

Water Sector ADR Panel
Meeting 25
Minutes of Meeting on 15 November 2017 at Water UK, 36
Broadway, London

Present:

Rachel Barber

Sir Tony Redmond

Louise Beardmore

Sandra Webber (Chair)

Apologies: Claire Forbes, Helen Hunter

Secretary: Shona Flood

ITEM 1: to prepare discussion points for discussion with representatives from Southern Water

1. The Panel considered and agreed discussion points for the interview with the representative from Southern Water.

ITEM 2: Minutes and actions arising from meeting on 25 October 2017

2. The Minutes of the meeting on 25 October 2017 were agreed. It was noted that
 - a) CCWater and CEDR had put forward proposed changes to process to enable CCWater to partially complete applications on behalf of customers if they wished. The Panel thought this should be trialled for a 3 month period, after it had been communicated to water companies. It was agreed that CCWater and CEDR should be asked to provide a process map setting out how the changes would work in principle;
 - b) the implementation of a factsheet to go with the CCWater closure letter should be delayed, so as not to confuse the results of the trial;
 - c) CEDR are to report the number of customers seeking and/or being given assistance from them in completing application forms as from its December report.

ITEM 3: to consider standing items

3. It was noted that the number of applications made to WATRS in September appeared to be lower than in the previous months and for the comparable period in the previous year. CEDR are to be asked to confirm that the data is correct.

ITEM 4: to hear from a representative from Southern Water

4. The Panel received representations from representatives from Southern Water who made the following key points:
 - a) the company had undergone an internal restructuring process with a focus on new operational and customer service roles to focus on an overall reduction in the level of customer complaints and to improve customer outcomes;
 - b) the overall length of an individual customer's complaint journey could become protracted where site visits were required or the complaint involved technical or operational details;
 - c) the company had put in place a process to review all applications with its legal team, and this had helped to improve responses to and outcomes for customers
 - d) the guidance around loss and inconvenience was very useful and the decision format had improved considerably

ITEM 5: to consider written responses from Thames Water

5. It was noted that the company thought that the 10 day timescale worked well although aimed to respond in less.
6. It was also noted that the company thought that there could be greater clarity regarding what comments and material from customers (submitted after the application) were taken into consideration by the adjudicator.

ITEM 6: to consider the draft 12 month review report

7. The draft annual report was considered. It was agreed that further amendments would be made and the final report submitted at the next meeting of the Panel.

ITEM 7: to approve the re-appointment of Ms Hunter

8. The re-appointment of Ms Hunter was approved.

ITEM 8: to consider and agree a programme of meetings for 2018

9. It was agreed that in addition to its annual review the Panel would undertake a second end to end review.

ITEM 9: AOB and actions arising

10. It was noted that there had been a large number of applications for the post of independent member of the Panel and that interviews would take place on 20 November.
11. Ms Flood to ask CEDR and CCWater to provide a process map of the proposed trial for consideration by the Panel.
12. Ms Flood to ask CEDR to confirm the data for applications in September
13. Ms Webber and Ms Flood to amend the draft 12 month review report.
14. Ms Webber and Ms Flood to organise dates for 2018 meetings.

NEXT MEETING: 8 December 2017