

**Fifth meeting of 4G/TV Co-existence
Oversight Board:**

Meeting date: 24th July 2013

Chair's report to Ministers and Ofcom

Attendees

David Hendon, Chair

Lawrence Wardle (Telefónica / O2)

Inge Hansen (EE)

Matthew Braovac (Vodafone)

Erol Hepsaydir (Three)

Alix Pryde (BBC)

Khalid Hayat (ITV)

Kim Chua (Channel 4)

Peter Couch (Arqiva)

Simon Beresford-Wylie (DMSL)

Jane Humphreys (DCMS)

Mark Caines (Ofcom)

Alberto Fernandes (Ofcom)

William Webb (non-executive
member)

Roger Darlington (non-executive
member)

Alex Pumfrey (Digital UK)

Robert Burles (DCMS)

Alastair Dougans (DCMS)

Apologies

Kip Meek (EE)

Phil Sheppard (Three)

1. Round-up

Interference model

- 1.1 DMSL is making good progress with the vendor on the interference model and the specification is scheduled to be completed in August. DMSL is currently considering the extent to which the Punch model is also used.

KPI interpretation

- 1.2 Ofcom has replied to the letter of 30 May from the Chair about KPI interpretation and written to DMSL along similar lines (copied to Board members). Ofcom agrees to the majority of points raised by the Chair in his letter but highlighted two points.

(i) Under KPI 5, Ofcom interpreted the previous Board paper as implying that instances of 'reinstating service' should not count towards the KPI reporting requirements. Ofcom would not agree to forbear enforcement to this extent, noting that an objective of KPI 5 is to ensure timely installations. Ofcom believes that any alternative solution used should still be timely. Ofcom understands that alternative solutions are likely to be faster than platform changes and that including alternative solutions in the KPI reporting requirements should not create a significant additional burden on DMSL.

(ii) Whilst Ofcom agreed to the request that the minimum time between mailing and activation should be lowered from 4 to 3 weeks, they noted that the decision will follow a different formal notification process because it is a variation within the bounds available to the Oversight Board within the existing licence conditions.

2. DMSL update

Roll-out

- 2.1 DMSL believes it is in good shape operationally. Roll-out has begun in London and across the rest of the country, with the number of mast activations increasing on a weekly basis.

Filters

- 2.2 One supplier is currently performing slightly outside of the specification for insertion loss. Many of these filters have already been despatched to households but DMSL is monitoring the situation closely, and will send replacements to households, if necessary.

Communications

- 2.3 Levels of awareness of potential 4G interference amongst viewers had risen and the 75% awareness target amongst Freeview households in London had been achieved.

Calls to contact centre

- 2.4 The volume of calls to the contact centre was decreasing over time. 15-20% of calls were from London, which was significant given that mailings of postcards to London were completed by 7 June.
- 2.5 84,000 calls had been received to date, of which 85% were from target areas. 70-75% of calls were about reception issues and the rest were general queries. The level of complaints was still fairly low.
- 2.6 A recent incident in which Freeview viewers with Sony digital TV recorders had lost reception following an incorrect EPG schedule data input by Sky had proved to be a useful experience for the DMSL contact centre. Many viewers incorrectly thought that 4G roll-out was the cause of the problem and had contacted the call centre.

Installer visits

- 2.7 There have been 108 installer visits to date. DMSL was taking the approach that installers should be readily sent to households in the early stages of rollout, in order that DMSL could seek to gain information about cases from the installers. There had been no early confirmed cases of 4G interference since the pilots. This may be partly due to the fact that 25% of those receiving filters were installing them as a precautionary measure despite DMSL advice to install them after interference is experienced.

Voucher scheme

- 2.8 The voucher scheme is operational and working well. DMSL are in the process of automating the information that comes back to them from installers.

Code of complaint

- 2.10 Progress in establishing a partnership with Ombudsman Services had not been as quick as DMSL had hoped. DMSL is considering how to proceed, for example by looking at alternatives.

Communal accommodation

- 2.11 DMSL is making reasonable progress with the arrangements for communal accommodation but there is still work to be done with the Prison Service and private landlords. The arrangements with social landlords have gone well.

3. Effective mailing

- 3.1 DMSL recognises that, under its current mailing strategy, certain households in a particular area could receive multiple mailings when further nearby (“infill”) masts are activated in later months. This could be confusing or alarming for householders and runs the risk of DMSL’s mailings being viewed as junk mail.
- 3.2 For example, a household close to a mast scheduled to be activated in July would have received a mailing from DMSL in June. As there is only a 25-50% probability of a mast being activated in the scheduled month, it is possible that the household would receive further mailings in relation masts scheduled for activation in August, September and October. DMSL has calculated that it could be possible for a household to receive up to 5 cards as well as a filter (if the household moved from being a DIA household to an SDI household) over a five-month period. (DIA or SDI classification is essentially driven by proximity to a 4G 800MHz LTE mast, with SDI households being closer to the mast).
- 3.3 To avoid this scenario, DMSL proposed to (i) mail only newly affected households; (ii) maintain a household’s status in the system as either SDI or DIA (and therefore not send filters to households that move from DIA to SDI); (iii) implement a system of reminder mailings to households that had yet to be affected by masts that should have been activated; and (iv) catch new-builds by having a full Punch run each time a new Post Office Address File was received and mailing affected households not previously mailed.
- 3.4 DMSL’s proposal has consequences for KPI 1 and KPI 2. Under the amended KPI 1, 99.9% of households forecast to experience interference should receive mailings between 3 and 12 weeks before the base station is turned on, although the

Oversight Board agreed a grace period for July's masts and extended the 12 week period to 16 weeks. For future masts, DMSL is proposing that the reminder mailing should commence in week 14; in circumstances where masts are not activated as per the plan (and that the reminder mailing should restart the 12 week period for mast activation).

- 3.5 Under KPI 2, not more than 10% of households forecast to experience interference should request a filter in the 4 weeks after a base station is turned on. DMSL would like to see KPI 2 modified so that if a household has already been mailed (even as a DIA household), then it is exempt from measurement for KPI 2 should it request a filter in future.
- 3.6 To support these revised arrangements, DMSL undertook to deliver filters in the relevant area on a reactive basis as soon as possible. Where possible, DMSL would arrange for an installer to visit a house with a filter where the call to the contact centre had been made before 2pm the previous day.
- 3.7 After some discussion of the consequences, the Board did not agree that KPI2 should be dis-applied but was supportive of the proposal that DMSL should trial this approach to filter provision for period of two months, given the poor correlation so far between the degradation predicted by Punch and actual instances of interference. DMSL committed to resolving any problems that arose within that period to avoid breaching KPI 2; and to notify me as Chair as soon as possible if there were any issue of which the Board should be aware. The matter will be reviewed at the 11th September meeting of the Oversight Board.
- 3.8 On KPI 2, Ofcom noted that a paper was going to its Policy Executive shortly proposing that the de minimis thresholds that it had established for KPI 2 should be extended for another three months beyond August. The Board also noted that it may need to consider the relevance of KPI2 and its possible replacement towards the end of the year if interference continues at the levels seen to date and it appears to DMSL and the Board that a faster reactive programme would be better for consumers than the proactive filter programme originally envisaged by the KPIs.

4. Technical sub-group

4.1 The technical sub-group chaired by William Webb, the technical member of the Oversight Board, met on 22 July to continue its investigation into why far fewer cases of 4G interference than predicted by the Punch model had been found. Good progress is being made but it is too early to report any firm conclusions from the group yet. William's observations included the following.

(i) There does not appear to be much discrepancy caused either by the LTE base stations having better than assumed transmitter masks or by the receivers having better selectivity at large frequency separations, for example as is the case at Crystal Palace.

(ii) There does appear to be potential for discrepancies due to two factors around receiver protection ratios. The first is that while receivers need greater protection at high signal levels, it appears that antenna installations are often poor (ie older and not maintained) in high signal level areas resulting in only a low interfering signal level at the receiver and so lowering the incidence of actual interference. The second is that the impact of burst interference may be less in the "real world" where there are many more signals than in the lab, making the bursty signal a lower contribution to the overall signal level that impacts the AGC.

(iii) There are some areas that may be cause for discrepancy but where further research would be needed which is not currently underway and difficult to do. This includes the propagation model from LTE base stations to rooftop mounted aerials.

5. Alex Pumfrey

5. 1 As Alex Pumfrey will shortly be going on maternity leave, I thanked Alex for her major contribution to the work of the Oversight Board, particularly for her work with the broadcasters and for representing the broadcasters in discussions with DMSL.

6. Roger Darlington

- 6.1 Roger Darlington, the non-executive member with expertise in consumer affairs, has accepted an offer from Everything Everywhere to sit on their External Advisory Board. Roger does not believe that there is any conflict of interest with his role as a member of the Oversight Board as the External Advisory Board has been established to advise Everything Everywhere on its 'responsibility' activity, ie. the objectives that the company wishes to achieve as part of its corporate social responsibility objectives. The Board meets only twice a year, has no official status or responsibilities, is un-remunerated and Roger is being asked to undertake the same role he undertakes in other areas, ie. to represent the consumer.
- 6.3 My conclusion was that there is no conflict of interest with his position on the Oversight Board and the Board endorsed my conclusion.

7. Alastair Dougans

- 7.1 Subsequent to the meeting of the Board it was confirmed that Alastair Dougans, who has been the secretary of the Oversight Board since before the first meeting of the Interim Board, has accepted the offer of a post in HMRC and will be leaving DCMS early in August. I am extremely grateful for Alastair's support to me as Chair and for the Board as a whole over the whole period and on behalf of the Board members, I wish him every success in the future.

8. Next meetings

- 8.1 The next meetings are scheduled for 14th August, 11th September, 9th October, 6th November and 5th December (all at Ofcom). I will review closer to the time whether it is necessary for the group to meet in August.

David Hendon

Chair

4G/TV Co-existence Oversight Board