

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

17 July 2025, 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 (from item 9 onwards)

Lenna Cumberbatch

Grant Davis

Robert Hammond (Member for England)

Rhian Johns

Carrie Matchett (Member for Northern Ireland)

David Warburton-Broadhurst

Michael Wardlow

Apologies

Michelle Goddard

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 The Chair welcomed Panel Members and attendees to the meeting.
2. Declarations of Members' interests 2.1 Rhian Johns declared her new Non-Executive Director role for Church House Westminster and awaits a starting date.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 19 June 2025 and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 19 June 2025 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.
- 3.2 In the Panel's June meeting, the Chair and team had asked for reactions from Panel Members, in writing, to their proposal that the current Next Gen NED and future Next Gen NEDs be empowered to participate beyond observing the meetings, by offering their own contributions. The person chairing each meeting would make presenters aware of the status of the contributor (that they were not a Secretary-of-State-appointed Panel Member) in advance of any such contributions.
- 3.3 Given that no Panel Member had objected to the proposal (some providing strong favourable reactions) and that the rules of the Next Gen NED scheme require chosen delegates to follow the UKRN's confidentiality agreement and the Nolan Principles of Public Life, the proposal was accepted unanimously.

4. Chair's Special Update

- 4.1 The Chair invited a member with strong postal advocacy experience to present his analysis of Ofcom's recent post-consultation report on its review of [the reform of the Universal Postal Service](#).
- 4.2 The Panel discussed next steps.

5. Consumer Policy update

- 5.1 The Panel received an update from Ofcom's consumer policy team on its key consumer policy areas.
- 5.2 Panel Members are keen to understand what providers are doing to incentivise social tariff take-up and service an update from the policy team to understand more about their monitoring and engagement work.
- 5.3 Panel Members urged Ofcom to keep in close contact with Communications Providers (CPs) using the One Touch Switch service to ensure consumers do not simultaneously pay for two contracts if the gaining CP does not use OTS.
- 5.4 The Panel is keen to receive an update from Ofcom on migration to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) in September, plus advised caution around the scope of Ofcom's monitoring of only forced migrations, raising concerns that consumers with additional support requirements may be missed in circumstances such as moving house, which may on the surface appear to be a voluntary migration.
- 5.5 Panel Members were pleased with the improvements to Ofcom's metrics around mobile coverage and Ofcom's release of its ['Map Your Mobile'](#) coverage checker, while encouraging Ofcom to continuously improve the product, one example

provided was to enhance the zoom feature to enable consumers to focus on specific geographic locations, including the signal threshold.

- 5.6 The Panel relayed its shared frustration and disappointment over Ofcom's recent post-consultation report on its review of [the reform of the Universal Postal Service](#). The Panel advised that it was unfair to produce a review document that is over 300 pages long for consumers who are most affected by the changes to read, plus the Panel felt they should have been given prior knowledge of the contents of the document, particularly Ofcom's decisions in response to the Panel's advice, prior to publication.
- 5.7 Panel Members reminded Ofcom of the published obligation to explain to the Panel why it did not act on its advice, given Ofcom's recognition of the Panel's consumer-focused challenges to the proposals, which had been referenced throughout Ofcom's report. The Panel also requested input into the communications strategy to inform consumers of the change.
- 5.8 Additionally, Panel Members raised concerns for bulk mailers having to move to email communications by default, due to cost or reliability issues resulting from the changes, thus causing further detriment to consumers who rely on post or lack digital literacy skills.
- 5.9 The Panel also advised that some of the outcomes would accelerate further revenue losses to Royal Mail.
- 5.10 Further serious concerns were raised by Members for consumers who would be multiply underserved from living in areas affected not only by poor postal quality of service, but in areas with poor internet or mobile connectivity.
- 5.11 The Panel is also concerned about the impact of any future price rises on consumers and looks forward to being part of future discussions with both Royal Mail and Ofcom. Noting that Ofcom's review document states that a consumer-focused forum is to be set up by Royal Mail before the next Panel meeting in September, the Panel notified Ofcom that it expected to be included in this work, as the statutory consumer panel for this sector.

6. Update on work to combat scam calls and mobile messages

- 6.1 The Panel received an update on the measures Ofcom had undertaken to prevent and reduce scam calls and mobile messages and welcomed progress in this area.
- 6.2 Panel Members asked Ofcom to provide information on the cost to consumers of receiving scam calls and messages.
- 6.3 Panel Members agreed with Ofcom's assumption that the number of scam calls and messages are likely under-reported and urged Ofcom to continue to work with providers and organisations to further support people and increase awareness scam-busting and reporting initiatives.
- 6.4 The Panel would respond to Ofcom's soon-to-be published consultation on blocking scam calls from overseas numbers.

7. Online Safety Panel Strategy Session

- 7.1 The Panel examined and reflected on its learning so far about Online Safety, both in the context of the changing UK legal situation, but also in the light of evolving technological, geopolitical and macroeconomic trends to gather insights to where the Panel should focus their attention in representing the consumer voice.
- 7.2 The Panel would re-group in the September meeting to finalise plans.

8. Online Safety - Protection of Children and Age Assurance

- 8.1 The Panel received an overview of Ofcom's Age Assurance Codes measures and its Protection of Children work.
- 8.2 Panel Members welcomed Ofcom's hard work and dedication in the Online Safety space so far, including age assurance within the protection of children codes.
- 8.3 The Panel questioned what factors would be put in place to measure the effectiveness of age assurance, and what steps have been identified to discourage bad actors and under-age participants being able to work around the age restriction process.
- 8.4 Panel Members requested clarity around Ofcom's enforcement programme, noting the upcoming compliance deadline date of 25 July 2025.
- 8.5 Panel Members questioned the age-appropriate reporting mechanism within online gaming and advertising, and sought to understand what steps are in place to combat recommender systems and algorithms from pushing inappropriate content to users.
- 8.6 The Panel questioned Ofcom on the opportunity for scammers to take advantage of the new age assurance requirements to create scams to obtain data for illegal purposes.
- 8.7 The Panel advised Ofcom not to overlook other audiences that may be more susceptible to harm, potentially including people with learning disabilities, plus to ensure that access to life-affirming content is not blocked, such as information vital to younger members of the LGBTQ+ communities in understanding their personal identities and asked whether any work was taking place to ensure this.
- 8.8 Panel Members queried what controls are in force to influence, monitor and protect individuals from the Dark Web.
- 8.9 The Panel raised concerns about online providers' likelihood to understand and comply with data protection law in terms of their lawful and fair processing of personal data for age assurance that they had not previously been required to process, for example, they should request only what they need to comply with Ofcom's codes and should not hold data for longer than necessary.
- 8.10 Panel Members queried what Ofcom could do beyond the Online Safety Act to further protect people, especially citizens who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and other UK equality laws, and what could be done to encourage corporate cultural best practice beyond compliance with those laws, to inclusion.

8.11 Panel Members recommended to Ofcom that children are involved with any Online Safety policy decisions to ensure their voices are heard.

8.12 Additionally, Panel Members urged Ofcom to ensure that those interacting with children and younger people during any research or feedback sessions are trained in working with children and younger people, to ensure that their opinions and sentiments are interpreted and reported accurately.

9. 2G/3G Switch-off Project update

9.1 The Panel received a progress update from Ofcom on the 2G/3G switch-off which included how the programme is being monitored, communications to consumers, and information on other services that rely on mobile networks.

9.2 Members were pleased to learn Ofcom had updated the 2G/3G switch-off [consumer advice page](#) on their website to include the latest data, and suggested Ofcom add signposting to a transcript and subtitling to the information video to improve accessibility.

9.3 The Panel was alarmed by the number of devices which are still connected to the 2G/3G network and are as yet unidentified. They advised that many of the devices may be smart meters, healthcare equipment, telecare, coastal telephones and eCall applications in vehicles, which could cause a serious risk to life if they were unable to connect to a network in an emergency. The Panel asked Ofcom about its plans to work with government and stakeholders to address this gap in information.

9.4 Panel Members raised further concerns around whether 4G/5G coverage would be capable of reaching all areas required geographically, without leaving some areas without coverage when 2G/3G networks are switched off.

9.5 Upon reviewing Ofcom's [postcode-level 2G coverage data](#) the Panel recognised many underserved geographic areas match the areas of populations additionally underserved by other communications services regulated by Ofcom, such as postal services and reiterated their fears for consumers experiencing multiple layers of detriment.

9.6 Panel Members highlighted their belief that Ofcom should be using its previously monitored Fairness Commitments to ensure that consumers who need to upgrade their device are treated fairly and are not signposted to expensive handsets that exceed their needs and budgets.

9.7 The Panel speculated whether imposing a 'hard' 2G/3G switch-off deadline, to alleviate differences in geographical and MNOs switch-off timelines would have been more beneficial. The example provided was that of the non-negotiable, cross-sector collaboration and action that had been required by the end of the last day of 1999, to address concerns of a 'Millennium Bug'.



10. Panel strategy around large-scale technology changes (Migration to VoIP, 2G/3G switch-off) - Digital Transitions

10.1 The Panel shared current knowledge and discussed emerging issues consumers could face over the forthcoming 5-10 years.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 There was no other business.