

**Minutes of the Thirty-sixth meeting of the Council of the Telecommunications  
Ombudsman Service Limited (TOSL)**

**Tuesday 19 April 2005 at 1pm**

**Otelo Offices, Wilderspool Park, Greenalls Avenue, Warrington**

**Present:**

**Council:** Peter Holland (Chairman)  
Margaret Doyle  
Rosaleen Hubbard  
Roger Jefferies  
Julie Meadows  
Jeremy Mitchell

**In Attendance:** Elizabeth France (Ombudsman)  
Richard Brown  
Richard Sills  
Chris McAlpine

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Chris Holland

**2 Minutes of the Council Meeting, held on 15 March 2005**

The Minutes, with minor drafting amendments, were approved for publication on the Otelo website.

**3 Matters Arising**

AP3 – Rosaleen Hubbard confirmed that work was in progress and she had been working with Andrew Bradley regarding this. The Member Extranet would be available shortly.

The Ombudsman informed Council that communications with consumer groups were ongoing. Andrew Bradley would contact Margaret Doyle about this.

Point 8 AP 5 – Rosaleen Hubbard confirmed that the Member Board would be discussing this issue at its next meeting. There had been no Member Board meeting since the last Council Meeting. Roger Jeffries confirmed that instructions would shortly go to the company's solicitors.

**Action Point 1:** Andrew Bradley to contact Margaret Doyle about communication with consumer groups.

**4 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman asked Council if there was any feedback from the BIOA conference. Council members confirmed that the event had been useful and interesting. Some of the

key points highlighted were that Otelo had robust governance and accountability. Ombudsman schemes were now becoming more prominent which meant that accountability was a key issue. Additionally, a useful session on Judicial Review took place. The Ombudsman also found the event useful and confirmed Council's view that Ombudsman schemes were becoming more widely recognised.

## **5 Ombudsman's Report**

The Ombudsman reported that Otelo had achieved all its key targets in March which was very pleasing. It was confirmed that general contacts to Otelo were rising and the Enquiries staff were very busy. Two new Enquiry Officers had been appointed and trained and a further advertisement for staff had been published.

The Ombudsman informed Council that she had chaired a CEPT conference. This group is concerned with European Post & Telecoms Regulation. The conference gave the Ombudsman the opportunity to consider future trends such as VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) which will impact on Otelo.

The Ombudsman confirmed that she and the Chairman will visit ntl on 29 June.

The Ombudsman also confirmed that preparation work was being done for the Member Day at the House of Lords. It was also confirmed that panel workers were still being utilised and would be used selectively to cover periods of absence in the Investigation teams.

The Chairman endorsed the fact that all targets were achieved in March. It was also decided that acronyms should be avoided in Minutes of meetings.

## **6 Member Board Report**

Rosaleen Hubbard stated that as there had been no Member Board meeting since the last Council meeting there was no formal report. It was confirmed that all member company's had been contacted regarding changes to the charging of case fees.

## **7 Member Update**

The Ombudsman reported that a further nine members had joined the Service since the last meeting – making 130 members. The Ombudsman also pointed out that some former member company's had been purchased or merged with other members.

## **8 Terms of Office of Council Members**

The Chairman confirmed that there had been a unanimous invitation to Roger Jeffries to continue in post for a period of another two years. The Chairman also discussed a document setting out proposed term extensions for Council Members but stressed that this was only a working plan. The document was agreed.

## **9 Draft response to Ofcom's statutory request for information**

The Ombudsman asked for comments on the draft document that had been produced in response to Ofcom's request. Council Members considered that it was an impressive

document. However, it was also felt that the document was complicated and the question was raised as to whether it could be simplified. It was also pointed out that there was some duplication in the presentation of information. Comments were submitted from all members for consideration, with the main point being that it would be useful to have an explanatory summary to go with the main document which would highlight the ethos and added value work that Otelo carries out that the main document may not fully convey.

The Ombudsman thanked Council for their comments and accepted that a short explanatory document would be useful whilst stressing that the information contained within the main document was necessary. The Ombudsman also stated that the submitted report would also include the Annual Report and Case Summaries.

It was agreed that Council Members would submit comments and amendments to the Executive by the end of the week.

**Action Point 2:** All Council Members to submit comments by Friday 22 April

## **10 Telephone Answering Presentation by Alyson Jordan**

Alyson Jordan, a consultant on call centre practice, gave a presentation to Council on appropriate targets for answering telephone calls, demonstrating the costs and benefits of various scenarios. Council Members asked questions during and after the presentation which was well received. Council also listened to the IVR recording of an actual call and discussed recorded messages.

It was decided that two KPI's would be set in relation to answering telephone calls:

- 80% of calls should be answered within 2 minutes
- 95% of calls should be answered within 5 minutes

These would be reviewed in six months. It was also agreed that some voicemail messages would be phased in to the waiting period and that research would be carried out into dropped calls after the IVR had been negotiated by callers. Richard Brown was investigating methods of carrying this out. Rosaleen Hubbard would inform the Member Board of the KPI's and a copy of the presentation slides would be e-mailed to her.

The Ombudsman issued a booklet to Council Members about the Otelo Home Computing Initiative (HCI).

**Action Point 3:** Andrew Bradley to e-mail slide presentation to Rosaleen Hubbard

**Action Point 4:** Richard Brown to investigate methods of determining dropped call information.

## **11 Date of Next Meeting**

16 May 2005 at 1pm.