



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

**16 April 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 (from item 3 onwards)

Apologies

none

In attendance for the duration of the meeting

The Panel's Executive Team  
UK Regulators Network's 'Next Generation Non-Executive Directors' scheme member ('Next Gen NED')

<b>Item</b>
<b>1. Welcome and introduction</b>  1.1 The Chair welcomed Panel Members and attendees to the meeting.
<b>2. Declarations of Members' interests</b>  2.1 There were no declarations of interest.



### 3. Minutes of the meeting on 19 March 2026 and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of **19 March 2026** were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting with minor amendments.
- 3.2 Panel Members discussed the potential impacts to consumers arising from the switch-off of 2G services, which would result in 2G devices no longer functioning. Desk research carried out by one Member was shared during the meeting.
- 3.3 Panel Members raised concerns that a significant number of issues relating to the Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) migration were being identified via social media, rather than through formal complaints to communications providers or the regulator, so may be missing from Ofcom's metrics on the consumer journey.
- 3.4 Following the March meeting and the introduction of the new way of working with Ofcom's Consumer (Policy) Supervision team, Panel Members shared feedback on some accessibility aspects of the new document format, which is designed to support a more agile and cohesive working relationship between the Panel and Ofcom.

### 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 19 March.
- 4.2 The Chair provided a brief overview to Members of a stakeholder meeting held the day prior to the Panel meeting.
- 4.3 Panel Members discussed the Universal Service Obligations in relation to post and how best to work with Ofcom and Royal Mail, to promote affordability and quality of service.
- 4.4 The Panel discussed recent Ofcom work on Online Safety and strongly agreed that further action is required to protect children in accessing age appropriate social media safely, and noted that responsibility largely rests with technology companies to implement.
- 4.5 Panel Members noted that the definition of 'offensive' content can be problematic, given that content that may be considered offensive to some users may be necessary to the full and safe life experience of others. The Panel discussed the need for balance in communications around younger online users' needs, from having access to accurate information, to being protected from coercive forces, and highlighted difficulties for young people in LGBTQ+ communities.
- 4.6 The Panel raised the issue of forced conversion therapy as an online harm that should be explicitly acknowledged as a risk for children and young people.
- 4.7 The Panel re-emphasised how important it would be to listen to subject-matter specialists in relation to Online Safety and to share learning with Ofcom. A Panel Member offered to assist in connecting the Panel with academic specialists.
- 4.8 The Panel had responded to consultations on the work programmes of the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (including their postal work plan) and Consumer Scotland, which had been appreciated.
- 4.9 Panel Members praised The Connection Project ['Misconnected'](#) report which explores how the UK can choose a better digital future which echoed the Panel's concerns



around the barriers to inclusion that are currently facing consumers. Members look to become more involved with the project.

- 4.10 The Chair requested views from Panel Members on the Board effectiveness review proposal and welcomed suggestions and feedback to the document.

## 5. Consumer Policy update

- 5.1 Panel Members discussed how to best influence the work of Ofcom's Consumer (Policy) Supervision team by focusing primarily on the Panel's key Workplan areas. They would consider a similar approach with Ofcom's Online Safety programme of work, as it moved into the implementation phase.

## 6. Communications Consumer Panel Draft Workplan 2026/2027

- 6.1 Panel Members discussed the draft Workplan and suggested final amendments ahead of the document being shared with stakeholders following translation.

## 7. 2026/2027 Research Plans (based on the Draft Workplan 2026/2027)

- 7.1 Panel Members discussed research priorities for the year ahead. The Panel had engaged with other UK consumer representatives to understand their plans and awaited news of Ofcom's full plan of research for 2026/27 to prevent duplication.

## 8. Adults' Media Lives and Adults' Media Use and Activities Research findings

- 8.1 The Panel received an overview of findings from Ofcom's Adults' Media Use and Attitudes research which helped the Panel understand the latest qualitative complement to Ofcom's data sets.
- 8.2 Panel Members raised a number of questions and areas for further consideration from the data presented which included whether there was any evidence on the implications of consumers security software usage to prevent scams and fraud.
- 8.3 Members queried whether work was planned on monitoring the addictive nature of algorithms and excessive screen time, including potential legislative and other approaches to delaying smartphone use among children, and whether robust consumer research existed on these issues.
- 8.4 Further discussion focused on online gaming, with Members asking whether additional work was planned on the impact of gaming on broader online behaviours, and whether any links between gaming and AI usage had been explored.
- 8.5 Panel Members queried how opportunities could be created for consumers to build the confidence to use AI to obtain improved affordability from products and services.
- 8.6 Members also sought clarification on the demographics of those affected by negative impacts of media use. The underlying data tables published with the report would hold this data.



- 8.7 Panel Members raised serious concerns regarding the impact to neurodiverse children and adults, and adults with learning disabilities, particularly the risk of misinformation where AI search results are accepted as factual without informed adult oversight, and questioned whether neurodiversity and learning disabilities had been specifically considered in the research.
- 8.8 Members acknowledged that AI presents significant accessibility benefits for neurodiverse users; however, Members emphasised the need for appropriate safeguards to ensure safe access.
- 8.9 Panel Members also discussed a perceived reduction in consumers posting content on social media, questioning whether this could be linked to mental health impacts or changing patterns of information sharing.
- 8.10 Members raised questions regarding the rapid, exponential development of AI and what this may mean for perceptions of risk over time, including whether AI-generated search summaries may become more reliable.
- 8.11 The Panel asked whether there was any evidence of individuals deliberately posting inaccurate information online to influence or manipulate AI systems.

## 9. Panel pre-discussion: 2G/3G switch-off

- 9.1 The Panel had received a paper to update Members on the 2G/3G switch-off programme which highlighted Ofcom's expectations of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and provided key information on the planned approach to the 2G switch-off.
- 9.2 A Panel Member provided the Panel with a technical analysis of the benefits and constraints of the 2G to 6G networks which included consideration of satellite communications to support the use of 2G networks, which would enable additional time for concerns around 2G retirement to be addressed.
- 9.3 Panel Members undertook a deep-dive, discussing the consumer implications of the planned switch-off of 2G networks, with 2G perceived as a fall-back option for 3G, referencing emergency access, telecare provision, affordability of devices and services, and the adequacy of communications and policy safeguards. They discussed:
- i) Concerns that some consumers will be unable to afford replacement devices when 2G/3G networks are switched off and there is a risk that consumers may perceive the switch-off as a "scam", particularly where they feel forced to replace otherwise functioning devices.
  - ii) The lack of awareness of consumers who have purchased 2G-enabled devices that will be affected by the switch-off, with the lack of a widespread communications campaign limiting the ability of consumers to make informed decisions about device purchases and upgrades.
  - iii) The need for a coordinated, UK-wide communications campaign, led jointly by UK and devolved governments and Ofcom. It was agreed that responsibility should not rest solely with MNOs, as fragmented message risks confusion and inconsistent consumer protection.
  - iv) Ownership of affected devices - while some (e.g. telecare alarms) may be owned by local authorities or businesses, the Panel fears that the direct



impact and liability will fall on individual consumers, who may face disruption or more importantly a risk to their safety.

- v) The positive actions taken by some MNOs to provide free replacement devices for consumers in vulnerable circumstances. Concerns were voiced around how MNOs decide who is eligible, how devices are distributed, and whether this approach would be sufficiently scalable and consistent.
- vi) The use of impact assessments. The Panel discussed whether these protected relevant groups and whether a formal risk register had been developed with mitigations set out concerning the needs of consumers in vulnerable circumstances.
- vii) A perceived lack of consumer confidence in 5G reliability, particularly given current coverage gaps. The Panel agreed that until there is robust and universal 5G coverage, providers should not cease issuing 2G-enabled telecare devices or switch off the networks they rely on.
- viii) Concerns regarding the reliability of emergency calls following the switch-off. Members would request that greater clarity and assurance on the level of confidence that emergency services access would not be compromised.
- ix) The need for network coverage to be assessed using actual, real-world performance data, rather than theoretical or predicted coverage maps, and for an independent source of data to be used that does not come from the MNOs themselves.

## 10. 2G/3G Switch-off project update

- 10.1 The Panel met the Ofcom Project Director and team to discuss the anticipated impacts of the 2G/3G switch-off for residential and business customers, together with the arrangements in place to manage, support and oversee the project.
- 10.2 The Panel relayed the key issues arising from their deep dive and reacted to points raised in the project team's update.
- 10.3 The Panel strongly emphasised the need for a coordinated UK-wide awareness campaign, noting that provider-led communications are often ignored by consumers. They highlighted that credibility and consistency of messaging were critical, urging that UK and devolved governments and regulators lead a campaign rather than relying on a market-led (MNO) approach.
- 10.4 Panel Members referenced the [Digital Connectivity Forum report \(from Plum Consulting\)](#), where the importance of UK-wide communications was reiterated, and highlighted lessons from the VoIP migration, including the need for independent data rather than reliance on self-reporting by MNOs.
- 10.5 The Panel acknowledged work already underway to raise awareness, including Ofcom's expectations document, the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology ([DSIT](#)) [2G Switch-off Charter](#), and regular data collection through Ofcom's Connected Nations report. However, Members continue to raise concerns about limited data availability for mobile migration compared to fixed networks, given the wide range of sectors reliant on 2G.



- 10.6 Panel Members queried MNOs' reluctance to align switch-off timelines, which would make communication with consumers easier.
- 10.7 The Panel highlighted that 3G is not satellite-compatible without significant investment, whereas 2G is potentially satellite-compatible subject to reconfiguration, which could enable the UK to have a unique competitive advantage, and questioned whether this had been fully considered, noting potential national security implications.
- 10.8 The Panel raised concerns around ownership of issues relating to 2G-connected devices (e.g. lifts, telecare, eCall) and how communications would reach statutory bodies, individuals, and international manufacturers of 2G-enabled devices. Members agreed that a communications campaign should start without delay and target a broad UK audience.
- 10.9 The Panel requested fact-checking on whether 2G is being switched off globally, noting this may not be the case, and reiterated concerns about the continued sale of 2G-enabled devices in the UK..
- 10.10 Panel Members raised concerns around consumer affordability, including the feasibility of MNOs providing free or affordable handsets and the impact of ongoing contract costs.
- 10.11 International evidence cited in the DCF report highlighted issues with emergency service access following switch-offs. Members sought assurance that these risks would be mitigated in the UK.
- 10.12 Questions were raised regarding 4G coverage and the expectation for 'broadly equivalent' coverage following 2G/3G switch-off, particularly in areas currently reliant on legacy networks, including some areas of Northern Ireland and rural areas.

## **11. Any Other Business**

- 11.1 There was no other business.