



News Release

10 September 2009

Communications Consumer Panel calls on Government to realise the Digital Britain vision

The Government's Digital Britain report set out a significant package of initiatives that included many of the things the Communications Consumer Panel has been arguing for over the last few years – fast, reliable broadband for everyone in the UK, action to stimulate investment in next-generation super-fast broadband for people the market will not otherwise reach and a strong commitment to helping people get online and get the most out of being online. The Panel's response to the report is published today and sets out the things that Government needs to deliver for consumers now that we are in the implementation phase.

Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that:

“The challenge for Government now is to deliver the full package of measures set out in Digital Britain. The Panel wants to highlight three key elements for consumers:

First, the Panel's research shows that soon broadband will be essential for everyone so Government needs to press on with plans to implement its universal broadband commitment – by 2012 everyone in the UK needs to be able to use the online services and applications that they value in a reliable and consistent way.

Second, the Panel believes that action to stimulate investment in next-generation broadband is needed now – the market will only rollout to around two-thirds of the population and the rest should not be left behind. To maximise the benefits for the economy and society, next-generation broadband needs to be available to everyone. In particular, it creates the possibility of delivering public services in really innovative and new ways, and could improve the quality and depth of interaction between citizens and Government, both local and national.

Thirdly, the Panel supports the strong focus in the Digital Britain report on promoting digital participation. It welcomes the Government's decision to set up a Consortium to promote digital participation and support it with funding for the next three years.”

The Panel welcomes the Consortium's planned social marketing programme and it will be important for it to be linked to the delivery of services at community-level that

are tailored to the needs of those groups of people that need most help – the six million people at risk of both social and digital exclusion. It will be vital for its activities to be co-ordinated with those of the Digital Inclusion Champion and Taskforce and the grass roots and community organisations who are often best placed to deliver targeted interventions for vulnerable groups.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

Read the Panel's response to the Digital Britain final report on the website:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/Response%20to%20Digital%20Britain%20final%20report.pdf>

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