

Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 30th May 2013 at the Offices NPA, St Andrews House, 18 – 20 St Andrews Street, London, EC4A 3AY

Present:	Neil Robinson	Chairman
	Dave Shedden	MD
	Barry Allsop	NPA
	Debbie Dalston	SN
	Richard Sage	Independent Retailer
	Rajiv Chotai	Independent Retailer
	Mark Williams	Independent Retailer
In Attendance:	Dorothy King	PDRP Administrator

1. Apologies for Absence

1.2 Apologies were received from Carrie Rooks and Raj Ganatra.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting 21st February 2013

The minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 At the meeting held 21st February 2013, the panel was informed of a situation where a PDRP Panel representative had raised two Stage 2 Complaint Forms which had not been captured within the statistics.

The wholesaler concerned undertook to investigate as to how this may have happened. As promised, the wholesaler concerned investigated to discover the forms had been sent to the supplying wholesale house, instead of the head office address where all complaints are administered and monitored.

The retailer advised that he had followed instructions as per the wholesale house. He was thanked for the information as this will be taken up as a training issue internally.

The retailer concerned stated, although the complaint was not captured centrally, the complaint process was handled effectively and efficiently by the distribution house.

- 3.2 It had been agreed to formalise the name of the Stage 2 Complaint Form as, Stage 2 Fast-track Resolution Form as detailed in the Charter.

To simplify it was agreed to call it Customer Complaint Form.

DK to get the Charter Flip Book amended and, as and when the flyer is re-circulated, to amend the name of the form prior to publishing.

4. Press Distribution Charter Edition 2

- 4.1 The comparison document for PDC1 and PDC2 has been circulated.

- 4.2 Feedback from a wholesale representative is that a multiple group claims that it was not consulted during the review process; however the association to which the multiple retailer is affiliated had worked with the sub group.

The association concerned have down sized its news and magazine category.

- 4.3 The quarterly reports will be required to reflect the new standards which have been introduced to PDC2

- 4.4 A double sided flyer was issued to retailers advising them of the launch of the PDC2, with a brief summary to ~~What you can expect from the Charter~~. On the reverse side is the Complaints Resolution Process.

- 4.5 With the launch of PDC2 and circulation of the flyer, it has been acknowledged that retailers have retained the flyer and refer to it when problems have occurred. There has been a spike of calls to the PDF, with retailers engaging with the complaint process.

- 4.6 Since the launch in March and the end of May there have been 63 calls from retailers to the PDF Helpline.

5. Issuing of PDC Stage 2 Complaints Forms.

- 5.1 The Chairman had sent a letter to Mike Newman, Chairman of PDF, dated 28/05/2013; noting the PDRP's disappointment the PDF's reluctance to centralise the issuing of Stage 2 Customer Complaint Forms.

The letter also raised the issues of persistent lateness and inaccuracy of the data received for the monthly Stage 2 and Stage 3 statistics.

- 5.2 Since MDL has streamlined its administration processes it does not feel that the request for centralisation is as imperative as it was, and is comfortable with their procedures internally.

- 5.3 SN is looking at its process and possibly considering a similar approach to MDL's.

SN currently sends the Stage 2 Customer Complaint Forms to all retailers (recorded delivery, and have brought to the attention of the PDRP that it has had a number of recorded deliveries returned ~~Declined by addressee~~).

Included with the Customer Complaint Form is a stamped address envelope, addressed to a central point of contact for the retailer to return the completed form.

- 5.4 An issue raised by the PDRP Administrator is that retailers when raising a formal Stage 2 Customer Complaint Form, remain unaware that the matter has been formally resolved as feedback/ response can be inconsistent.
- 5.5 The PDRP agreed to consider including the complaint form within the Charter Flipbook.

6. Timeliness and Accuracy of Stage 2 Complaint Data to Administrator

- 6.1 The issue of timeliness and accuracy has been discussed within the PDF meeting following the letter received from the PDRP Chairman dated 28/05/2013.

As a consequence, there has been a request that on the first of each month an email is sent to each of the associations requesting the monthly data by the twenty-first of the month.

A following email is sent on or about the fourteenth of the month, reminding the associations there are seven days remaining to submit the monthly stats.

On the twenty-first of each month the requested data should be submitted on time and accurate to the PDRP administrator.

The PDRP Administrator was asked to send round an Outlook Calendar with the reoccurring appointment.

- 6.2 When a Stage 2 Complaint is logged by a publishing association it is not required to detail which wholesaler is distributing the title, as the complaint is registered against the publisher. Adding wholesaler details can lead to confusion and mistakes.
- 6.3 The PPA has raised a Stage 2 Complaint Form, but this was not received back from the retailer.

7. Dispute Resolution Process – Conclusion of Stage 1

- 7.1 Stage 1 is informal discussion to try and resolve the issue at local area within 48 hours. Frequently the wholesaler/publisher consider the matter resolved whilst the retailer is under the impression that the matter is being dealt with and remains unresolved.

The panel considered whether it is appropriate at Stage 1 for the wholesaler/publisher to issue a formal statement that the matter is considered to be resolved, and therefore the complaint closed? It was resolved such notification should be issued.

The numbers of Stage 1 enquiries are vast compared to the formal Stage 2 complaints.

The operation of Stage 1 is a grey area which can vary greatly from a general chat to a complaint.

- 7.2 There have been a number of incidences where a retailer has raised a formal Stage 2 complaint and requested a form and the wholesaler/publisher has tried to resolve the matter as a Stage 1, even post having received the completed Stage 2 form.

The PDRP stressed that a Stage 2 complaint only becomes formal when the retailer has returned the completed form to either the wholesaler or publisher.

MDL has adopted the following processes:

When the form is received the complaint should be issued with a unique reference number on the PDC monthly statistics sheet and a letter sent to the retailer acknowledging the receipt of the complaint and advising that the complaint has been passed to the appropriate department with an aim to respond with a conclusion within 28 days maximum but 14 days optimum.

An email is then issued to the department with all supporting attachments, guidance on what is required, timeline for response to facilitate an investigation and an instruction to report back up channel with the conclusion.

The responsible personnel are made aware of the consequences of not fully investigating and responding appropriately, as this could instigate Stage 3 arbitration and the arbitrator could impose conditions on the wholesaler.

MDL use a tracking spread sheet and periodically chase up any complaint for which it has not received a response from the appropriate house.

The wholesale house concludes the complaint formally by writing to the retailer, signing off the complaint process.

- 7.3 The PDRP Administrator may not be advised when a Stage 2 has been formally resolved, but will be advised by the retailer if the matter remains outstanding or not adequately concluded. Then the issue is then referred to Stage 3 arbitration.

8. Reports from Retail Representatives

- 8.1 MW reported that he has the world's best driver, he communicates if things are running late, hangs back instead of double running and minimises disruption to HND.

- 8.2 RS raised concern that the title of some magazines is at variance to the title on the recall notice, leading to missing recall and loss of revenue.

An example given was Computer Active Easter 13 which has an actual title I March 13, which causes mistakes and then additional work when credits are not allocated.

- 8.3 RC also states that his deliveries are superb and the driver is exceptionally good, everything is neat and tidy stacked properly with no damaged issues.

There have been some issues with the made up odds packs. Sometimes there have been shortages which have been the fault of the packer at the distribution house, but the driver feels that the errors reflect upon him.

RC had also experienced some cut backs to supply figures, which disrupted his sub-retailing supplies. He believed that this should be ring fenced.

He went on to report that one major issue was due to an outside marketing organisation. InnZone fronted a telesales operation with a member of its staff purporting to be from MDL who then send unwanted and unauthorised product. DS undertook to investigate.

9. Report on Complaints Resolved Via the PDF Help Line

9.1 All the complaints handled by the PDRP Help Line are conducted as a Stage 2 Customer Complaint. The Administrator informed the panel that there has been:

- 63 complaints received
- 30 complaints regarding SN
- 27 complaints MD
- 5 complaints NPA
- 1 complaint Independent

10. Any Other Business

10.1 NR stated that he found the visit and tour around MDL SEL to be interesting and informative.

10.2 DD has offered a similar visit to Borehamwood.

10.3 DS mentioned that over recent months Sheffield had been shown up badly within the statistics, but things appeared to have turned a corner with things much improved.

10.4 DK reported that the next PDF Retail Forum will be hosted at Trinity Mirror Print Plant in Birmingham. CR is attending the meeting as a representative of both PDRP and PPA.

RG has also shown interest to attend as PDRP, but thought perhaps a retailer representative may consider attending. RS has stated he would like to attend.

Meeting closed at 3.25pm with thanks to the Chairman.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26th September 2013 at 11.am at the NPA Offices.

**MEETING –30th May 2013
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Item	Action	By Whom
3.1	To review with the distribution houses that ALL Stage 2 Complaint Forms are returned to MDL Head Office for monitoring.	DS
3.2	To amend Charter Flip book to include Customer Complaint Form	DK
5.3	SN to review its centralisation process of Stage 2 Customer Complaint Handling.	DD
6.1	To send Outlook Occurrence diary appointment to each association to receive statistics on time and accurate.	DK
8.3	Inn Zone telesales techniques - DS to investigate.	DS

Dates of Meetings for 2013

Date	Time	Venue	Comments
28.11.13	1.30pm	PPA Offices	