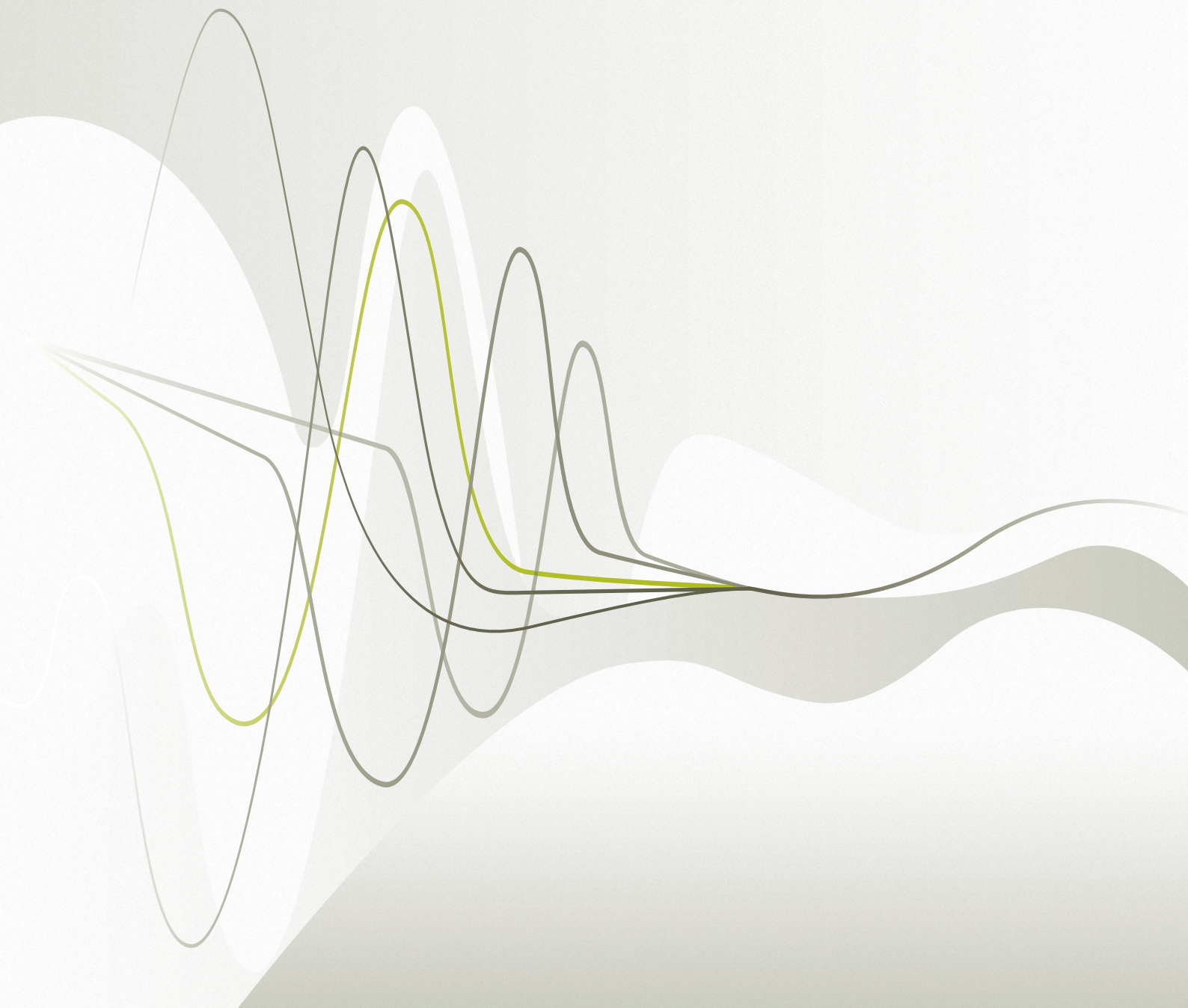


COMMUNICATIONS
CONSUMER
PANEL

Work Plan 2009/10

MAY 2009



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Section 1

Foreword

The coming year will be of crucial significance for consumers and citizens in the communications sector. The Government has recognised the importance of broadband to people's lives and the need to ensure that no one misses out. Action is now needed to achieve a Digital Britain where everyone is empowered to participate. During the coming year the Communications Consumer Panel will be providing independent advice to Ofcom, Government and industry so that the interests of consumers and citizens are protected and promoted.

Our latest research shows that broadband will soon be an essential part of people's lives. Without being able to use online services or carry out the activities that connect them with friends, family and the wider world, people will be at a significant disadvantage. Broadband will no longer be just 'nice to have'.

This presents a major challenge to policy makers. Through its Budget commitment to ensure that broadband is available throughout the UK, the Government has taken an important first step. This commitment now needs to be followed by action on the ground so that people in all parts of the UK can use the online services and applications that we as a society now think are important.

But as well as making broadband available, we need to focus on the 40 per cent of people who do not yet have broadband at home. This means examining the barriers to take-up, including cost, concerns about security and misuse of personal data, and a lack of skills or easy-to-use equipment. It also means finding out what would inspire or encourage people to get online. Some people might be excited by the prospect of developing their existing interests. Some might value the ability to keep in touch more easily with friends and relatives overseas. Some might be enticed once a wider range of public services are available online.

Our Work Plan for 2009/10 seeks to ensure that the interests of consumers and citizens are central to these policy debates. Section 2 explains the Panel's role and how it works. Section 3 discusses the issues that the Panel will be focusing on and the nature of the engagement that will be involved in each case. Section 4 explains how we engage with our stakeholders and Section 5 sets out our plans in more detail.

The Panel will be focusing on a number of issues, although it is important to note that the nature of the Panel's engagement will vary from issue to issue, ranging from significant and proactive to simply holding a watching brief.

Significant proactive engagement

- **Universal service** – influencing decisions about the services that should be available to everyone now and in the future so that they reflect the views of consumers and citizens.
- **Consumer and citizen empowerment** – influencing policy interventions so that they reflect, and are designed to meet, the full spectrum of consumers' and citizens' needs.
- **Trust and security** – highlighting concerns about security and misuse of personal data, and the potential for people to be deterred from going online or getting the most out of being online.

Limited proactive engagement

- **Mobile** – advising on mobile issues that matter to consumers and citizens, such as the absence of reliable coverage in significant parts of the UK. In relation to this area of work, we will be working closely with Consumer Focus so that we complement their work in the mobile sector and together address the issues that matter most to consumers and citizens.
- **Digital Inclusion Action Plan** – influencing the development and implementation of the Government’s Digital Inclusion Action Plan so that it focuses on the groups of consumers and citizens who most need help in getting online.

Monitoring with engagement as appropriate

- **Consumer protection** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, Ofcom’s policy and enforcement activities so that consumers and citizens are protected from harmful conduct.
- **Next-generation broadband** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, public policy and regulatory decisions about the rollout of next-generation broadband so that the interests of consumers and citizens are identified clearly and properly taken into account.

Watching brief

- **Digital switchover** – tracking developments as digital switchover progresses and highlighting any concerns that arise.
- **Broadband speeds** – observing how the voluntary code on fixed broadband speeds is implemented and raising any concerns about whether consumers are receiving appropriate information from providers.

The coming year is also likely to represent a watershed in terms of Government policy. Given the current economic climate, there is quite rightly a clear focus on encouraging investment and ensuring that the UK continues to have a strong and creative communications sector. The Communications Consumer Panel supports this objective, but it is vital that the interests of consumers and citizens remain paramount. In our minds, there need be no conflict between greater public intervention and consumers' and citizens' interests. In many cases it will be very welcome. But before intervening, Government and regulators must make explicit, and take into account, the likely impact on both consumers and citizens, in both the short- and long-term.

In the year ahead the Panel will be working hard to influence the actions of Ofcom, Government and industry so that consumers and citizens benefit to the full.



Anna Bradley

Chair, Communications Consumer Panel

Section 2

Panel's role and the way it works

Introduction

- 2.1 The Communications Consumer Panel (the Panel) was established under the Communications Act 2003 as an independent advisory body, with the role of advising Ofcom, and such other persons as the Panel thinks fit, on the interests of consumers and citizens in the communications sector. Until recently the Panel was called the Ofcom Consumer Panel. Its new name emphasises its role in advising across the communications sector and makes clearer its independence from Ofcom.
- 2.2 The Panel defines its role more specifically as:
- “To influence Ofcom, Government, the EU, and service and equipment providers so that the communications interests of consumers and citizens are protected and promoted.”
- 2.3 In carrying out its role, the Panel has a duty to have regard to the interests of:
- people from the different parts of the United Kingdom;
 - people in rural and urban areas;
 - disadvantaged people, including people with low incomes and people with disabilities;
 - older people; and
 - small businesses.
- 2.4 This means that the Panel needs to understand what is in the interests of consumers and citizens, including those groups of people referred to in the previous paragraph. It gains this understanding in four ways:
- It draws on the broad range of experience and expertise of its Members. In particular, the Panel has Members with specific responsibility for identifying and articulating the concerns of people in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively.
 - It draws on the research that it commissions itself and the research carried out by Ofcom and others.
 - It applies general principles about how products and services should be supplied. For example, consumers should be able to make an informed choice about whether to buy a product or service, and they should be able to get redress if things go wrong.
 - It engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including groups representing consumers and citizens, and communications providers, in order to understand how the sector is changing and the issues that are important to people. In Section 4 we discuss in more detail our approach to stakeholder engagement.

2.5 In Section 3 we discuss our priorities for the coming year and, in doing so, show how this will address the interests of the specific groups of people mentioned in paragraph 2.3 above.

Strategic priorities

2.6 The Panel also has three longer-term strategic priorities. These are set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Communications Consumer Panel’s strategic priorities

1. Provide Ofcom with valued advice	By providing evidence-based advice, the Panel can help to ensure that consumers’ and citizens’ interests are reflected in Ofcom’s policy development processes and decisions.
2. Influence UK and EU policy makers	By advising the UK Government and EU, the Panel should influence policy decisions that affect consumers and citizens in the UK communications sector.
3. Work with service and equipment providers to encourage them to address issues that are of concern to consumers	The Panel has a role in encouraging service and equipment providers to address issues that matter to their customers or potential customers.

Types of activity

2.7 The Panel believes that in order to achieve its strategic priorities, it should carry out a range of activities. These activities can be divided into three categories:

- **Influencing policy processes** – helping policy makers to improve their processes so that they identify consumers’ and citizens’ interests and take proper account of them. The main vehicle that the Panel has used to influence policy-making processes is the Consumer Interest Toolkit. This is a series of questions that can be used to inform both particular policy decisions and, more broadly, the culture of an organisation. The Toolkit has been adopted by Ofcom and has contributed to its increased focus on consumers’ and citizens’ interests. [Click here for more information about the Toolkit and how it has been used.](#)¹
- **Influencing policy decisions** – ensuring that the decisions reached at the end of the policy-making process – by Ofcom, and UK and EU policy makers – are in the interests of consumers and citizens. This is the main focus of our work and in Section 3 we set out which policy areas we will be focusing on over the coming year. The fact that the Panel’s statutory remit is not coterminous with Ofcom’s means that it is able to work across regulatory boundaries. This is increasingly important because the issues that matter to people are dealt with in a variety of ways, from formal regulation applied by regulators to self-regulatory codes applied by industry. The Panel is also able to advise policy makers, in the UK and EU, as they develop the regulatory frameworks within which regulators and industry must then operate. It is vital that the interests of consumers and citizens are taken into account at this early stage and given due weight.

¹ Here is the link: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/consumer-interest-toolkit/publications>

- **Calls to action** – highlighting an issue publicly where that is the most efficient way to serve consumers' and citizens' interests. This could mean calling for action from service providers, equipment providers or policy makers. In the past, the Panel has highlighted the need for the interests of vulnerable consumers to be addressed during the process of switchover to Digital UK. This led to the introduction of the Digital Television Help Scheme. More recently, the Panel pointed to the unacceptable gap between the headline broadband speed advertised to consumers and the speed they experienced in practice. As a result of the Panel's action, Ofcom carried out research that provided concrete evidence of the problem and sponsored the development by industry of a self-regulatory code that should lead to consumers being much better informed about the broadband speeds they can expect to receive. During the coming year, the Panel will issue further calls to action as and when this would be to the benefit of consumers and citizens.

Guiding principles

- 2.8 The Panel is guided in its work by five principles. These are set out in Figure 2 and will inform the way that it carries out its work over the coming year and beyond. The next Section discusses the Panel's work plan for 2009/10 in more detail.

Figure 2: Communications Consumer Panel's guiding principles

Evidence-based	The Panel provides advice that is based on sound evidence
Constructive	The Panel provides advice that is constructive and geared towards outcomes that are achievable.
Targeted	The Panel operates in a targeted way, focusing on the areas where it can have the most significant impact.
Collaborative	The Panel works collaboratively with other groups where pooling resources and expertise is the best way of tackling an issue.
Transparent	The Panel operates in a transparent way, reporting on its activities, publishing the advice that it gives and involving stakeholders in defining its priorities

Section 3

Priorities for 2009/10

Approach to setting priorities

- 3.1 There are many issues in the communications sector that matter to consumers and citizens which the Panel could potentially address. But given the limited resources at our disposal, we need to be clear about our priorities.
- 3.2 In order to decide what our priorities should be we examined the issues on the agendas of Ofcom, Government and the EU. We also drew on the findings of the deliberative research that we carried out towards the end of 2008. The aims of the research were to:
- understand consumers' and citizens' needs, and how they might change in the future; and
 - understand the role of communications services and devices in meeting those needs.
- 3.3 [You can click here to read the full research report²](#), but Figure 3 shows the four key findings:

Figure 3: Research findings

1. It is critical for all consumers and citizens that no one should miss out on the digital age – access to the internet has become an essential service.
2. Consumers and citizens accept they have responsibilities, but also believe Government, regulators and industry have responsibilities that need to be met.
3. Consumers need help to manage increasing complexity and constant change.
4. Security and privacy are vital to trust and confidence, and so to the use of digital services and technologies.

- 3.4 Having identified the issues that it could potentially address, the Panel narrowed down the long list by asking two main questions:
- What is the scale of the issue?
 - Can the Panel make a difference?
- 3.5 Having produced a short list, the Panel then refined the Work Plan through an iterative process that involved considering:

² Here is the full link: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future>

- the type of engagement necessary to address each issue;
- whether addressing the issues on the short list would enable it to meet its strategic priorities; and
- whether it would have the resources to address all the issues on the short list.

3.6 As we discuss in Section 4, we refined the Work Plan further as a result of input from our stakeholders.

Influencing policy processes

3.7 The Panel's work over the coming year will involve the three types of activities mentioned in Section 2: influencing policy processes; influencing policy decisions; and calls to action. Figure 4 shows the different areas and the type of engagement that the Panel will be carrying out in each area.

Figure 4: Areas to be addressed and nature of engagement

	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (July-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-March)
Influencing policy processes		Extending Toolkit to cover citizens		
		Ofcom's engagement with consumer groups		
Influencing policy decisions	Universal service (significant proactive engagement)			
	Consumer and citizen empowerment (significant proactive engagement)			
			Trust and security (significant proactive engagement)	
	Mobile (limited proactive engagement)			
	Digital Inclusion Action Plan (limited proactive engagement)			
	Consumer protection (monitoring with engagement as appropriate)			
	Next-generation broadband (monitoring with engagement as appropriate)			
	Watching briefs: digital switchover, broadband speeds			
Calls to action	As and when necessary			

Influencing policy processes

3.8 This type of activity involves helping policy makers to improve their processes so that they identify consumers' and citizens' interests and take proper account of them. The main vehicle that the Panel has used to influence policy-making processes is the Consumer Interest Toolkit. In the coming year, the Panel will be working with Ofcom to enable it to engage better with groups that represent consumers and citizens. The Panel will also be developing the Consumer Interest Toolkit so that it explicitly covers the interests of citizens as well as consumers.

Influencing policy decisions

Influencing policy decisions will form the bulk of the Panel's work. The Panel will be focusing on a number of issues, although it is important to note that the nature of the Panel's engagement will vary from issue to issue, ranging from significant and proactive, to simply holding a watching brief.

Significant proactive engagement

- **Universal service** – influencing decisions about the services that should be available to everyone now and in the future so that they reflect the views of consumers and citizens.
- **Consumer and citizen empowerment** – influencing policy interventions so that they reflect, and are designed to meet, the full spectrum of consumers' and citizens' needs.
- **Trust and security** – highlighting concerns about security and misuse of personal data, and the potential for people to be deterred from going online or getting the most out of being online.

Limited proactive engagement

- **Mobile** – advising on mobile issues that matter to consumers and citizens, such as the absence of reliable coverage in significant parts of the UK. In relation to this area of work, we will be working closely with Consumer Focus so that we complement their work in the mobile sector and together address the issues that matter most to consumers and citizens.
- **Digital Inclusion Action Plan** – influencing the development and implementation of the Government's Digital Inclusion Action Plan so that it focuses on the groups of consumers and citizens who most need help in getting online.

Monitoring with engagement as appropriate

- **Consumer protection** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, Ofcom's policy and enforcement activities so that consumers and citizens are protected from harmful conduct.
- **Next-generation broadband** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, public policy and regulatory decisions about the rollout of next-generation broadband so that the interests of consumers and citizens are identified clearly and properly taken into account.

Watching brief

- **Digital switchover** – tracking developments as digital switchover progresses and highlighting any concerns that arise.
- **Broadband speeds** – observing how the voluntary code on fixed broadband speeds is implemented and raising any concerns about whether consumers are receiving appropriate information from providers.

3.9 As mentioned in Section 2, in addressing these policy areas the Panel will need to fulfil its duty to have regard to the interests of:

- people from the different parts of the United Kingdom;
- people in rural and urban areas;
- disadvantaged people, including people with low incomes and people with disabilities;
- older people; and
- small businesses.

3.10 The interests of these groups are likely to be relevant across the full range of the Panel’s work, but the table in Figure 5 shows through the green shaded boxes the the areas of work that these sets of interests are particularly relevant to.

Figure 5: Having regard to the interests of specific groups of people

	People from different parts of the UK	People in rural and urban areas	Disadvantaged people, including people on low incomes or with disabilities	Older people	Small businesses
Universal service					
Consumer and citizen empowerment					
Trust and security					
Mobile					
Digital Inclusion Action Plan					
Consumer protection					
Next-generation broadband					
Digital switchover					
Broadband speeds					

3.11 It is possible that the Panel will also be given the role of advising Ofcom and other bodies on consumers’ and citizens’ interests in relation to postal services. The Panel does not currently have a role in this area, but the Postal Services Bill (as introduced to Parliament) provides for Ofcom to be given responsibility for regulating postal services and for the Panel to advise Ofcom on the exercise of its new functions in the same way that it advises Ofcom on the exercise of its existing functions. The Panel will monitor the progress of the Bill and will consider how best to fulfil any role that Parliament gives it in relation to post.

Calls to action

- 3.12 The Panel may decide to highlight issues publicly where this is the most efficient way to serve consumers' and citizens' interests. This could mean calling for action from service providers, equipment providers or policy makers. As mentioned in Section 2, in the past the Panel has successfully issued calls to action in relation to digital television switchover and broadband speeds. During the coming year, the Panel will issue further calls to action as and when this would be to the benefit of consumers and citizens.
- 3.13 More information about the work that the Panel will be doing is shown in the table in Section 5. This includes details of the related Ofcom priorities, the planned outputs, the outcomes we are seeking to achieve and the action we have taken so far. The table will be updated on a quarterly basis to show the progress we have made and to add more detail to reflect the more detailed planning that we will be doing during the course of the year.

Section 4

Engaging with stakeholders

- 4.1 In March of this year, we held an event for stakeholders so that we could receive comments on our proposed Work Plan and have an opportunity to talk about the issues that are affecting consumers and citizens in the communications sector. This was the first time that we had consulted stakeholders on our Work Plan and we were pleased by the level of interest and by the broad support for our proposed plan. We also invited comments in writing after the event and have reflected the comments that we received in the final version of the Work Plan.
- 4.2 More generally we are seeking to make our activities more visible to stakeholders. In January we started a Blog that Panel Members are using to share information and thoughts, and prompt debate. [You can read the Blog by clicking here.](#)³ We are also now publishing a monthly newsletter that summarises what the Panel has been doing.
- 4.3 We have made our website more accessible to people with visual impairments and are thinking generally about how we can ensure that our work is accessible to all our stakeholders.
- 4.4 The Panel has close relationships with Ofcom's Advisory Committee for England, Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland, Advisory Committee for Scotland and Advisory Committee for Wales. Panel Members attend meetings of these Committees as observers and gain valuable insights into the issues affecting consumers and citizens in different parts of the UK. The Panel is also represented at meetings of Ofcom's Advisory Committee for Older and Disabled People, which is a valuable source of information about the interests of older people and people with disabilities. The Panel is also a member of the Consumer Forum for Communications.
- 4.5 The Panel will also be working closely with Consumer Focus, to ensure that we take a co-ordinated approach to areas of mutual interest, such as the mobile sector and the Government's Digital Britain Review. Our aim is to use our collective resources efficiently to achieve the maximum benefit for consumers and citizens.
- 4.6 Finally, we are developing a more systematic programme of engagement with key stakeholders, including groups representing consumers and citizens, communications providers, industry bodies, and policy makers. Together with the other ways in which we seek out information and ideas, we hope that this will provide us with a comprehensive picture of the interests of consumers and citizens in the communications sector.
- 4.7 We look forward to engaging with our stakeholders in an open and collaborative way over the coming year as we implement our Work Plan.

³ Here is the full link: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog>

Section 5

Detailed work plan

The following table will be updated on a quarterly basis, with the changes highlighted so that they are visible to stakeholders. Planned outputs are shown by reference to the relevant quarter of the financial year.

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Universal service	Influencing policy decisions	Influence public policy and regulatory decisions about universal provision of comms services so they reflect consumers' and citizens' views about the services that should be available to everyone now and in the future. Will involve influencing decisions about policy framework and how it should be implemented.	Substantial proactive engagement Throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.	1. Promoting access and inclusion. 2. Releasing spectrum, including the digital dividend.	1. Commission research on the services and applications that everyone should have access to via broadband. 2. Present research findings to Digital Britain Steering Group. 3. Hold seminar to discuss policy implications (Date TBD) 4. Advise Ofcom on: a. review of universal service, including pay phones and services for people with disabilities; and b. work on access and inclusion. 5. Hold workshop with Ofcom to discuss its universal service review – date to be determined. 6. Advise the European Commission on future scope of EU regulatory framework.	Output Research report (Q1). [Further outputs to be determined in the light of the Digital Britain Final Report and Ofcom's universal service work.] Outcomes 1. The Government defines its universal service commitment for broadband (USC) in a way that makes clear which services and applications people will and will not be able to use online. 2. The Government sets out a clear process for reviewing universal service commitment to ensure it continues to meet the interests of consumers and citizens.	The Panel's response to the Digital Britain Interim Report, submitted in March 2009, set out its views on the proposed USC for broadband. Research then commissioned in March 2009. Main findings of the research set out in a letter to Lord Carter in April 2009. Research report scheduled for publication in May 2009.

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
<p>Consumer and citizen empowerment</p>	<p>Influencing policy decisions</p>	<p>Influence public policy and regulatory decisions about consumer and citizen empowerment so that they reflect: a. full spectrum of consumers' and citizens' needs; b. how they actually make decisions; and c. the complexity of communications markets</p>	<p>Substantial proactive engagement throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.</p>	<p>1. Promoting access and inclusion. 2. Promoting media literacy.</p>	<p>1. Develop framework for analysing different elements of consumer and citizen empowerment in collaboration with other interested parties, including Ofcom's Content Board. 2. Explore how much is understood about how consumers make decisions in communications markets and, if necessary, pull together a review of the relevant research. 3. Examine what action Ofcom and industry should carry out to promote more easy-to-use equipment, for people with disabilities and generally. 4. Advise Ofcom on its work on: a. consumer empowerment, including consumer information, switching, and complaints-handling and alternative dispute resolution; b. access and inclusion, including services for disabled people; and c. media literacy. 5. Advise Government on its work to promote media literacy.</p>	<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. Publish consumer and citizen empowerment framework (TBD)</p> <p>[Further outputs to be determined.]</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>1. The framework influences how policy makers think about consumer and citizen empowerment, and specific interventions to promote it.</p>	<p>Provisional framework for analysing the different elements of consumer and citizen empowerment set out in a letter to Lord Carter in April 2009.</p>

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Trust and security	Influencing policy decisions	Influence public policy and regulatory decisions so that they reflect consumers' and citizens' concerns about security and misuse of personal data online.	Substantial proactive engagement Q3 to Q4.	1. Promoting access and inclusion. 2. Promoting media literacy.	1. Consider need to commission research to understand better consumers' and citizens' concerns about security and misuse of personal data online, building on the deliberative research that the Panel published in February 2009. 2. Advise Ofcom in relation to its work on access and inclusion, in particular the links between trust and security and broadband take-up and usage. 3. Monitor implementation and enforcement of the Internet Advertising Bureau's good practice principles for online behavioural advertising that come into force in September 2009.	Outputs [Outputs to be determined.] Outcomes [Outcomes to be determined.]	

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Mobile	Influencing policy decisions	Influence regulatory decisions in relation to the mobile sector so that they reflect the interests of consumers and citizens.	Limited proactive engagement. Throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.	1. Assessing our regulatory approach in mobile. 2. Releasing spectrum, including the digital dividend.	1. Advise Ofcom in relation to its mobile sector assessment and its future of termination pricing project. 2. Monitor implementation by industry of emergency roaming. 3. Continue dialogue with the mobile operators about the consumers' and citizens' interests in the mobile sector. 4. Work with Consumer Focus as it seeks to identify the issues affecting consumers in the mobile sector in relation to which it could make a difference. 5. Monitor developments in the EU in relation to the mobile sector.	<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. Position paper on mobile coverage (Q2).</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>1. Ofcom commits to further work to determine the current limits of mobile coverage and to examine how it could be improved.</p> <p>2. Emergency roaming is implemented effectively by the end of Q3.</p>	

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Digital Inclusion Action Plan	Influencing policy decisions	Influence the development and implementation of the Government's Digital Inclusion Action Plan so that it focuses on the groups of consumers and citizens who are in most need of assistance and sets out clearly the intended outcomes.	Limited proactive engagement. Throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.	1. Promoting access and inclusion. 2. Promoting media literacy.	1. Provide input to the Digital Inclusion Task Force that the Government is intending to set up.	<p>Outputs</p> <p>No outputs planned.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>The Government, advised by the Digital Inclusion Champion and Task Force, identifies a clear set of priorities, specifies the intended outcomes and makes significant progress towards achieving them.</p>	Responded to the Draft Digital Inclusion Action Plan, submitted in January 2009.

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Consumer protection	Influencing policy decisions	Monitor, and influence where appropriate, Ofcom's policy and enforcement decisions to ensure that the interests of consumers are protected and promoted.	Monitoring with engagement as appropriate. Throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.	1. Developing and enforcing consumer protection policies.	1. Advise Ofcom in relation to its policy decisions on: a. fixed mis-selling; and b. premium rate services. 2. Monitor Ofcom's enforcement activities in the area of consumer protection, such as in relation to additional charges. 3. Monitor the level of complaints, and assess other intelligence, about issues that are of concern to consumers.	<p>Outputs</p> <p>No outputs planned.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>1. Ofcom puts in place the regulatory rules that enable it to tackle the issues that are of most concern to consumers. 2. Ofcom's approach to enforcement ensures that effective action is taken to prevent consumer harm.</p>	
Next-generation broadband	Influencing policy decisions	Monitor, and influence where appropriate, public policy and regulatory decisions about next-generation broadband so that the interests of consumers and citizens are identified clearly and properly taken into account.	Monitoring with engagement as appropriate. Throughout the year – Q1 to Q4.	1 Enabling clear regulation for next-generation access and core networks.	1. Advise Ofcom in relation to the development of the regulatory framework for next-generation broadband. 2. Monitor decisions by Government in relation to next-generation broadband. 3. Continue to monitor local initiatives. 4. Track market developments, particularly rollout plans. 5. Monitor what services and applications next-generation broadband is being used for, both in the UK and internationally.	<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. Updated paper on local next-generation broadband schemes (Q4).</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>1. The interests of citizens and consumers are central to the debate about what public policy or regulatory intervention is required in relation to next-generation broadband.</p>	The Panel's response to the Digital Britain Interim Report supported Government's intention to consider the case for public incentives to extend rollout of next-generation broadband beyond expected market-led initiatives.

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Digital switchover	Influencing policy decisions	<p>Watching brief throughout the year in relation to the process of digital television switchover to ensure that consumers receive appropriate information and support. In particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to engage with Digital UK, the Digital Television Help Scheme and Ofcom in order to keep track of developments and highlight concerns if necessary. 2. Review progress with Digital UK after the large-scale switchover in the Granada region that is scheduled to take place in November 2009. 					
Broadband speeds	Influencing policy decisions	Watching brief throughout the year in relation to Ofcom's and industry's work on broadband speeds to ensure that consumers receive appropriate information about the broadband speeds that they can expect.					
Ofcom's engagement with consumer and citizen groups	Influencing policy processes	Work with Ofcom to enable it to engage better during the policy-making process with groups that represent consumers and citizens.	Limited proactive engagement. Q2 to Q4.	Not applicable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide guidance to a selected project team to assist in its engagement with citizen and consumer groups. 2. Use this experience to develop advice for project teams more generally. 	<p>Outputs</p> <p>No outputs planned.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>As a result of engaging better with consumer and citizen groups, Ofcom's policy decisions reflect consumers' and citizens' interests more fully.</p>	

Issue	Type of activity	Objective	Type of engagement and timing	Related Ofcom priorities	Specific tasks	Outputs and intended outcomes	Action taken
Extending consumer interest toolkit to cover citizens' interests	Influencing policy processes	Develop the Panel's Consumer Interest Toolkit so that it explicitly covers the interests of citizens as well as consumers.	Limited proactive engagement Q2 to Q3.	Not applicable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the Toolkit so that it explicitly covers the interests of citizens as well as consumers. 2. Work with Ofcom so that the questions contained in the amended Toolkit are built into Ofcom's guidelines on policy-making and integrated fully into the way that Ofcom makes decisions. 3. Agree with Ofcom a timetable for carrying out a further review of how well Ofcom is applying the Toolkit. 	<p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amended Toolkit (Q3). <p>Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Toolkit, as amended to include citizen-related questions, is embedded in the way that Ofcom makes policy decisions. 	
Postal services	The Panel does not currently have a role in relation to postal services, but the Postal Services Bill (as introduced to Parliament) provides for Ofcom to be given responsibility for regulating postal services and for the Panel to advise Ofcom on the exercise of its new functions in the same way that it advises Ofcom on the exercise of its existing functions. The Panel will monitor the progress of the Bill and will consider how best to fulfil any role that Parliament gives it in relation to post.						

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