

Eleventh meeting of 4G/TV Co-existence Oversight Board

Chair's report to Ministers and Ofcom

Meeting date: 18 February 2014

Attendees

David Hendon, Chair

Kip Meek (EE)

Matthew Braovac (Vodafone)

Paul Rosbotham (Vodafone)

Robin Vernon (O2)

Khalid Hayat (ITV)

Alan Boyle (BBC)

Peter Couch (Arqiva)

Roger Darlington (Non-Executive)

William Webb (Non-Executive)

Ben Roome (DMSL)

Jane Humphreys (DCMS)

Mark Caines (Ofcom)

Alberto Fernandes (Ofcom)

Ian Dewhurst (DCMS)

Sue Ramroop (DCMS)

Michelle Brownrigg (DUK)

Andrew Dumbreck (Technical Advisor)

Apologies

Inge Hansen (EE)

Lawrence Wardle (O2)

Phil Sheppard (Three)

Kim Chua (Channel 4)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Ofcom agreed the Board proposals for a trial of the Key Performance Indicators, Service Level Agreement and Operational Condition regime. The six-month trial of the scheme began on 1st February.
- 1.2 The position on interference remains lower than originally expected with 1109 confirmed cases to date, excluding the 35 cases during the pilots.
- 1.3 at800 met all KPIs for December with the exception of a marginal miss of KPI5 due to a single case in the Winter Hill area. The Oversight Board considered the breach and concluded that this case was outside of the scope of KPI5, since the case was an aerial change and therefore not strictly a Platform Change.
- 1.4 I welcomed Alan Boyle and Paul Rosbotham to the Board membership, representing the BBC and Vodafone respectively. They replace Alix Pryde and Matthew Braovac, whom I thanked for their contributions to the Oversight Board.
- 1.5 Ian Dewhurst has joined as Head of the Oversight Board Secretariat; I also welcomed Ian to the Board and Secretariat.

2. Interference experiences within Europe

- 2.1 The Board shared reports and findings of interference experiences within Europe to inform understanding of the issue, particularly at Block A, and identify potential patterns. It was concluded that the experience is consistent with expectations.

3. at800 update

Roll-out

- 3.1 There have been a total of 4471 installer appointments to unique addresses to date of which 1244 were in January alone. This significant increase in the number of installer visits is primarily due to the rise in calls to the contact centre following the 3.2 million remainder mailings posted in January.
- 3.2 There have been 1109 confirmed cases (post-audit) of 4G interference at 800MHz, excluding the 35 cases found within the pilots.
- 3.3 If Block A mast activations take place within the trial period, at800 will closely monitor the interference levels and alert the Board immediately if there are any spikes or if operational changes are required to address significant increases in reported or confirmed cases.

Audit Summary

- 3.4 414 audits were conducted in January; 151 at locations diagnosed as having 4G interference of which 71 (47%) were overturned on audit and at 263 locations diagnosed as not having 4G interference, 16 cases (6%) were overturned.
- 3.5 The benefits of a reduced pool of regional contractors have begun to be realised with indications that the reduction in 4G cases overturned post-audit demonstrate improved installer diagnosis of interference caused by 4G. The expectation is that the installer service will further improve with contractual requirements to resolve issues within one visit.

Data Operations

- 3.6 at800 still expect to use the LS Telcom model for April mast activations as planned despite continued delays with resolution of software performance issues. Recent testing has shown that the model is quick, with outputs produced within 4-5 hours rather than the 24 hours previously experienced with Punch.

Contact Centre

- 3.7 Agents continue to receive training to improve customer service, including initial triage assessments. The increase in positive feedback within a high call volume indicates the benefits of this training.

Website

- 3.8 In collaboration with Digital UK, at800 have developed and implemented an online 'decision tree' questionnaire that assists web-visitors in self-diagnosing TV signal or interference issues. Information on the URL address is provided on the postcard mailings.
- 3.9 Based on the answers, users are redirected to Digital UK or the BBC if the issue is primarily signal related or, if potentially an interference problem, advised to contact at800 directly via telephone, email or by completing contact forms on the site.
- 3.10 In January, there were a total of 23,938 unique visitors to the at800 website; from this number, 6296 visitors used the decision tree with approx. 57% completing it and of those, 846 (1/4) went to the 'Contact Us' page on the at800 site. The majority exited via the provided links to other information sources e.g. Digital UK or the BBC.

Research Grid

- 3.11 The audits conducted on the London area cluster of 80 cases originally confirmed with 4G interference by an installer, were completed in December. The test system confirmed that the LTE signal level for 8 of the 80 cases tested was sufficient to result in disruption to DTT. All 8 confirmed cases were within 300m of a live mast. The results demonstrate the good DTT signal strength experienced in the London area.
- 3.12 There are 44 devices collecting 4G and DTT signal readings from households in particular locations throughout the UK with specific TV/aerial characteristics. The second batch of data cards has been returned and analysis will begin shortly; the data will also be compared against the LS Telcom model to validate its results of predicted interference.

Mast Analysis

- 3.13 In January, the cumulative number of confirmed cases per mast increased to 0.54, leading to concern within at800 that interference levels may be rising and the engagement model would not be scaled appropriately if the upward trend continues.

- 3.14 at800 undertook analysis to further understand the issues. They reported that the January figure is a result of slower mast activations, high volumes of mailings - prompting more calls to the contact centre and therefore more installer visits - and incorrect diagnosis of 4G interference.
- 3.15 at800 noted that as support to consumers is provided beyond the post mast activation 28 day period, the number of confirmed cases will lag and consequently distort the figures in later reporting periods. During analysis, it was also identified that 100% of post-audit confirmed cases are within 900m from an active 4G mast and 83% are within 500m.
- 3.16 Based on these findings, at800 conclude that there is no indication that interference levels are growing beyond predictions and recommended a revised reporting approach for a more accurate account of the position by providing both cases per mast reported within 28 days of mast activation and total cumulative number of cases per mast.
- 3.17 The Board accepted this recommendation, restating their suggestion that to enable comparison against the cumulative figures, at800 also report across a 3 month period to allow for the lag in confirmed interference and further proposed that the report also states the position for both distances of 1.5km and 900m from the mast.

Trial of new model and supporting regime

- 3.18 Ofcom agreed the Board proposals to a six-month trial of a revised Key Performance Indicator, Service Level Agreement and Operational Condition regime and to forbear from enforcement of the KPIs and OCs during the six-month period. The trial began on 1st February 2014.
- 3.19 at800 informed the Board that they are comfortable with the progress at this point with no major issues or concerns to report. The Board will be closely monitoring performance during the trial.

4. KPI report

- 4.1 at800 reported that KPIs 1-4 and 6 were passed in December with a proposal to exclude a single breach in KPI 5 (Platform Changes) as the restoration of service did not involve a platform change.
- 4.2 This one case, of a total of 218, was resolved in 16 working days rather than the KPI standard of 15 days after four separate installer visits. The DTT signal on one of the

channels was found to be below the acceptable level. Although a 4G signal was also present, as the property was 110 metres from an active mast, it is believed that this was not the primary issue, exacerbating the underlying signal problems. The DTT signal was improved (by over 20dBµV) by fitting a new aerial. at800 commented that the case was out of scope of the intent of the original KPI as it did not involve a platform change.

- 4.3 The Board unanimously agreed that this single incident was outside the scope of the KPI as it did not specifically result in a platform change. It was not necessary to formally recommend Ofcom forebear from imposing Operational Conditions within the “de minimis” threshold because of this and also due to the agreement to forebear from enforcement during the six-month trial period.

5. AOB & Next Meeting

- 5.1 Alix Pryde and Matthew Braovac have both stepped down from the Board. Alix will be leaving the BBC to start her new appointment with Vodafone in March. I thanked Alix and Matthew for their major contributions to the Oversight Board and on behalf of the Board, I wished Alix every success in her new role.
- 5.2 I welcomed Alan Boyle and Paul Rosbotham (BBC and Vodafone respectively) and Ian Dewhurst, who joins as Head of the Secretariat to the Oversight Board. We look forward to working with them.
- 5.3 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 18 March (at Ofcom).

David Hendon

Chair

4G/TV Co-existence Oversight Board