

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

16 July 2026, 10:30 - 15:35

Meeting held in hybrid format via Microsoft Teams

Present

CCP/ACOD (The Panel)

Lenna Cumberbatch - Acting Chair for the meeting
Rachel Burr (Member for Wales) - from item 3 onwards
Grant Davis
Michelle Goddard
Robert Hammond (Member for England)
Rhian Johns - from item 8 onwards
Sarah O'Neill (Member for Scotland)
David Warburton-Broadhurst
Michael Wardlow

Apologies

Helen Froud (Chair)
Judith Clifton
Carrie Matchett (Member for Northern Ireland)

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')

Item
1. Welcome and Introduction 1.1 In the absence of the Panel Chair, for compassionate reasons, the Panel had agreed Panel Member, Lenna Cumberbatch, would chair the meeting. Lenna Cumberbatch welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. Declarations of Members' interests 2.1 Rhian Johns had previously declared her position as a member of the Anglian Water Independent Challenge Group and highlighted that the new Ofcom Chair, Sir Ian Cheshire has been appointed Chair of Anglian Water, with effect from 14 July 2026.



2.2 Sarah declared that she had recently been elected as the branch secretary of the GMB union's Scottish Judiciary Branch.

2.3 David Warburton-Broadhurst declared that he personally knew (the then prospective leader of the Labour Party/Prime Minister), The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 18 June 2026 and matters arising

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of **18 June 2026** were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting after minor amendments.

3.2 The Exec team to arrange a meeting between a Panel Member and a technical expert from Ofcom to discuss areas of opportunity in relation to satellite-to-smartphone connectivity, low Earth orbit satellites, and the switch-off of 2G networks.

3.3 It was agreed that the Exec Team would establish with the Chair, upon her return, whether expert matter Panel Members should submit advice papers to Ofcom or other relevant organisations, in their role of Panel Member, subject to an agreed advice paper approval process.

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 18 June.

4.2 The Communications Consumer Panel had - since the last meeting - been informed that four Panel Members would not be reappointed by DSIT, pending a review of Ofcom's consumer engagement by the incoming Chair, Sir Ian Cheshire. Three of the four members had been appointed for an initial three-year term from 1 August 2023, so would be leaving the Panel at the end of this month. With the fourth being the current Member for Wales, they discussed the fact that her role is a statutory role under the Communications Act 2003, reflecting the importance of ensuring continuity of the representation of consumers, citizens and small businesses in Wales and that the Member for Wales was currently in the process of expanding and deepening the Panel's stakeholder engagement in Wales, including in Online Safety.

4.3 While the Panel recognised that reappointment was not guaranteed, they expressed disappointment with the decision, the process and the impact on the Panel's work plans. The short notice given to those leaving on 31 July 2026, while the Chair was on compassionate leave, did not leave the Panel with much time to reorganise and handover remaining Panel Members on the specialist remits of the departing members. The departure of three Members in July represented a sudden 25% reduction in Panel membership and would leave the Panel with reduced capacity, expertise, and demographic diversity.

4.4 Members recognised the unique talents and experience of the departing members, Professor Judith Clifton, Lenna Cumberbatch MBA and Dr Michelle Goddard, referring to insights they had shared in equality, diversity and inclusion, protection of women and girls in the online environment, research and academia, affordability, privacy, data governance, and digital transformation in the context of consumer vulnerability.

4.5 Given the continued expansion of the Panel's responsibilities, Members discussed the risk that the reduction in membership could create significant capacity and skills gaps, potentially affecting the Panel's ability to provide the breadth of challenge, insight and consumer representation expected of its role.

5. Panel Deep Dive on Consumer Supervision (Policy)

- 5.1 Panel Members noted that Ofcom had been in contact with Communications Providers (CPs) relating to measures to improve awareness of, and take-up of, social tariffs and requested sight of the content of the communications.
- 5.2 Members requested engagement between Ofcom and the Panel ahead of the Quarterly Telecoms Complaints report publication, to understand Ofcom's interpretation of the data and any consumer harm trends.
- 5.3 The Panel discussed the move from percentage-based to pounds-and-pence mid-contract price rise communication and expressed concern that consumers appear to be worse off under the new approach. Members questioned whether the policy was achieving its intended fairness objectives and what action Ofcom was taking, including whether the practice should be discontinued.
- 5.4 Panel Members continued to raise concerns about the ongoing migration to VoIP, with only 6 months remaining until the PSTN network would be switched off. Members queried the approach being taken to non-voluntary line migrations and reiterated their belief that all existing migrations should be treated as non-voluntary.
- 5.5 The Panel requested a written response to the paper they had previously submitted to Ofcom, in order to prepare for their next meeting with the migration to VOIP policy team in September.
- 5.6 Members highlighted the strategic use of satellite communications as a potential solution to digital connectivity challenges across the UK. They also expressed concern that 5G network coverage is not universally guaranteed to fulfill consumer needs, even though devices may be sold as 5G-enabled, which could result in service disruptions for critical applications, including alarm systems.
- 5.7 Panel Members discussed ongoing ways to enhance the working relationship with Ofcom, by understanding at pace the topics, issues and challenges faced by Ofcom and ensuring that the consumer voice was fed into Ofcom's work in a meaningful and actionable way. A Panel Member had used a template form to enable colleagues to promptly share issues and challenges in technology projects and offered to share this with the Exec team.

6. Deep Dive: Future of TV Distribution

- 6.1 A Panel Member had attended a DSIT presentation on the Future of TV Distribution at the July meeting of the Digital Connectivity Forum and noted that the messages on strategic considerations in the Ofcom paper were consistent.
- 6.2 The Panel raised a number of concerns regarding the potential impact on consumers, particularly vulnerable and underserved groups. Key concerns raised included:
 - Welsh language broadcasting currently relies heavily on linear television, and that any transition away from traditional platforms could have implications for accessibility and reach, with consumers less able to access and use the content and reach data giving the impression of a decline in need or interest.
 - Whether the right balance has been struck between consumer needs and business interests. Panel Members highlighted that regardless of which end

date was chosen for the switchover project, some content had already been moved, with no safeguards in place to protect those who rely on it.

- The increasing reliance on reliable and robust internet connectivity for accessing services and content, and how underserved consumers can be protected from being disadvantaged by these changes. The Panel highlighted the important use of TV for public emergency communications for groups of consumers who are less digitally active.
- The potential cost implications for consumers, including the need to purchase new television equipment and make changes to in-home connectivity and infrastructure.
- Whether sufficient equality and accessibility assessments have been undertaken.
- Digital ageism, particularly in relation to older consumers, and the challenges around discoverability and usability that systems and services are not always designed with older generations in mind.
- That a comprehensive assessment of the consumer impact should be undertaken before any significant changes to TV distribution are implemented.
- The sustainability and environmental impacts, including how frequently consumers replace their televisions and the potential increase in redundant equipment resulting from changes in technology and distribution methods.

7. Future of TV Distribution (FoTVD)

- 7.1 The Panel received an update on the activities Ofcom had undertaken since the publication of their FoTVD report in 2024 and key the points from the [Government's Green Paper](#) published in June 2026.
- 7.2 Panel Members discussed the potential move away from linear television and raised concerns about the impact on consumers, particularly those who may be more susceptible to digital exclusion.
- 7.3 Members highlighted points referenced in 6.2, that some audiences, including Welsh language viewers, remain heavily reliant on linear TV and expressed concern that internet-delivered services could make content more difficult to find and access. Concerns were also raised about digital ageism, accessibility, and whether future platforms and applications would be designed to meet the needs of older consumers and other groups who may face barriers to accessing digital services.
- 7.4 The Panel questioned how migration would be managed and sought reassurance that lessons learned from previous sector transitions, including migration to VoIP and the 2G/3G switch-off, would be applied. The Panel was advised by Ofcom that DSIT had noted lessons from migration to VOIP.
- 7.5 Panel Members sought clarification on whether applications would be embedded within television sets and questioned what accessibility and usability standards would be applied to ensure they are straightforward and intuitive for consumers to use.

- 7.6 The Panel queried the evidence base underpinning the update, including the source of the data and assumptions used in relation to the potential switch-off timeframes of 2034 and 2044.
- 7.7 Members emphasised that consumer needs, infrastructure readiness, and affordability should be central considerations, noting concerns about the potential costs of replacing equipment and the assumption that universal, affordable broadband connectivity would be available.
- 7.8 Members also highlighted the risk of further disadvantaging consumers who already experience connectivity, affordability or accessibility challenges. They stressed the importance of ensuring appropriate support mechanisms be in place and urged industry to take steps to protect consumers.
- 7.9 The Panel queried whether sufficient equality and consumer impact assessments had been undertaken and sought clarification on the evidence and assumptions underpinning current thinking. Members emphasised the need for an approach that includes, rather than excludes, consumers and noted that poverty remained a significant factor in digital exclusion.
- 7.10 The Panel stated that they would also feed the above points and any other relevant considerations into public consultations on the Future of TV Distribution and would be keen to engage further with Ofcom as the timeline progressed.
- 7.11 Ofcom welcomed further interaction with the Panel on this work and emphasised the need for a well-managed migration process.

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.
- 8.3 The Panel welcomed Ofcom's analysis of the impacts on consumers of Virgin Media's actions which prevented consumers from switching, and the subsequent enforcement action that had been taken, including the largest enforcement fine Ofcom had ever raised in the telecoms sector.
- 8.4 The Panel welcomed Ofcom's attention to ensuring that those who complained received compensation and urged that consumers who had not submitted complaints but had received unfair treatment and remained Virgin Media customers would be proactively informed of their ability to seek redress. The Panel highlighted the probability of more assertive consumers receiving better outcomes than consumers who had suffered equally but had not felt empowered to seek redress.
- 8.5 Panel Members raised concerns regarding Ofcom's enforcement powers in online safety breaches, highlighting situations where overseas companies neglected to pay fines. The Panel queried Ofcom's ability to act fast enough to protect consumers from online harm through using fines and requested further information on the use of fines in this context.

9. Mobile Connectivity update

- 9.1 The Panel received an overview from Ofcom on their proposed approach and workplan in relation to mobile connectivity as set out in their discussion paper, [Connectivity you can count on](#), published on 3 June 2026.
- 9.2 The Panel discussed a range of issues relating to mobile connectivity and network performance across the UK, highlighting the importance of reliable mobile services for consumers, businesses and public safety.
- 9.3 Members emphasised that mobile connectivity is as important on the road network as it is on the rail network, highlighting the potential safety implications of poor coverage, including the ability of vehicle emergency systems, such as eCall, to function effectively.
- 9.4 Concerns were raised that coverage challenges continue to affect both rural and urban areas and highlighted that road users include bus passengers who may be more likely to be older, more financially vulnerable and living with health conditions and disabilities.
- 9.5 The Panel raised concerns regarding the quality and capacity of mobile networks, including download speeds, network congestion and the prioritisation of bandwidth. Members questioned whether it was fair that consumers paying for premium services should receive preferential access to network capacity and sought assurance that network performance is measured on the basis of actual user experience, rather than theoretical coverage and capacity projections.
- 9.6 Members queried how Ofcom defines success in relation to improving mobile connectivity and expressed an interest in contributing to ongoing work in this area. They requested visibility of relevant Ofcom initiatives and highlighted the Panel's willingness to provide input and help shape future thinking.
- 9.7 The Panel also sought clarification on the role of infrastructure investment and delivery, including whether Ofcom had engaged with local authorities to understand barriers, regarding planning, infrastructure constraints and funding challenges.
- 9.8 Members asked what level of investment would be required from Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to deliver the connectivity consumers expect from a reliable service and whether any additional barriers to improve coverage and performance had been identified.
- 9.9 Members questioned whether alternative technologies, including satellite direct-to-device connectivity, could play a role in addressing current coverage gaps and improving resilience. A Panel Member will discuss points with Ofcom following the meeting.
- 9.10 The Panel highlighted concerns around affordability, questioning whether improvements in network quality and performance might ultimately lead to higher prices for consumers.
- 9.11 Members also encouraged Ofcom to consider lessons from international markets where mobile network performance is perceived to be stronger and were pleased to hear that some investigation around mobile connectivity in countries with similar geographical challenges was taking place.

10. CCP/Jigsaw Moving Home Research

- 10.1 Representatives from Jigsaw provided an overview of case studies from the Panel's 'Moving Home, Staying Connected' (working title) research project, which examined the challenges

faced by consumers in vulnerable circumstances when moving home and experiencing a negative service experience with telecoms, digital and postal services or providers.

- 10.2 The Panel questioned Jigsaw on the key findings and recommendations from the qualitative study and planned to review the agency's data in more detail to produce recommendations to be taken forward with policymakers and industry.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Chair highlighted a paper by Ofcom's Public Policy team and invited Members to raise any questions that would be shared with the team after the meeting. Members questioned why telecommunications had not been included within the Public Accounts Committee inquiry, given its consideration of the regulation of the water, energy and broadband sectors. Members also sought clarity on how the Panel, as a consumer representative body, could contribute evidence and insights to support the inquiry.
- 11.2 Members further discussed Ofcom's role and responsibilities in relation to data centres. The Panel expressed an interest in understanding, without delay, the potential implications for consumers, particularly underserved groups, and how consumer interests can be effectively protected in this area.
- 11.3 A Member lead other Members in reflection on the conclusion of the terms of Professor Judith Clifton, Lenna Cumberbatch MBA and Dr Michelle Goddard as Panel Members and expressed their sincere thanks for the significant contribution each had made over the past three years. The Panel wished to record its appreciation for their dedicated service in representing the interests of consumers, citizens and small businesses, particularly in providing a voice for underserved communities and individuals and wished the departing Members ongoing success in influencing positive outcomes for consumers.