

4G/TV Co-existence Oversight Board Meeting: Wednesday 27 September 2017

Chair's report to Ministers and Ofcom

Attendees (in person)

David Hendon, Chair
Roger Darlington (Non-Executive)
William Webb (Non-Executive)
John Ballard (Arqiva)
Dave Darlington (BBC)
Ben Roome (DMSL)
Andrew Dumbreck (Technical Advisor)
Michelle Brownrigg (DUK)
Nick Munn (DCMS)
Sue Ramroop (DCMS)

(via teleconference)

Paul Rosbotham (Vodafone)
Greg Thompson (Three)
Robin Vernon (O2)

Apologies

Alan Boyle (BBC)
Ian Dewhurst (DCMS)
Inge Hansen (EE)
Alexandra McNair (ITV)
Philip Milton (Channel 4)
Graham Plumb (Ofcom)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 There were 22,121 confirmed cases of 4G interference at 800MHz as of the end of August 2017. The levels of interference remain within the revised estimates, based on actual experience, made by at800 in 2014.
- 1.2 All KPI targets were met. All 393 4G interference cases confirmed in August were resolved within the ten working day target, achieving a 100% pass rate for KPI A, Service Restoration.
- 1.3 The Board agreed that the next formal discussion in December 2017 would focus on the priorities and accompanying timetable for 2018. As the final year of the Oversight Board and formal mitigation scheme, there will be consideration on what, if any, support and associated governance is available post-2018 and any opportunities the 700 MHz Clearance Programme Viewer Support scheme (once confirmed) might offer.

2. at800 update

Roll-out

- 2.1 As of the end of August, there were 22,121 confirmed cases of DTT interference caused by 4G at 800MHz, which includes the 35 cases found during the pilots conducted in 2013.

Mast Analysis

- 2.2 The numbers of cumulative cases reported within 28 days of mast activation for 900m and 1.5km are 0.26 and 0.34 respectively. The number of monthly cases

reported within 28 days for 900m and 1.5km increased marginally with 0.15 in July, from 0.10 in June (900m), and 0.17 from 0.12 (1.5km).

- 2.3 The average number of cumulative cases per active mast was 0.96 in August and the rolling average of confirmed cases per activated mast across a three-month period to August increased from 0.51 in July to 0.57.

Installer Scheme and Audit Summary

- 2.4 There have been 66,468 engineer visits with 60,051 to unique addresses, of which 3,845 have been subject to audit, with 293 overturns in total (217 4G to non-4G and 76 non-4G to 4G) and 186 form completion errors (132 4G to non-4G and 54 non-4G to 4G.)
- 2.5 There were 1,460 visits originally scheduled to take place in August; the majority, 1,349 were undertaken and closed as arranged; 12 visits were rearranged by at800 with 99 cancelled by viewers. Nearly 98% of the completed appointments took place within the three working day target.
- 2.6 A total of 94 audits were completed in August for engineer visits originally undertaken in June (32), July (53) and August (9) on the work of 33 different engineers from across all three regional teams.
- 2.7 There were two overturns (one from 4G to non-4G and the other non-4G to 4G) on the work of the same engineer who had not undertaken the full system checks during both visits. Whilst the engineer had replaced fly leads and connectors, installed a filter and reminded the viewer to relocate their broadband router away from their TV set in the non-4G to 4G overturn case, the omission of filter tests and meter readings were not completed and therefore the contribution of 4G signals was missed. In the 4G to non-4G overturn, the engineer did not fully check the main TV set and after testing by the auditor, it was determined that the set itself was the cause of the issue and not signal interference. Both overturns have been raised with the relevant engineer.
- 2.8 In addition to these cases (and the one form completion error of 4G to non-4G), there was a reversal of an auditor's previous overturn decision (an overturn of an overturn) in August. As the auditor's investigation and final outcome had been based on a different aerial system to the one the engineer had attended (due to a replacement of the entire installation by the local council further to damage caused by them at the property), the benefit of the doubt has been extended to the engineer as his notes and work supported his original diagnosis.

Data Operations

- 2.9 In readiness for the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation, which relates to the use and access of personal data of EU citizens and comes into effect in May 2018, at800 has a working group to manage the company through to compliance. The group are currently focusing on mapping the touch points of any personal data held and accessed within the organisation as well as those of third parties/suppliers.
- 2.10 As a direct consequence of the at800 GDPR working group, the names of individual householders are no longer shared with the third party filter distributor and instead all filters are labelled to "The Householder" as a generic addressee upon despatch.
- 2.11 Future progress on the group's activities will be shared with the Board as part of the regular monthly updates.

Clusters and viewer experience

- 2.12 During 2016, the Coexistence Technical Working Group (CTWG) analysed why some masts have a higher number of interference cases than average (i.e. clusters). The purpose of the work was to help at800 identify possible future clusters in advance and so prepare resources. The CTWG identified a set of characteristics associated with clusters of cases which tended to be in suburban areas or small towns with semi-detached or terraced housing where there is relatively weak reception of a distant 6 multiplex (MUX) DTT transmission.
- 2.13 Further to that work and in recognition that other factors such as the likelihood that in smaller communities, social interaction may be more prevalent with a tendency for 'word of mouth' on issues such as TV disruption, prompting more calls to the at800 call centre, the Board recommended that when another 'cluster' occurs, at800 consider gathering information directly from viewers about what prompted the call i.e. postcard, local gossip etc. as this may help understanding the behavioural aspects.
- 2.14 In May 2017 the first potential cluster was identified when there was a spike of reported issues (from 45 individual households) related to one mast activation in the Anglesey area. Upon verification that this was indeed a cluster and not related to another issue i.e. weather interference or TV transmitter work, at800 contacted all 45 households via the Outbound Survey to ask what had specifically prompted them to get in touch.
- 2.15 Of the 45 households, 37 responded with 5% reporting that the postcard had induced them to make contact, 10% said the information in the local press, 16% said 'word of mouth' and 67% said that they had had information from the local MP.

- 2.16 As part of their routine awareness campaign, at800 contact MP's and councillors in the local area to advise them of the expected mast activations and the existence and purpose of at800 so that should constituents/citizens raise issues with them, they are aware.
- 2.17 DMSL is in touch with the MP's office in an attempt to establish how the information was shared with local residents as a possible good practice model for the future and any data obtained through audit visits will be shared with the CTWG. (Subsequent correspondence since the Oversight Board has confirmed that constituents in the local area received leaflets from Albert Owen MP (Ynys Môn), about potential disruption to TV providing at800's contact information.)

Activities related to the 700 MHz clearance programme

- 2.18 In late August, there were a further two 700 MHz clearance events in the STV North region. Postcards for 2,004 households (of 70,266) identified as being eligible for a 4G/800 MHz related mailing were withheld as they were within areas effected by 700 MHz clearance events planned to occur within four weeks of estimated delivery.
- 2.19 Of the 2,004 households, 2 contacted at800 for assistance: 1 had already received a postcard in June from at800 and was referred to the Clearance Freeview Advice line for assistance with their reception issue and the second was a referral from the Advice line to at800 and were assisted accordingly as a possible 4G interference case.
- 2.20 Overall, there have been no impacts upon the at800 operation and planning milestones for the next set of 700 MHz clearance events have all been met.

3. KPI Report

- 3.1 at800 reported passes against all KPI and SLA targets in August 2017.
- 3.2 For KPI A Service Restoration where a household is a primary DTT user, all 393 confirmed 4G interference cases were resolved within the ten working day target, achieving a 100% pass rate.

4. AOB & Next Meeting

- 4.1 There is an expectation that a variety of factors upon which decisions for next steps are reliant will become clearer over the coming months and that the Board will be in position to discuss and agree the priorities timetable for 2018 at the next formal meeting on Wednesday 20 December 2017.

- 4.2 The funding and provision of a mandatory 800 MHz mitigation support by the MNO's and the oversight of operational performance by this Board will cease after 31 December 2018. Ofcom has indicated that responsibility for mitigating the impact of new and existing 800 MHz mast activations on DTT beyond December 2018 would remain the responsibility of individual licence holders. As such, there is a need to consider what happens when formal mitigation assistance is no longer available, including funding implications, how ongoing mitigation would be monitored (and by whom) and how transition to a new governance structure might be supported.
- 4.3 In addition, the Viewer Support scheme for the 700 MHz Clearance Programme has yet to be finalised and the delivery partner confirmed. This has implications for the time required to adapt the company's operation. DMSL's Board is in the process of making a decision about its future. Ofcom and DCMS will need to identify and establish suitable governance for the Viewer Support scheme once it is agreed.
- 4.4 Therefore, discussions at the December 2017 meeting will include considerations on what happens when the prescribed 800 MHz mitigation assistance for primary DTT viewers is no longer mandatory and the options for replacing the current governance structure should mitigation continue in another form; whether there is an opportunity to continue with a similar composition that provides oversight of the 700 MHz Viewer Support scheme as a whole or as an advisory function with a smaller membership or, indeed, amalgamate governance of both support schemes.
- 4.5 The Board will test identified governance models during 2018 and pass formal recommendations to Ofcom and DCMS within appropriate timing.
- 4.6 I expect Ofcom will announce the outcome of their verification of the Telefonica UK licence obligation in the early part of 2018 and that the MNO's/DMSL will be able to clarify the progress of 4G roll-out, even if, to maintain commercial confidences, this information is provided as a percentage of the total number of expected sites/masts.
- 4.7 In the meantime, the Board note their continued appreciation of the at800 staff and contractors involved in the at800 operation and recognise their consistent hard work and support to viewers affected by 4G related interference issues.

David Hendon

Chair

4G/TV Co-existence Oversight Board