

**Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee (“TUCAC”)**

**Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held at 3:00 p.m.**

**on 16 June 2021 (Wednesday) in Conference Room,**

**Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”),**

**29/F Wu Chung House, Wan Chai**

**Present:**

Mr. Sanda CHEUK (Chairman)	Deputy Director-General
Mr. Francis HO	Representative of Consumer Council
Dr. Anthony NG	Representative of Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Ricky CHONG	Representative of Communications Association of Hong Kong
Mr. Eric YEUNG	Representative of Small and Medium Enterprises
Mr. C M CHUNG	Representative of the disabled
Mr. Y C SIU	Representative of the disabled
Ms. Maura WONG	Representative of the aged community services
Mr. K K LAU, MH, JP	Member appointed on an ad personam basis
Dr. K W TANG	Member appointed on an ad personam basis
Ms. P Y CHAN	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. K L CHAN	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. W K CHENG	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Peony CHEUNG	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Katy LAU	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Eva LAU	Representative as a member of the public
Dr. K W LAU	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. Richard TSANG	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Avon YUE	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. Henry LIN	Representative of Education Bureau
Ms. Jamay WONG (Secretary)	OFCA

**In attendance:**

Mr. Desmond YOUNG	OFCA
Mr. Allen TIN	OFCA
Ms. Christine CHIM	OFCA
Mr. Kenneth LEUNG	OFCA
Miss Edith YAU	OFCA

**Absent with apologies:**

Mr. Keith LI	Representative of Hong Kong Wireless Technology Industry Association
Mr. W T CHAN	Representative as a member of the public

Mr. H C HUNG  
Mr. Y M KUNG

Representative as a member of the public  
Representative as a member of the public

**I. Welcome Young Members**

1. The Chairman introduced at the meeting two new members who had been appointed through the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth, and welcomed them to the Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee.

**II. Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee (“TUCAC”)**

2. The Secretary had not received any proposed amendment to the draft minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting from the members prior to the meeting and no amendment was proposed by the members at the meeting. The Chairman announced that the minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were confirmed.

**III. Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards**

3. Mr. Desmond YOUNG briefed members on the details of the Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards (“Registration Programme”), including the current status of SIM services in Hong Kong, the implementation timetable of the Registration Programme, its key features and channels, as well as the handling of registered information. Related information was set out in TUCAC Paper No. 1/2021.

4. Dr. Anthony NG enquired about the pre-paid SIM (“PPS”) cards as to how the operators could be clear and sure that the cards sold to individual or corporate users were used for machine type connections, and thus not subject to regulation under the Registration Programme.

5. Mr. Desmond YOUNG said that, generally speaking, the PPS cards being supplied in the market for individual users were all intended for person-to-person communications. As for the SIM cards being purchased for machine type connections, most of their users were corporate users in the telecommunications industry, such as the Internet of Things (“IoT”) companies. They usually ordered this type of SIM cards directly from the relevant operators.

6. The Chairman added that albeit the fact that SIM cards used for machine type connections were not included in the Registration Programme, OFCA would also discuss the sale arrangement with the operators concerning this type of SIM cards as to whether the customers should be required to provide basic information for their purchase. The required information might include the application of the machine type connection service involved, contact information of the customer, the quantity purchased of SIM cards. Details had yet to be worked out pending discussion with the operators.

7. Mr. Eric YEUNG said that the telecommunications industry had also discussed the issue. Basically, users in the telecommunications industry (including the IoT companies) usually preferred using service plan SIM cards rather than PPS cards for service development and testing purposes. In view of the much lower average cost of using a service plan SIM card than a PPS card, coupling with the fact that there was no registration limit for service plan SIM cards under the Registration Programme, corporate users could register a different number of SIM cards according to their needs. It was thus believed that the Registration Programme would not hinder the development of the telecommunications industry.

8. Dr. Anthony NG hoped that the Government could provide various sectors with clear guidelines so that they could understand better the respective responsibilities of people selling and using PPS cards under the Registration Programmes.

9. The Chairman understood Dr. Anthony NG’s concern. He said that both the operators and the end-users of PPS cards should be responsible for the sale and use of their cards. The operators had to ensure implementation of the Registration

Programme in accordance with the law and the relevant guidelines, while the users had to provide information for registration according to the requirement of the Registration Programme. The Communications Authority (“CA”) was working out the detailed arrangements for implementing the Registration Programme in consultation with the industry, and would set out the details clearly in the guidelines upon actual implementation of the arrangements.

10. Mr. C M CHUNG enquired whether the data-only SIM cards were also covered by the Registration Programme. He further said that since the existing PPS card users were mainly those who were not willing to register with operators or enter into a fixed-term contract. He asked whether OFCA would consider having a review of the Registration Programme after its implementation for some time in order to gauge whether the Registration Programme had restrained users’ flexibility and choices in using telecommunications services.

11. Mr. Eric YEUNG replied that any PPS cards which served to provide telecommunications services, including calling cards and/or data cards, would be covered by the Registration Programme. The Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation (“Regulation”) was scheduled to take effect from 1 September this year. OFCA would monitor the implementation of the Registration Programme and consider if any review was required in due course.

12. Mr. K K LAU said that he used to come across two incidents of suspected deception in which someone was making phone calls to him and his friend using a PPS card, so he fully supported the Registration Programme. Mr. K K LAU suggested that the Government should set out the responsibilities of registrants and users under the Registration Programme by making reference to the relevant provisions governing the use of vehicles.

13. The Chairman thanked Mr. K K LAU for his comments and pointed out that the Registration Programme did not involve any additional criminal burden. Regardless of whether the Registration Programme was implemented or not, any offenders who committed illegal acts with the use of PPS cards would be subject to investigations and

follow-up actions by the relevant law enforcement agencies. The introduction of the Registration Programme was mainly intended for the purpose of plugging the loophole with a more effective way of combatting and preventing serious crime, so as to maintain the robustness of telecommunications services and safeguard the legitimate use of SIM cards by normal users.

14. Mr. Richard TSANG enquired (1) supposing that some PPS cards were purchased by corporate users for use by their staff, whether the corporations concerned or end users should make registration for the PPS cards under the Registration Programme; and (2) according to his understanding, some social welfare organisations or non-governmental organisations would purchase a large quantity of PPS cards for distribution or donation to the grassroots during the epidemic. While the Registration Programme had imposed restriction on the purchase and use of PPS cards in terms of quantities and registration respectively, he asked whether the Government had considered the fact that implementation of the Registration Programme would cause inconvenience to the free distribution of PPS cards by those organisations.

15. Mr. Desmond YOUNG responded that a corporate user must produce its business registration certificate or branch registration certificate number, a copy of the above registration certificates, the name of its business or corporation/branch, and personal particulars of the designated responsible person of the corporate user concerned before the PPS cards could be activated.

16. The Chairman clarified that under the Registration Programme, there was no limit on the number of PPS cards an individual or corporate user could purchase. There was no need to make registration upon purchase either. Target users could activate their PPS cards simply by registering the required information through various self-help registration methods of the operators before using the cards. Therefore, it was unlikely that the Registration Programme would affect the purchase of PPS cards by the social welfare organisations or non-governmental organisations for charity purpose or free distribution.

17. Mr. Francis HO enquired whether the Government had plans to arrange publicity (especially targeting at tourists) for the Registration Programme in order to avoid unnecessary disputes between users and operators. In addition, since operators had the right to cancel the registration of users, Mr. Francis HO would like to know whether there was a mechanism or channel in the Registration Programme for users to enquire about the reasons for cancelling their registration and whether they could make a representation afterwards.

18. Mr. Desmond YOUNG said that the Regulation would take effect on 1 September and the Government was consulting the industry on the guidelines for implementation of the Registration Programme. He believed that the Government and operators would arrange publicity for promoting the registration requirements in due course. As for the cancellation of registration, if users failed to comply with the requirements of the Registration Programme (e.g. individual users registering more than 10 PPS cards or providing incorrect information for registration), the operators could cancel the registration of those users. However, operators must notify their customers before taking action, informing them the reasons why their registration was cancelled and allowing them reasonable time to give explanation, make arrangement or correction for the registered information.

[Post-meeting note: On 20 August 2021, the CA issued “Guidelines on Implementation of Real-name Registration for SIM Cards” (English version only).]

19. Dr. K W TANG suggested that the Government should consider including the roaming PPS cards issued by operators for use outside Hong Kong only into the Registration Programme at a later stage.

20. The Chairman said that the Government had heard of such views during the consultation of the Registration Programme. In view of the fact that the Registration Programme was a kind of new regulation, and having made reference to the practices of other countries which had implemented similar programmes, the Government had decided to require real-name registration of local PPS cards first. With more experience and depending on the effectiveness and implementation of the programme,

the Government would consider whether it was necessary to adjust the Registration Programme.

21. Mr. C M CHUNG was concerned about the registration methods provided by operators and the registration limit on individual users. He hoped that OFCA could specify the provision of online registration channels by all operators and consider relaxing the registration limit up to 25 PPS cards for an individual user, on par with that of a corporate customer.

22. Mr. Desmond YOUNG said that OFCA encouraged operators to provide many different means of registration, including online registration via the mobile phones using the PPS cards, mobile applications, thematic websites of operators, and in-person registration at retail shops of operators, to cater for the needs of different customers. As for the registration limits, when the Registration Programme was being devised, the Government originally set a limit of three cards for both individual and corporate users. After taking into consideration the views collected from public consultation, the registration limits for individual users and corporate users had been increased to 10 and 25 respectively. It was noteworthy that the registration limit was referred to the number of PPS cards registrable under each operator. Therefore, if users purchased and registered their PPS cards with different operators, the numbers of PPS cards allowed to be used were in practice more than 10 and 25 respectively.

23. Mr. Ricky CHONG enquired who would be responsible for verifying the registered information and, if it was the responsibility of operators, how they would verify the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by customers.

24. The Chairman said that operators were required to conduct verification in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines and take reasonable steps to verify the information provided by customers, as in the case of handling the information of customers using SIM cards under the existing service plans. Users who intentionally provided false, misleading or incomplete information for registration should be bound by legal liabilities.

#### **IV. A Dedicated Webpage for Advice to Disadvantaged Telecommunications Service Users**

25. Mr. Allen TIN briefed members on the content of the dedicated webpage for advice to disadvantaged telecommunications service users (the “dedicated webpage”), including the target groups, the Three A’s and the points to note and tips under four scenarios. Related information was set out in TUCAC Paper No. 2/2021.

26. Mr. C M CHUNG was of the view that the dedicated webpage was rich in content which offered important information for the disadvantaged groups under different scenarios. He stated that currently most of the operators required their clients to fill in a paper service termination form for termination of services. However, it would cause difficulties for the visually impaired to a certain extent as not every one of them could seek help from family or friends to help filling out the termination form. He hoped that OFCA would seize the opportunity of promoting its dedicated webpage to encourage the operators to provide their customers with other alternative means of registration, such as e-forms, to facilitate the needs of the visually impaired for service termination.

27. Mr. Allen TIN stated that, before and after the launch of the dedicated webpage, OFCA had liaised with the operators alerting them to give more concern and attention to the various needs of the disadvantaged groups regarding telecommunications services. The operators showed positive responses on this matter. For instance, some operators set up dedicated hotlines to provide special services for the elderly, while some offered special billing services to the disadvantaged telecommunications service users. As such, those in need might as well raise out or reflect their needs to their operators so that the operators could provide suitable assistance as appropriate.

28. Ms. W K CHENG followed up and enquired about the issue of returning the equipment after service termination. She hoped that the operators would take the initiative to provide assistance to those in need, for example, providing on-site equipment collection for them. Moreover, Ms. W K CHENG pointed out that not many elderly persons know how to access the internet, and thus they might not be able



to keep up with the information posted on the dedicated webpage. She hoped that the operators could provide assistance to the disadvantaged groups proactively and there would be more channels to promote the message.

29. The Chairman thanked Ms. W K CHENG for her suggestions, and said that the suggestions would be relayed to the operators as appropriate in order to have a better understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged groups among their customers and provide them with necessary assistance. While OFCA understood that the Internet might not be the most effective channel to disseminate information to the elderly as it was quite difficult for the elderly to make enquiry on their own accord and keep track of all the information, OFCA would continue to organise public education activities through various channels, including seminars and exhibitions at schools and communities for dissemination of information. It was also hoped that when people had familiarised themselves with the information, they would explain it to their elderly family members or directly help them handle those matters relating to telecommunications services. OFCA would explore more effective ways and channels to disseminate the information to the elderly.

30. Ms. Christine CHIM added that OFCA had been educating the public what they should know about telecommunications services. The promotion of dedicated webpage had also been included as one of the planned activities of the year. For example, two seminars were held by OFCA at elderly centres in May to brief the elderly on the dedicated webpage. OFCA would continue to organise seminars of similar nature for the remaining days of the year in various districts with a view to stepping up dissemination of information.

31. Mr. Francis HO pointed out that the Consumer Council often received complaint cases lodged by disadvantaged groups, particularly the elderly and ethnic minorities. Most of the complaints involved cold calls from salespersons and billing issue of telecommunications service, as mentioned in Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 on the dedicated webpage. When handling these cases, the Consumer Council noticed that these disadvantaged groups did not fully understand the details of the telecommunications services they had subscribed to. Moreover, the operators usually

notified their clients of the proposed arrangements upon expiry of a contract via email or SMS. This might not be the best way of communication for the elderly and ethnic minorities, who probably end up missing the deadline for contract renewal with concessionary offer to continued service or termination of service. They might not even know that their contracts had expired until they received a monthly statement with surcharge and then have disputes with the operators. Mr. Francis HO hoped that, in order to avoid disputes, the operators could come up with a more effective means of notification to inform the elderly and ethnic minorities of the arrangements upon expiry of their contracts.

32. The Chairman thanked Mr. Francis HO for his advice. OFCA would continue to closely monitor and analyse the market development and the complaint cases of telecommunications services. OFCA would also carry out a review in due course and discuss with the operators the prevailing and other practicable measures for consumer protection. In the meantime, the Consumer Council was welcome to provide information on the types and number of the complaints they received from the disadvantaged groups for OFCA's reference.

33. Mr. Francis HO shared the overall figures of complaints concerning telecommunications services from 2018 to 2020 at the meeting. However, owing to the fact that not all complainants had stated their age, the Consumer Council was unable to give a full picture with accurate figures for the complaints received from the disadvantaged groups. Mr. Francis HO said that most of the complaints about telecommunications services involved disputes over charges/service and matters relating to service termination, which showed that the complainants had lacked knowledge of the terms and conditions of their subscribed service plans. He hoped that the operators would strengthen their efforts in explaining the terms and conditions of their service plans to the disadvantaged groups, enabling them to make a suitable and wise choice after having a thorough understanding of their subscription plans so as to avoid unnecessary disputes. Mr. Francis HO further said that there was a declining trend in the number of complaints received by the Consumer Council in relation to telecommunications services. He hoped that the operators would continue to provide services in line with OFCA's initiatives and enhance their services with their

best endeavours.

## **V. Any Other Business**

### **Report on Consumer Complaints**

34. The Secretary reported that the CA had received 294 and 242 cases of consumer complaints in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020 and the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021 respectively. All cases (100%) in the said two quarters were outside the CA's jurisdiction. These complaints primarily involved dissatisfaction with customer services, disputes over contracts/service termination, dissatisfaction with the quality of mobile communications/fixed network/Internet services and disputes over billing. No substantiated case was confirmed to be in breach of the Telecommunications Ordinance or licence conditions in the said two quarters. The latest consumer complaint statistics are in Annex 1.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

35. The Secretary said that the next meeting would be held in the second half of 2021. Members would be notified of the exact time of the meeting later.

36. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

# Report on Consumer Complaints on Telecom Services

The Telecommunications Users and  
Consumers Advisory Committee  
The 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting  
16 June 2021



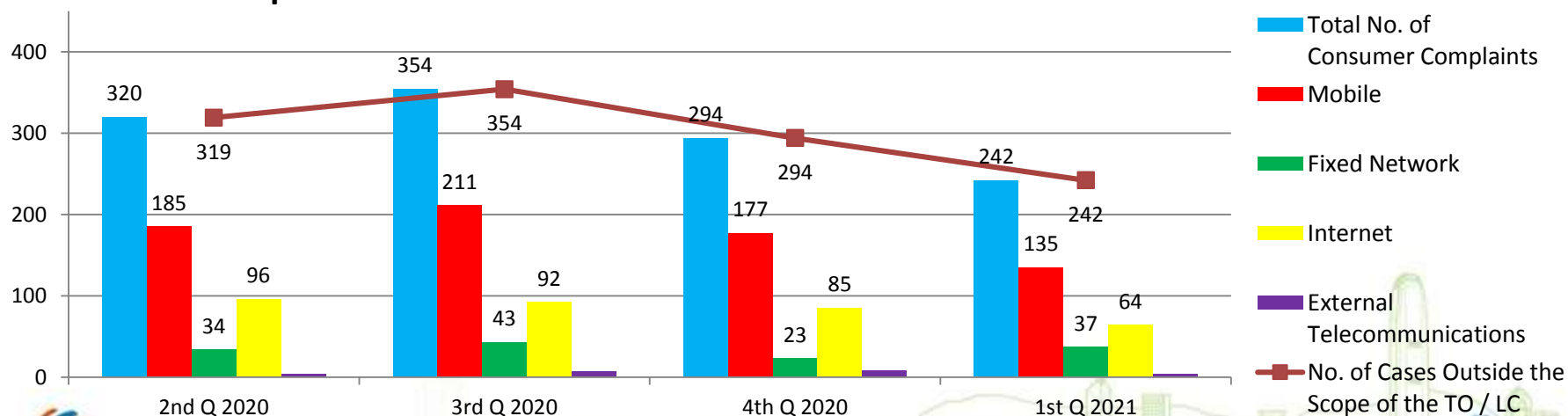
# Overview (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021)

*(Categorised by service types)*

	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Q 2020</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Q 2020</u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup> Q 2020</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Q 2021</u>	<u>4<sup>th</sup> Q 2020</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Q 2021</u>
<b>Total No. of Consumer Complaints</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>242</b>
Mobile	185	211	177	135	177	135
Fixed Network	34	43	23	37	23	37
Internet	96	92	85	64	85	64
External Telecommunications	4	7	8	4	8	4

**No. of Cases Outside the Scope of the Telecommunications Ordinance ("TO") / Licence Conditions ("LC")**

## No. of Consumer Complaints



## No. of Complaints (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021)

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020, the Communications Authority (“CA”) received 294 cases of consumer complaints, representing a substantial drop of 16.9% from the 354 cases received in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021, the number of CA received consumer complaints recorded a significant decrease of 17.7% to 242 cases.

No. of cases not involving any breach of the TO or LC : 294 and 242 cases in the 2 Quarters respectively

The cases mainly involved :

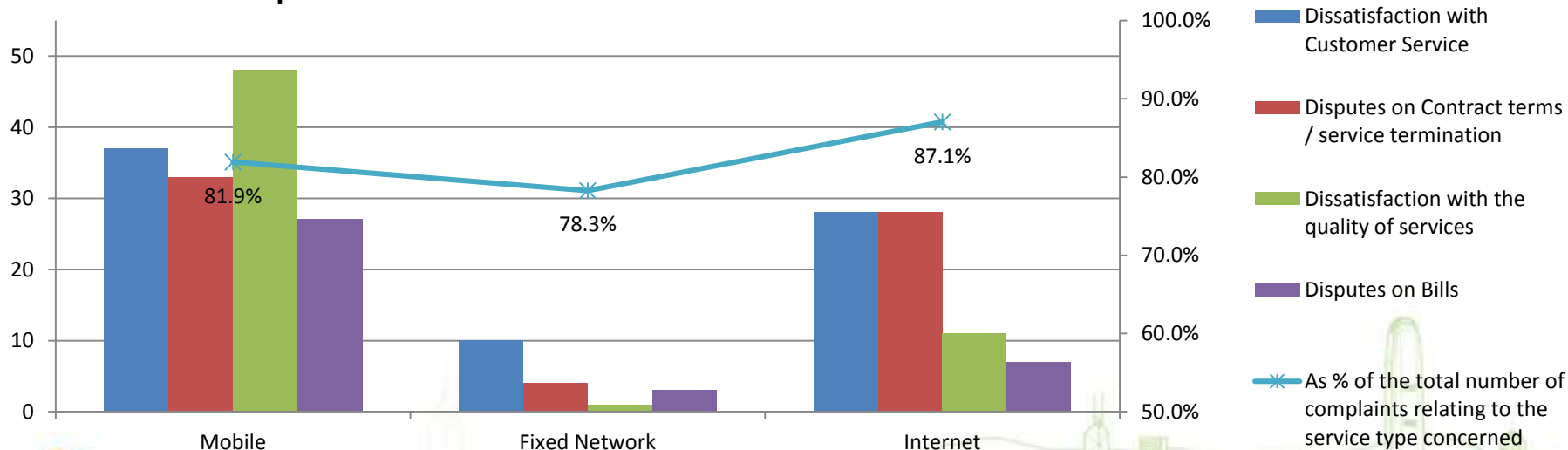
	<u>4<sup>th</sup> Q 2020</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> Q 2021</u>
➤ Dissatisfaction with customer service :	82 cases	69 cases
➤ Disputes on contract terms / service termination :	66 cases	53 cases
➤ Dissatisfaction with the quality of mobile/ fixed network/Internet services :	60 cases	43 cases
➤ Disputes on bills :	38cases	35 cases

No. of cases involving possible breach of the TO or LC : 0 case in the 2 Quarters

# No. of Complaints (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020)

<i>(Categorised by major service types)</i>	<u>Dissatisfaction with customer service</u>	<u>Disputes on contract terms / service termination</u>	<u>Dissatisfaction with the quality of services</u>	<u>Disputes on bills</u>	<u>As percentage of the total number of complaints relating to the service type concerned</u>
Mobile	37	33	48	27	81.9%
Fixed Network	10	4	1	3	78.3%
Internet	28	28	11	7	87.1%

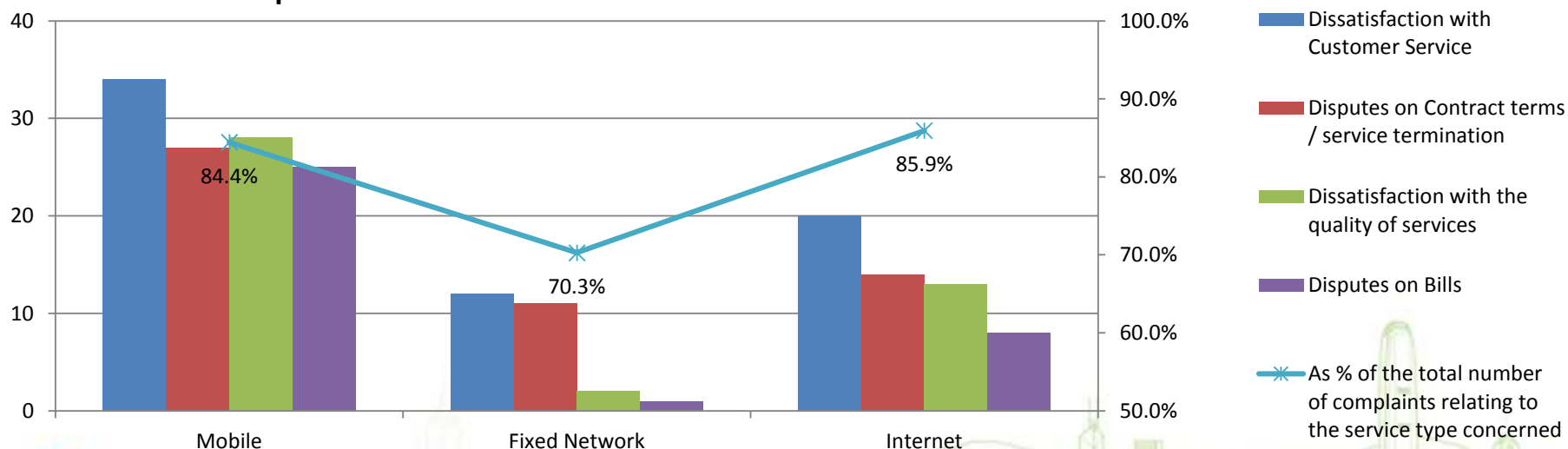
No. of Consumer Complaints



# No. of Complaints (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021)

<i>(Categorised by major service types)</i>	<u>Dissatisfaction with customer service</u>	<u>Disputes on contract terms / service termination</u>	<u>Dissatisfaction with the quality of services</u>	<u>Disputes on bills</u>	<u>As percentage of the total number of complaints relating to the service type concerned</u>
Mobile	34	27	28	25	84.4%
Fixed Network	12	11	2	1	70.3%
Internet	20	14	13	8	85.9%

No. of Consumer Complaints





# No. of Complaints (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021)

## Case Analysis of Breach of the TO / LC

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021, there was no substantiated case of breach of the TO/LC.

# Thank You

