

Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 26th April 2012 at the Offices of the Newspaper Publishers Association, St Andrews House, 18 - 20 St Andrews Street, London, EC4A 3AY

Present:	Neil Robinson	Chairman
	Darren Barker	NPA
	Dave Shedden	MD
	Debbie Dalston	SN
	Shaun Crosse	SN
	Mark Williams	Independent Retailer
	Richard Sage	Independent Retailer
	Rajiv Chotai	Independent Retailer
	Raj Ganatra	Independent Retailer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Carrie Rooks.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Shaun Crosse of SN as an observer.

Before commencing the meeting, the Chairman aired his concerns about the effectiveness of the PDRP discussions and, consequently, ability to fulfil its remit. He was of the opinion that the group needed to be more pro-active in recognising and taking action on recurring failures to achieve standards. It was not enough to merely receive statistics and data on a quarterly basis without analysing the same in order to identify issues of genuine concern that require attention at industry level. By doing this, service levels at every level can be improved.

2. Minutes of Last Meetings: 19th January 2012

2.1 The minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Paragraph 4.3 – the Chairman reported that he had written to the PPA as directed at the last meeting. He had received a response indicating that the matter would be considered internally before a formal reply. However, indications are that retailers log the complaints

at stage 1 to wholesale, who subsequently resolve the matter thereby evading PDRP capture.

The committee noted the report, but was of the opinion that magazine allocations are a big issue, and there are concerns that no complaints are being escalated at Stage 2- It was agreed to wait for the publication of the new Charter to see if the revised standards provide a route for complaints on this issue.

4. Quarterly Report

4.1 The Quarterly Report was considered and unanimously approved.

4.2 MW commented that the statistics can be misleading. With Delivery Timeliness, he is experiencing late delivery via publisher and is concerned that this is reflecting on the wholesaler.

In some circumstances the wholesaler will deal with the retailer's issue direct and refer it to the publisher internally after the complaint has been resolved. Furthermore, recurring lateness to the retailer can often be as a result of lateness by a number of publishers and, as such, not a failure to reach the standard by the wholesaler.

On the occasions that the wholesaler has to re-run supplies due to late/delayed inbound supplies, a fee is payable by the publisher to cover the wholesaler's additional costs.

4.3 RG raised a concern that he had recently experienced with a newspaper publisher; the Saturday edition of the Telegraph is so thick and heavy when assembled, that the HND team can only insert 2 copies of the Telegraph in their delivery bags. When they get to the account that requests delivery of this title, they have to dismantle the paper to post through the letter box.

RG's concern is:

- That the lion's share of assembling this title should be more fairly distributed down the chain to the news deliverers
- When trying to speak with publishers about this issue, you are passed around with no one wanting to engage on this issue.
- RG asked if this was something that the PDRP could look into, but was advised that this is not covered by the current standards and the purpose of the PDRP is to ensure that the standards are maintained and applied.
- RG was advised to write to Michel Woodman, (via DK) who has been engaging with trade associations and retailer's regarding a review of the current Charter and has taken in submissions received for consideration.
- DK undertook to raise this matter as an issue during the next PDF meeting.
- RG stated that he was aware that NI has a retail customer service division, but questioned whether the remaining publishers had one too, so that when issues rise there is a point of contact to discuss such matters.
- DB to contact Lucy Ukoumunne to request the NPA Fast Track Publisher telephone numbers and email addresses.

- 4.4 It appeared from the Stage 2 Complaint data that wholesalers were recording data against their houses, when the complaint is against a publisher; NR has requested that in such cases the publisher be identified, but still giving the wholesale house as the originator of the complaint.
- 4.5 NR requested that all the data submitted since November 2011 be verified to take account of this issue i.e., late inbound is logged against the appropriate publisher, but detailing the wholesale house.

The Quarterly Report will be published on the PDRP website.

5. Absence of PPA Complaints

- 5.1 Covered under Matter Arising 5.1 and agreed to carry over to next meeting when CR is present.
- 5.2 DD raised that SN has potential of its first PPA complaint, where SN have been short supplied on a part work, which has had an impact on a retailer.

This has not been raised as a Stage 2 complaint at this stage, but DD will keep the PDRP posted on developments.

- 5.3 DS reported that MD has taken a snap shot view of complaints regarding allocations of magazines and found at least 40 complaints. As these complaints were dealt with via customer service, they have all been resolved at Stage 1.
- 5.4 DD stated that the complaints received by SN were pertinent to niche titles, and complaints were in excess of 40.
- 5.5 It was agreed that wholesaler and retail representatives should produce some data regarding issues experienced regarding supplies allocation of magazines during May, to feed back to DK ahead of June's Meeting.

6. RDT/SDT - FODI

- 6.1 NR stated that there has been a flurry of Stage 3 Arbitrations of which 2 have been regarding the change of RDTs to SDTs by the wholesaler.

These instances have occurred with the same wholesaler and same house, which in itself is setting a possible trend.

NR stated that, on this topic, there is a set of rules determined in accordance with, the now defunct; Focus on Distribution initiative (FODI) process.

These state that, "*Delivery will be no later than the Retail Delivery Times (RDTs) or scheduled Delivery Times (SDTs)*" – Please see appendices 1 for full definition

When the Charter was being devised this matter was raised by the retail associations and it was agreed unanimously, that the rules would remain in force.

6.2 DK to present to MW at the PDC2 meeting 29.04.12

NR pointed out that changing an RDT to an SDT required considering the balance between the commercial need of retailer against the logistical feasibility of the wholesaler.

7. Complaints Audit

7.1 MW suggests making the statistics would be more credible if they were subjected to audit. He suggested that the PDRP contact complainant retailers and verify the complaints, procedure, handling and outcome.

DS sought clarification that MW is suggesting that we investigate a sample of historical complaints back to originator in order to confirm that the matter has been resolved and the retailer is happy with handling of complaint;

Or

Is MW suggesting that a test of the system is carried out on a genuine complaint? MW pointed out that he had made a Stage 2 complaint, that DS was aware of, and for whatever reasons the complaint did not get registered at Stage 2 by the wholesale house. DS was made aware of the issue and the complaint materialised.

MW said that his issue was resolved, but there was no feedback from the branch. The credit just appeared on his credit note.

DD said SN had centralised the complaints process and it conducted its own reviews and audits on the process. It had employed Shaun Crosse, so when complaints come in, Shaun is allocated the complaint to follow through.

7.2 NFRN refers complaints to both wholesalers, but these are primarily stage 1, which are not logged.

7.3 It was agreed that the retail members seek to log a genuine complaint as the situation arises or seek the assistance of other retail members to log their complaint, and refer back to DK and NR on the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaint process. Reports to be considered at the next meeting.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 DB raised an issue regarding vouchers that were claimed by a retailer, went missing at wholesale level, but the value the retailer was claiming was significantly higher than his average claim.

The retailer was asked to explain the high volume difference, and it transpired that he had accepted third party vouchers from other retailers. The other retailers had no account with the publisher or wholesaler and they were trading vouchers between themselves either on an ad hoc basis or sub retailing.

DB sought clarification as to the process of vouchers and sub retailing.

NR was of the opinion that there is a fault in the voucher process system if it does not permit the dismissal of traded vouchers. Each voucher should have an exclusion clause on it stating that it cannot be traded in any form.

Vouchers should only be redeemed by the wholesaler that has the business relationship and account with retailer concerned and should not be purchased or traded for other goods. The wording on the vouchers needs to be more effective.

Wholesale T & Cs should also reflect that such behaviour will not be tolerated

In this case the retailer was unable to produce proof of value as he had not retained a copy of his voucher sheet and, due to the vouchers going missing at wholesale; the wholesaler was also unable to prove the issue.

The Press Distribution Forum is looking into this scenario and the matter is also being taken into consideration with the review of Charter standards.

8.2 RS asked if there is a mechanism at wholesale to raise a query with the retailer if regular returns are missed thereby helping prevent retailers losing out on credit.

8.3 DD asked if regional press are included within the standards of the Charter. If a regional title is distributed via the national wholesale network that title will be governed by the standards within the Charter under the auspices of the wholesaler.

The Newspaper Society is not currently a member of the PDF.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 28th June 2012 at 14.00 at the PPA offices.

The meeting closed at 3.24 pm.

**MEETING –26th April 2012
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Item	Action	By Whom
4.3	RG to write to Michel Woodman via DK regarding the weight of newspapers and handling of these for news deliverers cost of re running, assembling and dismantling to post through letter boxes.	RG
4.3	Request up to date contact details of telephone numbers and email of Publishers contacts for Fast Track Resolution contacts	DB
4.4	To identify data that has erroneously been recorded against wholesale which may be against publisher	DD/DS
4.5	Review all data submitted since November 2011	DD/DS
5.2	To update on potential first PPA complaint re part work	DD
5.5	Wholesale and retail to produce issue experienced regarding magazine allocation.	ALL
6.2	FODI ruling on RDT/SDT to be presented to Michel Woodman for inclusion of reviewing of standards	DK
7.3	For all retail members of panel to log a genuine complaint to test the process and to refer back to DK and NR	MW/RG/RS/ RC