

OEWG Newsletter 23 January 2007

Four Ofcom Expert Working Group meetings (OEWG) have now taken place at Ofcom's central London office, Riverside House. The first OEWG meeting chaired by Frank Phillips and attended by industry experts and an approval body representative developed procedures including organisation of the group, the working approach that was to be adopted, Terms of Reference, communication with interested groups and a template for holding the revised documentation.

The second OEWG meeting concentrated on the structure of the document. The stated intention was to use plain English. Further discussion centred on specific billing scenarios e.g. the bundling of services and how the revised Direction would deal effectively with them.

Tight timescales were agreed and early March 2007 was chosen by the OEWG for production of a draft revised Direction ready for Ofcom.

At Meeting Three (14/12/2006) Frank Phillips handed over to Roy Davies who following informal consultation and an interview, has been recruited by Ofcom to project manage and Chair the OEWG. Frank Phillips still retains the role as Ofcom Project Manager for the implementation of the Oftel Metering and Billing Direction review project. At this time two members announced that they would be leaving the OEWG and their meeting input will be greatly missed but they will both be involved in future drafting consultations. Two new members have been recruited and will attend from Meetings Four and Five respectively.

The Direction had earlier been broken down into contentious and non-contentious subjects. Areas of expertise were re-assessed to ensure that there is adequate subject matter cover following changes in membership and people were placed into work groups with some overlapping. Members were then asked to continue with or start preparing papers for distribution prior to Meeting Four. An excellent presentation was given on the subject "What is Accuracy" which proved stimulating with regard to the complex areas of Bundling and Bill Production error with particular concerns related to correction time scales being scrutinised.

Meeting Four concentrated on tabled papers only one of which could be deemed suitable to be placed into the revised Direction template. More work is required on the remainder of the initial papers and e-mail/teleconferencing/voting is being used to meet the tight timescales. Further allocation of people to Direction section work groups is taking place on a rolling basis and new papers will be presented at or before Meeting Five.

Note: Due to the work demands placed on OEWG members by this complex work Managers who have agreed to their personnel taking part in OEWG tasks are asked to ensure that they are supported and released for adequate periods of time. Failure to do this will jeopardise the opportunity that industry has to use their expertise to bring a successful conclusion to the Review.