



**Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Consumer Panel (CCP) and
Advisory Committee for Older and Disabled People (ACOD)**

15 January 2026, 10:30 - 15:35

Meeting held in hybrid format via Microsoft Teams

Present

CCP/ACOD (The Panel)

Helen Froud (Chair)

Rachel Burr (Member for Wales)

Judith Clifton

Lenna Cumberbatch

Grant Davis

Michelle Goddard

Robert Hammond (Member for England)

Rhian Johns

Carrie Matchett (Member for Northern Ireland)

Sarah O'Neill (Member for Scotland)

David Warburton-Broadhurst

Michael Wardlow

Apologies

none

In attendance for the duration of the meeting

The Panel's Executive Team

Two UK Regulators Network's 'Next Generation Non-Executive Directors' scheme members ('Next Gen NED')

Item
<p>1. Welcome and introduction</p> <p>1.1 The Chair officially welcomed the Panel's new Member for Scotland, Panel Members and attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 The Chair thanked the outgoing Next Gen NED for his contribution and participation in Panel meetings during his one-year tenure, and welcomed the incoming Next Gen NED, who will attend Panel meetings for the forthcoming year.</p>

2. Declarations of Members' interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 18 December 2025 and matters arising

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 18 December 2025 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting following slight amendment.

3.2 The Panel re-visited their discussion from item 7 from the 18 December minutes (Engaging with Distressing Content and Material) and agreed that since the original discussion it had felt necessary to provide feedback to the Ofcom colleague on the frequency and format of training for Ofcom colleagues, informed by the Panel's expertise and trauma-awareness. The Panel were surprised that this was not mandatory given other safety measures with this potential level of impact are mandatory.

4. Chair's Update

4.1 The Chair and Panel Members discussed the Panel's recent activity and stakeholder engagement across the UK since the last meeting held on 13 November.

4.2 The Panel's Online Safety Strategy Plan was discussed and following an additional comment will be submitted for Panel Members' final agreement before being published.

5. Consumer Policy update

5.1 The Panel received an update from Ofcom's consumer policy team on current consumer policy areas.

5.2 Panel Members requested early access to data from Ofcom's Pricing Trends report, noting ongoing concerns about affordability and wider consumer detriment.

5.3 The Panel intends to respond to Ofcom's 'Combatting Mobile Messaging Scams' consultation before the deadline and Panel Members with strong relevant expertise would collaborate on a response to be signed off by the Chair.

5.4 The Panel queried whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) summaries produced by search engines provided accurate, safe information to consumers searching for information. The Panel warned of unintended consequences, referring to the known harm caused by

Information, Connection and Signposting Services (ICSS), which had manipulated consumer internet searches for telephone numbers online, causing consumers to pay premium rate call costs for access to free telephone numbers.

- 5.5 The Panel looks forward to an update from Ofcom in February 2026 on the migration from PSTN to Voice over-Internet Protocol (VoIP).
- 5.6 Panel Members asked whether Ofcom is aware of a confirmed switch-off date for 2G/3G services.
- 5.7 In relation to Ofcom's Review of postal regulation - pricing and affordability Call for Input, the Panel highlighted the Panel and Ofcom's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and advised Ofcom to share relevant information in a timely and confidential manner, to enable the Panel to be a well-informed 'critical friend' to Ofcom.
- 5.8 Panel Members reiterated concerns about unresolved Royal Mail issues following changes to the Postal Universal Service Obligations (USO), highlighting public complaints about stamp prices, delays, and limited competition in letter delivery.
- 5.9 The Panel requested access to the recently issued mobile connectivity document.

6. Member for Scotland Welcome and Introductions

- 6.1 Panel Members welcomed their new Member for Scotland.

7. Panel Strategy/Workplan

- 7.1 The Panel discussed its key areas of focus for the coming year and agreed to formally develop a comprehensive strategy and accompanying workplan to guide its activities and priorities.

8. Enforcement update

- 8.1 The Enforcement team provided Members with an update on Ofcom's investigations and enforcement programme across all work areas.
- 8.2 The Panel asked questions around the current enforcement work aimed at protecting consumers, citizens and microbusinesses.

9. Artificial Intelligence in telecoms: understanding the impact for consumers

- 9.1 The Panel received an update from Ofcom on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is likely to impact consumers in the telecoms sector.



- 9.2 The Panel noted a significant imbalance in how AI benefits and risks are distributed. While Ofcom's AI strategy highlights substantial advantages for businesses, the Panel felt many of the associated risks fall disproportionately on consumers and stressed the importance of redressing this imbalance within regulatory thinking and public communication.
- 9.3 Panel Members highlighted the ongoing uncertainty for consumers around whether AI tools operate as products or services. This distinction may require different regulatory approaches, and companies should clearly define AI functions at project outset.
- 9.4 The Panel raised concerns that AI voice recognition systems may misinterpret consumer language, preventing consumers from reaching the correct services. Panel Members advised that this risk is heightened for vulnerable user groups, including and not limited to users with learning disabilities, autism, ADHD and hearing impairments, as well as those who do not speak English as a first language. The Panel noted that duties under disability legislation and non-discrimination policies across the UK must be fully considered.
- 9.5 The Panel recommended that Ofcom assess the current regulatory framework to identify gaps where consumers may be left unprotected. Consumer duty should remain central across all aspects of AI deployment, not just customer facing services.
- 9.6 Panel Members shared high-risk concerns around generative AI predictions, including bias, dynamic or unfair pricing, and potential impacts on consumers' ability to secure the best deals.
- 9.7 The Panel emphasised the need for further research to understand consumer experiences, including the extent to which people are unaware they are interacting with AI.
- 9.8 Panel Members highlighted the importance of involving people with learning disabilities in design processes from the outset. The Panel advised that Ofcom's media literacy responsibilities should support consumers in understanding how to use and protect themselves when engaging with AI enabled services.
- 9.9 The Panel stressed the importance of ensuring alternative mechanisms remain available where AI could create access barriers.

10. Consumer Protection Monitoring and Compliance Programme (CPMC) update

- 10.1 The Panel deferred the agenda item to the next available meeting.

11. Any Other Business



11.1 There was no other business.