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**Response to the CMA Notice of possible remedies Under Rule 12 of the CMA's rules of procedure for merger, market and special reference group.**

Dear Project Manager,

It is with much relief that my organisation has read of your conclusions in regard to the completed acquisition of Smartbox Assistive Technology Limited and Sensory Software international Limited by Tobii AB.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we have relied on Smartbox over a number of years to meet the very specific needs of the UK citizens who rely on AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). We were immediately alarmed by the takeover in August 2018 as the more robust devices, traditionally part of Smartbox's portfolio, quickly disappeared from the range of devices available to UK citizens. As we primarily work with students who need robust, high specification devices so that they can access the national curriculum and begin to have opportunities in the mainstream education system, we were very concerned that our student group were going to be compromised. What is, and always has been, special about the services that Smartbox offer is the sensitivity, concern and responsiveness they have always shown towards the needs of all users of AAC devices, even those who have low-incidence needs. We have also had concerns about the potential loss of choice in regard to eye gaze solutions. The variety of camera's that Smartbox can offer is fundamental to the students' success in being able to choose the eye gaze system that most fully meets their needs, rather than an off the shelf option.

Smartbox have demonstrated that they understand the needs of students who need to access the UK curriculum and communication support systems by being firmly rooted in the UK, promoting UK symbol systems and responding to UK needs.

Smartbox have a customer service model that is absolutely unique in the AAC world. They have invested in the customer and the customer has responded by maintaining their loyalty to the company. The customers have done so despite the unsettling time that we currently go through. It is further testament to the solid foundations and ongoing determination of Smartbox to continue to deliver excellent services that they have continued to provide the highest quality of support to customers throughout the past nine months. It is also notable

that the staff team at Smartbox have remained loyal and stayed in their positions despite what must have been a tense and worrying time for them.

In regard to potential remedies, it is difficult to fully understand the options that you put forward in your notice. At CandLE, we feel that Smartbox needs a solution that secures their future in a way that ensures that they have control over how they manage their customer services and provision of devices and software. We therefore consider sale to a competitor of any description to be out of the question. We would be equally concerned to see any entrepreneurial acquisition from the private sector who would be likely to put profits over services. We are not clear how 'prohibition of the merger' can be achieved but this would be our ideal position so that the current management of Smartbox stay firmly in charge of the future of an organisation that is admirably meeting the needs of students in the UK who rely on AAC.

Best wishes

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Lead trainer and assessor and CEO