

WATRS independent ADR Panel
Meeting 43
Minutes of a meeting on 11 January 2021 via MS Teams

Present:

Susan Bradford	Sir Tony Redmond
Claire Forbes	Katy Taqvi
Daksha Piparia (Chair)	Claire Whyley

Apologies

Louise Beardmore

Attending

Shona Flood (Secretary)	Sally Ainsworth, UU PLC
JP Azzi, CEDR (Items 3c, 4a and 4c)	

		Action No.
Item 1	Welcome and declaration of interests	
1.	Ms Whyley was formally welcomed to the Panel. She confirmed that she has no interests in any supplier to or subscribing member of WATRS.	
2.	It was noted that Sir Tony Redmond would be stepping down from the Panel at the end of February. The Chair expressed the Panel's thanks for his support and work both before and following WATRS's inception. It was noted that Ms Clancy from CCW would attend future meetings of the Panel until a formal replacement was nominated. Ms Flood would forward future meeting dates to Ms Clancy.	[1.] SF
Item 2	Minutes from meeting on 6 October 2020	
3.	The minutes of the meeting on 6 October 2020 were approved.	
Item 3	Matters arising	
4.	It was noted that there were primarily two ADR providers in the water sector, WATRS and the ADR Group. It was agreed that Ms Piparia would raise the issue of whether steps should be taken to actively address any perception that WATRS was not an independent ADR process with RWD.	[2.] DP
5.	It was noted that there were still a number of companies who had not included a reference to the 8 week referral period on their websites. It was also agreed that Ms Flood would prepare a draft letter to be sent to individual company customer service directors giving examples of the type of wording that could be used.	[4.] SF
6.	It was noted that there remained a considerable disparity between the amount of financial compensation claimed and	

	that awarded. It was agreed that the end to end review would focus on decisions where either there was a significant disparity between the amounts claimed and awarded or where the company had been required to undertake works. See also item 7 below.	
7.	It was noted that the agreed amendments to the publication policy had been made to the text on the RWD website.	[5.] SF
Item 4	Standing items	
8.	The Panel heard from Mr Azzi of CEDR regarding the operation of the scheme including the use of webchat. It was noted that the webchat facility was provided offshore but monitored within the UK. Mr Azzi was asked to send a sample of the 'chats' for the Panel to consider. It was further noted that in the future the monthly report would include data relating to the use of webchat.	[6.] JA/SF
9.	It was noted that the new format of the service provider's monthly report included customer experience and satisfaction data. The number of responses was limited [and insufficient to draw definite conclusions from]. It was noted that the number of responses varied across the survey; the Panel considered whether it would be appropriate to make progression through survey conditional on completion of all questions. On balance it was decided that it would be inappropriate to do so at this time. Mr Azzi was asked to confirm the points at which customers were surveyed during the CMS process.	[8.] JA/SF
10.	Mr Azzi was asked to clarify the difference between the ineligibility criteria for 'customer out of time' and 'out of time' in the monthly report.	[9.] JA/SF
11.	The Panel noted that a small number of cases were settled after an application had been made but before the company had provided a response. It was agreed that Mr Azzi would send over a sample of those applications that had been settled in order to understand what the likely drivers for settlement were.	[10.] JA/SF
12.	Ms Forbes noted that there appeared to have been a change in the wording in decisions and references to the guidance for awards for loss and inconvenience. Mr Azzi agreed that the case studies available on the WATRS' website would be reviewed to ensure that they were consistent the guidance available to customers.	[11.] JA/SF
Item 5	Preliminary decisions trial update	
13.	The initial assessment by the Panel sub-group had not been able to draw any solid conclusions; it was noted that the trial had been extended by agreement with RWD for a further 3 months to enable sufficient data to be collected to enable the trial to be assessed against the agreed success criteria.	
Item 6	Longer term reform of the water sector complaints structure	

14.	It was noted that CCW and Ofwat had published a discussion document 'Putting things right' and had established a number of workstreams to consider the potential to enable a more seamless movement from stages 3 to 4 in the customer complaints' journey. Ms Piparia and Ms Forbes confirmed that they were both participating in the workstreams together with Ms Lindsay from RWD. It was agreed that members of the Panel would provide comments on 'Putting things right' by the beginning of March and that the Panel would provide a formal response to CCW by the end of March.	[12.]All [13.] DP/SF
Item 7		
15.	The format of the actions/issues log was agreed.	
16.	Ms Whyley and Ms Ainsworth (on behalf of Ms Beardmore) agreed to take part in the End to End review. It was agreed that Ms Flood would provide an initial list of potential decisions to review after the end of the current financial year and that a meeting would be arranged in early April to agree a methodology for the review.	[14.] CW/SA [15.]SF
17.	With regard to the annual review, Ms Flood would circulate a draft of the statistical information for 20/21 for consideration at the Panel's meeting in June.	[16.] SF
18.	It was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Panel to review its current terms of reference and its relationship with the board of RWD. It was further agreed that Panel members would provide feedback to Ms Piparia for discussion at the next Panel meeting.	[17.] All
19.	It was also agreed that Panel members would provide feedback on the future development of the Panel for further discussion.	[18.]All
	Next meeting: 26/03/21 @ 10am	