

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Press Distribution Review Panel held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at the Offices of the Newspaper Publishers Association, St Andrews House, 18 - 20 St Andrews Street, London, EC4A 3AY**

Present:	Neil Robinson	Chairman
	Carrie Rooks	PPA
	Dave Shedden	MD
	Debbie Dalston	Smiths News
	Mark Williams	Independent Retailer
	Richard Sage	Independent Retailer
	Rajiv Chotai	Independent Retailer

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Jonathan Denton and Darren Barker.

**2. Welcome to New Members**

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Richard Sage and Rajiv Chotai as new members of the committee.

**3. Minutes of Last Meetings: - 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

**3.1** The minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

**4.1** Paragraph 3.2 – the Chairman suggested that, as there were continuing problems with the collection of data from central sources, it would be folly to allow spread sheet input at wholesale branch level. It was agreed that this item be deferred indefinitely.

- 4.2** Paragraph 3.3 – the PDC One Page Flyer has been printed and distributed. The Pop-Up Banner has been manufactured and was used to good effect at the Retail Forum.

Mark Williams reported that a copy of the flyer had not been received by his organisation.

- 4.3** Paragraph 6.2 – 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.

The committee revisited this subject and it was generally felt that the key issue is whether the problem is resolved at the point of first contact i.e. wholesaler. Whilst it was accepted that everyday minor problems would not be captured, it was felt that the bigger issues should be going through the PDC Complaint Process.

The retail representatives expressed the view that the minor problems were being dealt with before the PDC was considered and, at worst, at Stage 1 of the complaint process. Furthermore, that 'one off failures' were more often than not tolerated. Basically, they were of the opinion that retailers don't tend to exasperate a problem as they had pressures on their own time and, in most cases, they did not think their efforts would bring about and resolution of the problem.

The retailers were able to demonstrate their point by examples that they had personally experienced, some of which amounted to £50. In all cases the problem had not been taken through the PDC Complaint Process although the entire committee considered that they should have been.

Retailers refer supply issues to their wholesalers. The wholesaler explains that their supply had been cut by the distributor and, accordingly, adjustments need to be made to retail supply. This is accepted by the retailer and he does not refer it as a formal complaint and the issue is lost to capture.

It appeared to the committee that retailers were experiencing supply management difficulties and trying to resolve them informally or at PDC Stage 1, but not escalating as a complaint to Stage 2. The committee thought that this was wrong and that, if there was a genuine supply management complaint that involved a reasonable amount of money, it should be referred to the PPA as a Stage 2 complaint.

The committee agreed that there was a need to build confidence in the PDC and its dispute resolution process in order to ensure that supply management problems moved from a company level to an industry level. In an attempt to quantify the problem wholesalers are asked to informally capture complaints concerning more serious magazine supply management.

- 4.4** Paragraph 6.4 – the misunderstandings have been resolved and MD data has been resubmitted.

**5. Annual Report**

The Chairman reported that he had started compiling the Annual Report for the period 1/11/10 – 31/10/11 in December, but the credibility of the data had been brought into question and, accordingly, the activity was brought to a premature end. He hoped to recommence work on the report as soon as the data had been verified.

The report was noted.

**6. Data Collection**

The Chairman reminded the committee that the timeliness and accuracy of Stage 2 Complaint data had been brought into question at the September meeting. He was firmly of the opinion that the situation had deteriorated further evidenced by the previous item on the agenda.

In December 2011 the complaints spread sheet indicated that there had been 69 Stage 2 Complaints in the first year of the PDC operation. Two entries had no complainant surname, 9 no first name, 11 no telephone number, 4 no Stage 2 commencement date, 2 no Stage 2 completion date and 3 no publisher name. Such omissions are unacceptable and bring into question the monitoring process and, accordingly, self regulation itself.

In view of the seriousness of the situation the Chairman had communicated with the PDF urging them to rectify the situation. A copy of the correspondence is attached to these minutes.

The committee shared the Chairman's concern and endorsed the existing data collection spread sheet.

**7. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at 1.30 pm at the NPA offices.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm.

## **MEETING –19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Annual Report to be prepared and distributed for approval</b>	<b>NR</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Wholesale representatives to cascade informal data collection of potential Stage 2 complaints concerning magazine supply management.</b>	<b>DD/DS</b>