

PLAN TO SIMPLIFY MUSIC LICENSING

The days of salons having to buy music licences from two bodies separately could be consigned to history if a pilot that allows businesses to get licensed in a single transaction proves successful.

Music licensing is currently split between **PRS for Music** (PRS) and **Phonographic Performance Ltd** (PPL), with salons that want to be fully covered for playing music needing to buy a licence from both bodies.

But PRS has told *SalonFocus* the two organisations are now actively looking at ways to work together more closely "to offer a simpler licensing solution for customers and, where possible, enable joint licensing".

A pilot is being evaluated under which firms can get total cover in one go, although PRS said this did not currently involve any hairdressing businesses.

Other moves to streamline and simplify the system are also being considered, with even the idea of businesses being offered a discount for buying both licences being mooted, although PRS stressed there were no plans for this in the immediate future.

Of the joint licensing plan, a spokesman said: "We think it makes it simpler for customers. They say it would be easier to have one licence to cover everything. All areas are being considered, including hairdressing."

However, PRS has insisted no merger between the two organisations is planned.

"We are two separate organisations looking after two separate rights," the spokesman emphasised.

The PRS licence ensures royalties are paid to writers and publishers of music while the PPL licence ensures royalties are distributed



MIKE COOK: OFFER MUSIC WHILE ON HOLD

to performers and record companies.

Both licences are required by salons that want to play copyrighted sound recordings.

Meanwhile, it is hoped an ombudsman complaints' service for PPL customers will be in place by November. PPL first revealed this was on the cards to *SalonFocus* last summer (*SalonFocus*, May/June 2010).

A spokeswoman said: "PPL is committed to supplementing its existing process for responding to customer service feedback by introducing an external and independent complaints review service, which we hope to launch in the autumn... we do not anticipate many cases requiring the review service."

PRS established an external complaints' ombudsman more than a year ago but, to date, just three cases have been referred, and none has involved salons.

PRS said: "If we do receive a complaint we look at each individual case very carefully to ensure that the music licensing system is delivered fairly and equitably."

Irrespective of the administrative burden, the benefits for salons of having music in the background or while clients are on-hold can be immense, according to **Mike Cook**, head of production at **PH Media Group**, which specialises in on-hold messaging and in-store music for companies including **Toni&Guy** and **Trevor Sorbie**.

"Playing music and marketing messages to clients waiting on hold is another innovative and cost-effective way to promote services to potential clients when they call and get return on investment on your licence fee," he said.