

Minutes of a Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 20th September 2012 at the Offices of the Newspapers Publishers Association, Queen's House, 55-56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn, London, WC2 3LJ

Present:	Neil Robinson Dave Shedden Darren Barker Debbie Dalston Richard Sage Raj Ganatra Rajiv Chotai Mark Williams	Chairman MD NPA/NI SN Independent Retailer Independent Retailer Independent Retailer Independent Retailer
In Attendance:	Dorothy King	PDRP Administrator

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Carrie Rook PPA/ Seymour

2. Minutes of Last Meetings: 28th June 2012

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

3. Matters Arising

3.1 3.1 RG was going to prepare a briefing note for NR to write to the PDF and publishers. RG reported that, after speaking with other retailers, it appeared that his concerns were limited to a minority, and therefore no longer a major issue.

3.2 3.3 Regarding complaints being captured and recorded accurately against the perpetrator, SN try to establish the source of issue and direct grievance accordingly; however, there were two incidents during the Olympics where the issue related to persistent late inbounds from the same publisher. The publisher did not accept the PDC and referred it back to wholesale; therefore the data was captured correctly.

3.3 3.4 SN updated the panel members of the possible PPA complaint, which was resolved internally by sourcing copy via the SN network, retailer supplied and no formal complaint received.

3.4 4.1 NPA contact details have been published on the PDF website and circulated to SN and MD Customer Services, though the first line of contact remains to be wholesale before contacting publishers.

3.5 6.1 SN is not in a position to provide that level of detail. Its systems uses open text and resolved through supplying product from either across the network or additional copies from publishers. Most issues appear to be resolved at stage 1.

Issues covering damaged copies should be referred to wholesale first in order to resolve if a pack handling issue or a production concern.

3.6 10.5 NR sent letter as requested to Michel Woodman regarding the complaint process procedure. A copy of the letter is appended to these minutes.

4. Quarterly Report

4.1 The report records that there have been a low number of complaints recorded at Stage 2 and 3, which reflects to the same corresponding period 12 months earlier.

4.2 The collated data does not include matters that have been resolved without the need of facilitating a formal complaint at Stage 2.

4.3 Consideration was given to capturing good news when situations are resolved, e.g., PDF help line dealt with 34 enquiries, without the requirement of formal complaints and these have been resolved with the aid of the publisher/wholesaler, and therefore not registered within the statistics.

4.4 SN & MD to investigate the feasibility for capturing Stage 1 informal discussion.

5. Complaint Audit

5.1 Retailer representatives have agreed to conduct an audit of complaint handling based on their own experiences or those of another retailer known to them.

5.2 MW reported that Williams News have had no problems during the summer with MD; but has been on i-menzies chat forum and notes that there is a resistance from retailers to engage the PDC process.

When retailers have genuine concerns, he advises them to engage in the PDC process and passes them the PDRP website details; but the willingness to engage is not registering. This can be looked at in differing ways:

- a) That the retailers like to complain, but do nothing about the situation.
- b) Lack of confidence in the system.

5.3 RC reported that he had not had a good summer, experiencing problems with "I" Daily and the Independent. The Express had improved and the Mirror has been late on a few occasions.

When the "1" is late the retailers are unable to send a replacement paper because the value of the publication is 20p.

Late deliveries cause a lot of phone calls and anxieties with promises of returned calls from the Sheffield Call Centre that never materialise, waiting to see if the late titles arrive in time to send out with the news round or sending the delivery staff out and make good by driving and delivering a re-run later when the titles eventually arrive. This incurs additional costs and becomes expensive and poor time management.

There had also been shortages reported that have not been honoured as credits on the next day or final delivery note. This provoked the Stage 2 complaint process and outstanding issues going back to June that have not been resolved.

There is no problem with the Sheffield Call Centre. They can only go so far; the issue is when the problem comes back to local branch level. Just one call has been received from the local branch manager at Maidstone.

Despite going through the Stage 2 process, he generally found other issues, such as damaged copies and timeliness, were fine. The only issue is with local title Kent Messenger which keeps selling out.

- 5.4 RG reported that he had received a response back to his previous Stage 2 complaint, regarding credit queries remaining unresolved with no communication back to him.

An apology for the issue has been received, and a credit for the original claim.

As a consequence of RG bringing this to SN's attention, SN implemented a system to send out three different types of letters to customers as appropriate. This was a unique problem to Borehamwood; all other call centres within SN were already following this procedure.

- 5.5 RS reported a generally good summer experienced with SN. However, as an observation, he reported that there had been two shops side by side closed down in his area. They were bought by a multiple for an eight week refit to make one large outlet.

RS was away from his business when this occurred and so he instructed his staff to contact SN with a view to increasing his supplies by 20/30%. - SN would not authorise the increase without RS's signature, which was not feasible due to his absence. This led to 3 days of additional supply being lost. Then SN requested a day by day record of title increase the enhanced supply lasting only a week at a time. RS was required to make contact every week to maintain the enhanced supply. SN would not do an overall increase and RS is concerned as he has been having sell outs.

RS has been trying to increase his HND and sales whilst the refurbishment is being carried out by the competitor.

DD will check into RS concerns.

- 5.6 As recorded within the minutes dated 28.06.12, bullet point 5.5, RS proposed that when a wholesaler/publisher receives a completed Stage 2 complaint form, it should be immediately acknowledged.

Within the standards of the Charter under the heading Complaints Resolution Process – Stage 2 Fast Track Resolution it is states, “*The Company responsible will acknowledge the complaint and provide the retailer with details of their complaint handling procedures.*”

6. Reporting on Complaints via PDF

- 6.1 DK received 33 issues via the PDF Helpline and these have all been resolved, the analysis of the stats is:

Complaints and Breaches

Company	Complaints	Breaches
SN	17	20
MD	10	17
NI	6	7
Total	33	44

Source of Complaints

	T&C	DT	OSM	Returns	Inv	Vouchers	CS	Total
SN	1	2	8	3	4	1	1	20
MD	2	5	5				5	17
NI	2		1	1	1	2		7
Total	5	7	14	4	5	3	6	44

Originators of complaints

NFRN	18
The Convenience Store	2
Trade Press	1
Connect 2U	1
PDF/PDRP Helpline	11
Total referrals	33

7. Review of PDC Charter Standards

- 7.1 NR sent letter to MW on 07.08.12, regarding the current dispute resolution process in the Press Distribution Charter, and copied the panel in on the correspondence.
- 7.2 The PDC2 subcommittee noted the content of the letter and have adopted the suggestion in its final draft which will be presented to the PDF board for approval.
- 7.3 The letter suggested the centralising of the issue, registering and monitoring of all Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints-thereby making the system more transparent and accurate with more expediency in data recording of complaint statistics.

- 7.4 DS advised the panel that since the last meeting of 28.06.12, MD has had the 2nd edition of 'MD Service Pledge' launched.
- 7.5 SN & MD Stage 2 complaint form requires updating on PDF website, with a link to be provided.
- 7.6 As a consequence, MD has now centralised its complaint process, and DS carried out an analysis of the process ahead of the current meeting.

The process has been running for approximately 2 months and within this time MD has received:

- 21 Stage 2 complaints.
- 11 Resolved at Stage 2.
- 1 Escalated to Stage 3.
- 9 Outstanding within the time frame to be resolved.

- 7.7 This has vastly improved the methodology of how complaint data is being supplied within the organisation, and brought about greater transparency. A letter is sent to retailers acknowledging the complaint upon receipt.

By having complaints registered centrally; this prompts administration to liaise with the distribution house for a response and monitoring of each complaint, ensuring that the dealing with complaints does not elapse the permitted time.

RC commented that he was pleased to hear this, as issues at branch level can no longer be ignored.

- 7.8 DS to send an explanation of the changes to DK highlighting the improvement made to the system for inclusion in the next PDRP Quarterly Report.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 RG reported that he had recently attended a Palmer & Harvey meeting. It is looking into the CTN sector. All the attendees' apart from RG belonged to symbol groups and RG was the only independent.

Retailers present were complaining about the industry and procedures, but appeared to be unaware of the PDC.

DK to forward a copy of the Charter to P&H.

- 8.2 DD asked for guidance on the timescale for retailers to raise a PDC complaint.

NR responded that there was a 3 month timeline agreed under the ISSA arbitrator's guidelines.

- 8.3 NR to circulate Arbitrator's Guidelines to panel.

8.4 DK advised the panel that the PDF website is currently being reviewed and updated.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 29th November 2012 at 13.30 at the NPA offices.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm.

MEETING –20th September 2012 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Item	Action	By Whom
3.4	Note to be placed on PDC website to state first contact should be via wholesale, before referring to publisher.	DK
4.4	SN & MD to investigate the feasibility for capturing Stage 1 informal discussion.	DD/DS
5.5	To check RS concerns re allocation of supplies while competitor having a major refit.	DD
7.4	MD 2 nd Edition of Service Pledge to forward to NR and DK	DS
7.5	SN & MD Stage 2 Complaint forms to be updated on PDF website	DK
7.8	DS to submit a paragraph regarding new MD procedures for next quarterly report.	DS
8.1	RG to pass details of P&H contact to DK to contact and forward the Charter.	DK
8.3	NR to circulate 'Arbitrators Guidelines' to panel for reference.	DK

Dates of Meetings for 2013

Date	Time	Venue	Comments
21.02.13	2.00pm	MD SEL	Address to be supplied
30.05.13	1.30pm	NPA Offices	
26.03.13	1.30pm	PPA Offices	
28.11.13	1.30pm	PPA Offices	