 and in some instances 30 minutes prior to cut off time.

**6.2** The panel noted that it had observed an increase in the number of complaints regarding lateness and therefore the issue had already been discussed.

The Chairman pointed out that, as far as the Charter is concerned, bunching does not excuse wholesaler lateness. Publisher responsibility for retail lateness occurs if its delivery to the

wholesaler is later than one quarter of an hour past cut-off time. It is for the wholesaler to manage breaking of bulk and onward distribution if the publisher delivers before this time.

Historically the cut off times worked because publishers staggered their arrivals into wholesalers. However, with publishers sharing trunking and the rationalisation of wholesale houses, there has been a negative impact on publisher's ability to stagger the arrivals.

The PDRP is of the opinion that the industry needs to seriously consider publisher timeliness as it has a big impact on retailers and end consumers. RDTs/SDTs have been established for a considerable number of years, but if the dynamics of the industry have changed, the industry should consider appropriate adjustments.

The PDRP recognised that late deliveries impact on HND deliveries and early opening retailers who have regular commuting trade.

Publisher representatives reported that road works had recently been a big concern for publishers. They have team's analysing and modifying routes on a daily basis for scheduled road works and route diversions which are occurring during the night, but are not able to account for the unscheduled roadworks or route diversions due to RTA's etc.

News UK advised that its route planning is not completed until it is able to devise a route that should arrive at wholesale within the designated time schedule and it achieves this regardless of cost.

PV advised that the retailers where he is situated receive an email when papers are running late advising how late they are running and the reason of delay. This prevents wholesaler's lines being congested and allows the distribution to continue with minimum disruption.

Retailers wanting to know their current RDT/SDT can contact their wholesaler and request their information.

LG will refer back to MD to enquire if it would be possible to print the retailer's RDT/SDT on retailer's paperwork and how the retailer can obtain their own personal RDT/STD details.

News UK has recently carried out an exercise with London retailers and refreshed all delivery times, sending out in writing to advise the agreed delivery time. It believes most retailers who call for, what they perceive as a, late delivery are not aware of their delivery time even though the daily delivery times are published on the daily delivery notes and they have had a recent communication in writing confirming their delivery times.

**6.3** The Chairman will respond back to Brian Murphy's letter on behalf of the PDRP and advise the following:

- The PDRP recognises the problem
- The issue is being worked upon due to the number of increased complaints regarding lateness and double running.
- Delivery inbounds which are 15 minutes after cut off require that the wholesaler pass retail complaints back to the publisher concerned for appropriate action.
- The PDRP does not accept that bunching before 15 minutes passed cut off time is a legitimate reason for wholesale delivery being late.
- Sympathise with wholesalers predicament
- Suggest to the industry that attempts are made during contract negotiations to elevate the pressure on the wholesaler.

NR to draft response to BM and circulate to panel prior to sending formal reply.

## 7.0 Stage 2 Complaints Audit

- 7.1 The PDRP Administrator reported that the PDRP Complaints Stage 2 Electronic Audit has still not received any feedback via the link supplied on the paperwork issued at the conclusion of the complaints supplied by the wholesalers and publishers.
- 7.2 DK to send a link to Jac Roper as this may be something Jac may be able to promote by advising her readers as to what the PDRP is doing. The PDRP is of the opinion that retailer's feedback is essential to monitor the quality of the process.
- 7.3 It was agreed to carry out a Kitchener style press release – Please help us help you, Your Industry Needs Your Feedback on the PDC Complaints Process!

## 8.0 PDRP Constitution

- 8.1 Covered under 3.9 above

## 9.0 Tenure of Office

- 9.1 Covered under 3.9 above.

## 10.0 Report on Complaints Resolved Via PDRP Help Line

- 10.1 The PDRP Administrator stated 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:

71 complaints received and 166 breaches between 05/12/2015 – 28/032016.

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total
Smith's News	23	2	25
Menzies	24	1	25
NIDL	20	0	20
NMA	1	0	1

Breached of Standards – 166 Breaches

T&C	DT	Del Q	OSM	SBR	RM	Inv	VP	Sub R	C/S	C/C
5	28	18	12	0	22	24	5	0	51	1

- 10.2 An increase of 9 complaints from previous meeting.

SN complaints decreased by 3, plus 2 Stage 3 Arbitration Complaints  
MDL complaints increased by 5, plus 1 Stage 3 Arbitration Complaints  
NIDL complaints received 20  
PPA complaints received 1 complaint, but did not proceed to Stage 2

- 10.3 Customer Service again seeing the greatest increase of standard breach, followed by Delivery Timeliness, Returns Management and Invoicing.
- 10.4 Although there has been a big increase in Customer Service complaints, wholesale advised that there had been a big increase with their staff handling abusive calls from retailers and bad

language. This is more apparent early morning, perhaps when the retailer is most frustrated with delivery times or orders.

**10.5** It was agreed to publish the reports within the PDRP Quarterly reports.

**11.0 Any Other Business**

**11.1** NR advised that he had experienced problems in matching statistics within last year's Annual Report against the corresponding Quarterly Reports for the same period. The principle report responsible was identified as that for 2014 Quarter 2. The offending Quarterly reports had been corrected and the proposal is to extract the two erroneous reports from the record and substitute with the correct reports. This was agreed by the panel.

The Annual Report has been passed to the PDF, and hopefully will be published early April.

**11.2** It was noted that there seems to be a retail movement gathering wanting automatic restitution. As a consequence, misinformation is being supplied to retailers by certain trade associations that retailers should be applying for automatic restitution at Stage 1 and Stage 2. It is a situation that the PDC Complaints Process does not allow for as many matters have to be considered especially the matter of whether the problem complained of is "*Serious or persistent*" who was actually responsible for the failure and *force majeure*.

Last of all there is the question of quantum; retailers need to prove the value of their loss, which is simple when considering the 55p per copy for double run, but not as simple when dealing with other complaints.

**11.3** TH has requested the date for December's meeting to be changed from 8<sup>th</sup> to either 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>. Panel agreed to amend to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

**11.4** PDF Retail Roundtable Discussion is being hosted at the Telegraph Offices, Victoria and will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016. NR has been requested to attend as Chairman of PDRP and would be nice for a retailer representation to attend.

Meeting closed at 15:20pm with thanks to the Chairman.

## Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 13:00.

### MEETING 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Item	Action	By Whom
3.1	AS to obtain a formal response from SN as to how retailers can obtain RDT, SDT and ADT.	AS
3.4	AS to refer 'bunching' to SN. If problems have increased, there may be a need for wholesalers to re-negotiate cut off times with publishers.	AS/LG
3.5	AS to ascertain SN's position on deferred payment for stickers and collectables.	AS
3.6	AS to report back at the next meeting if SN are able to assist with crediting vouchers within 7 days rather than the current 14 days, helping retailers with their cashflow.	AS
3.7	MP/TH to redraft document for presentation to the PDF for consideration, this will be completed by end of April.	MP/TH
3.8	NR to write a letter to the PDF regarding the PDRP Standards Review	NR
3.9	NR to include the 'miss three meetings and out' clause to the constitution and present to the PDF Board.	NR
3.10	MN to respond to NR re NMA, Regional Press becoming aligned with the restitution process.	MN
5.1	DK/NR to prepare a press release on RDT/SDT when all feedback has been received.	DK/NR
6.2	LG to enquire if MD can advise retailers how to obtain RDT/SDTs generically	LG
6.3	NR to draft response back to BM and circulate to panel prior to formally replying	NR
7.2	DK to send link of questionnaire to Jac Roper for a constructive comment via Convenience Store	DK
7.3	Press release Kitchener style – Your industry needs your feedback on the PDC Complaints Process!	NR/DK

## Dates for Meetings 2016

- 07/07/2016 1pm PPA Offices, Second Floor, 35 – 38 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6BW
- 01/09/2016 1pm PPA Offices, Second Floor, 35 – 38 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6BW
- 06/12/2016 1pm Marketforce Offices, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, EC14 5HU