



News Release

53/09

9 December 2009

BRIGHTSOLID/FRIENDS REUNITED

Issues statement

The Competition Commission (CC) has today published an issues statement as part of its inquiry into the anticipated acquisition of Friends Reunited Holdings Limited (Friends Reunited) from ITV by Brightsolid Group Limited (Brightsolid).

The CC has been asked to decide whether the acquisition may be expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition (SLC) within any market or markets in the UK. Brightsolid, which runs websites Find My Past.com and 1911 Census.com, and Friends Reunited, which owns Genes Reunited.com, are two of the three largest suppliers of online genealogy services in the UK. These websites allow users to search and access historical information and documents such as census results, birth, marriage and death records, and also supply family tree software.

The issues statement follows the first stages of gathering information, views and evidence and identifies clearly for all interested parties the specific questions and areas the inquiry is examining. This will form the basis for hearings with Brightsolid and Friends Reunited.

The full issues statement is available on the CC website at:

www.competition-commission.org.uk.

The issues statement should not be seen as implying that the inquiry group (the Group) has identified any competition concerns—the Group has yet to reach any conclusions on this inquiry. The purpose of making the issues statement public is to inform all interested parties and give them an opportunity to raise any further points with the CC.

If the Group considers that the merger has resulted or may be expected to result in an SLC, it will consider whether and, if so, what remedies might be appropriate, taking into account any customer benefits that might arise from the acquisition, and will issue a notice of possible remedies, should this be required, at about the time it publishes its provisional findings.

The CC is expected to report by 16 April 2010 and would like to hear comments on the issues statement from any interested parties, in writing, by 6 January 2010. To submit

evidence, please email anne.jolly@cc.gsi.gov.uk or brightsolidfriendsre@cc.gsi.gov.uk or write to:

Anne Jolly
Inquiry Manager
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
LONDON
WC1B 4AD

Notes for editors

1. The CC is an independent public body, which carries out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries.
2. The Enterprise Act 2002 empowers the Office of Fair Trading to refer to the CC completed or proposed mergers for investigation and report which create or enhance a 25 per cent share of supply in the UK (or a substantial part thereof) or where the UK turnover associated with the enterprise being acquired is over £70 million.
3. The members of the Brightsolid/Friends Reunited Group are: Laura Carstensen (Group Chairman), Robin Mason, Ed Smith and Anthony Stern.
4. The CC has a 24-week period in which it is required to publish its report, which may be extended by no more than eight weeks if it considers that there are special reasons why the report cannot be published within that period.
5. Further information on this inquiry, including the terms of reference and other key documents, as well as on the CC and its procedures, including its policy on the provision of information and the disclosure of evidence, can be obtained from the CC website at: www.competition-commission.org.uk.
6. Enquiries should be directed to Rory Taylor or John Park on 020 7271 0242 (email rory.taylor@cc.gsi.gov.uk or john.park@cc.gsi.gov.uk).