



Commission for
Communications Regulation



ComReg and the NDA launch Consumer Guide for people with disabilities and older people

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) and the National Disability Authority (NDA) today launched a consumer guide entitled **Phones and Broadband – a guide for people with disabilities and older people**.

The purpose of the guide is to give straightforward, accessible and useful information on the services available for people with disabilities and for older people. It includes information on services such as Textphone which is a service that converts voice messages into text and SMS to Speech which allows people to listen to text messages. The Guide also provides information on accessibility features of home phones and mobile phones as well as specific information on phones that are compatible with hearing aids.

In order to reach the widest possible audience the guide is available in the following formats - Large Print, Easy to Read, Braille and Audio. These formats are available on request from both ComReg and the NDA. An accessible electronic version is also available on www.askcomreg.ie,

Speaking at the launch of the guide, the Chairperson of ComReg, Mike Byrne said: “Research has shown that many people with disabilities are not aware of the communications services available today and how they might benefit from their use. We believe that this consumer guide can help to raise awareness and to encourage people to take advantage of useful services. I believe that this consumer guide is only the beginning and that the Forum can continue working on new initiatives that will better address the communications needs of people with disabilities”

The Chairperson of the NDA, Angela Kerins, said: “The telecommunications companies play an important role in getting information about accessible services to people with disabilities, and the NDA is pleased to see this support for people with disabilities as customers. Features such as being able to increase the volume on a phone, or being able to use the hearing aid compatibility feature can benefit many users, both people with disabilities and older people. Other very basic feature such as large buttons on phones can make using the phone easier for everyone, as we get older. The Industry Forum is a clear indication of the added value for both service providers and consumers working together, and ComReg has always demonstrated a can-do attitude in ensuring consumers with disabilities’ needs are considered. It is great to see positive outcomes like this guide based on that proactive work.”

ComReg has also published a Disability Survey which examined the level of awareness among people with disabilities of the kinds of telecommunications services that are available. This survey may be found in the publications section of the ComReg website www.comreg.ie.

Note for editors

The Forum on Services for People with Disabilities was established by ComReg in September 2006. It consists of ComReg, the NDA, representatives of disability groups and the main communications providers. The aim of the Forum is to work with both the telecommunications industry and the disability sector to ensure that accessible information about telecommunications services are available, to promote and encourage service providers to ensure that services are accessible for people with disabilities and to work on other initiatives to better meet the needs of people with disabilities.

ENDS

Issued By

Tom Butler

Public Affairs Manager, ComReg

Ph: 01 804 9639 Mobile: 087 2536358

tom.butler@comreg.ie

Donie O'Shea

Senior Policy & Public Affairs Advisor

National Disability Authority

Ph: 01 608 0408(Direct)

doshea@nda.ie