

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

**18 December 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

Lenna Cumberbatch

Grant Davis

Michelle Goddard

Robert Hammond (Member for England)

Rhian Johns

Carrie Matchett (Member for Northern Ireland)

David Warburton-Broadhurst

Michael Wardlow (in attendance for items 1 to part way through item 6)

Apologies

none

In attendance for the duration of the meeting

The Panel's Executive Team

Will Harding (Ofcom Board Member, attending as an observer)

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

Representative from Galop (item 8)

Item
<b>1. Welcome and introduction</b>  1.1 The Chair welcomed Ofcom's Board Member, Panel Members and attendees to the meeting.

## 2. Declarations of Members' interests

- 2.1 Lenna Cumberbatch re-emphasised her role as Chair of Galop, the LGBTQ+ anti-abuse charity for the purposes of item 8 (Galop Workshop - Reducing Barriers faced by LGBT+ Survivors of Abuse and Violence).

## 3. Minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2025 and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2025 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.
- 3.2 The Panel re-iterated the need for Ofcom to liaise with government and industry to minimise a single point of failure when sub-sea cable or other critical national infrastructure fails to deliver service to consumers, citizens and microbusinesses.
- 3.3 The Panel asked the Executive team to request a response from Ofcom on what actions Ofcom was taking to improve network resilience, in terms of minimising single points of failure in connectivity networks.
- 3.4 The Panel discussed Ofcom's role in ensuring that communications providers were fair and transparent in their sales processes, informing consumers about their choices where a cheaper service could mean a less resilient service.

## 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 Panel Members received an oral update from the Ofcom Board Member on current information relevant to the Panel's remit.
- 4.3 The Chair and Panel Members briefly discussed the Panel's remit, which has expanded significantly in the past 18 months due to legislative and regulatory change. The Panel recognised the choices this brings and acknowledges the pressures this creates for its plan of work. The Panel wishes to hold a strategy session in its January 2026 meeting to discuss this issue in more depth.

## 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 The Panel commented that One Touch Switch (OTS) had proven an effective tool for increasing switching rates and urged Ofcom to continue to monitor consumer outcomes.
- 5.3 Panel Members asked whether any concerns about competition had been raised, regarding Linksys, which operates as a hardware provider.

- 5.4 The Panel stated its ongoing discomfort around the handling of migration to Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) by industry and urged Ofcom to treat this as a top priority to ensure consumer protection and safety. Panel Members reiterated their particular concern for not only telecare users, but other landline-reliant consumers whose health and safety would be at risk without access to a landline.
- 5.5 The Panel commented that the number of devices operating on 2G/3G networks remained unknown and asked Ofcom colleagues whether it had data on the full scope of issues faced.
- 5.6 Panel Members discussed a situation raised by a Panel Member, where a Communications Provider (CP) had used 2G/3G switch-off as an opportunity to upsell a device. The Panel voiced strong concern about the risk of 2G/3G switch-off being used by CPs in this way, which could cause consumers to pay more than they need and to lose trust in their provider.
- 5.7 In relation to the 2G/3G switch-off pilots in Scotland, the Panel requested if any information/feedback could be shared.
- 5.8 Panel Members highlighted the increasing numbers of postcode districts missing their Quality of Service (QoS) targets in December. Against the context of missed QoS targets, resourcing concerns and consumers' Christmas post demands, the Panel queried Royal Mail's decision to seal a number of mailboxes around the country apparently in order to upgrade them to include parcel dispatch.
- 5.9 The Panel discussed parcel delivery issues and raised concerns about parcels being delivered late at night and marked as undelivered, 'no-one at home', highlighting discussions in a local community forum which demonstrated that this was not an isolated issue.
- 5.10 Panel Members discussed PlusNet's migration of its email service to Greenby and the subsequent harm caused to less digitally skilled consumers.

## **6. Telecoms Access Review 2026-2031**

- 6.1 The Panel received an update from Ofcom on the Telecoms Access Review 2026-2031, covering progress to date and key concerns raised by stakeholders.
- 6.2 The Panel remains seriously concerned about the potential risk to life if copper services are withdrawn without suitable alternative communication options for consumers who are digitally excluded.
- 6.3 Panel Members reiterated their worries that industry is concentrating primarily on Telecare users as being at risk of harm, when many other consumer groups may also be left without a reliable service, such as those who rely on landline services to contact friends and family in an emergency.
- 6.4 The Panel queried the fault rate figures presented, noting that they appeared significantly higher than historic broadband fault levels, and asked whether Ofcom could provide a breakdown of fault rates for copper versus fibre broadband.
- 6.5 Panel Members also sought clarification on Ofcom's performance metrics and when aspirational targets will become formalised as actual targets.

## **7. Engaging with Distressing Content and Material**

7.1 The Panel received an overview from Ofcom on their approach to protecting Ofcom colleagues who may be exposed to distressing content and material during their work within Online Safety and Broadcast and On-Demand Content, via audio-visual, written, or other material that could cause significant distress due to its nature or themes.

## **8. Galop Workshop - Reducing Barriers faced by LGBT+ Survivors of Abuse and Violence**

8.1 A representative from Galop, the UK's LGBT+ antiabuse and antiviolence charity, delivered a workshop to help Panel Members deepen their understanding of the experiences of LGBT+ survivors, including the abuse they face, the barriers to accessing support, and the digital and media challenges that affect them. The Panel agreed to keep in touch Galop as a stakeholder representing underserved communities.

## **9. Social Tariffs and Affordability update**

9.1 The Panel received an update from Ofcom on consumer affordability across UK households, including awareness and uptake of social tariffs.

9.2 Panel Members expressed concern about the consistently low awareness and adoption of social tariffs, particularly the significantly lower take-up in Northern Ireland. Ofcom would provide data broken down by all four nations, where base sizes permit.

9.3 The Panel questioned the continuing expectation that qualifying consumers should request a social tariff from their communications provider, noting that social tariffs are often difficult to find on provider websites, with the best deals typically only being offered to those who haggle - a process many consumers find overwhelming.

9.4 Panel Members asked whether regulatory intervention may be required to improve awareness and uptake, and strongly encouraged Ofcom to make a case to the Secretary of State to review providers' promotion and design of their social tariff offers. The Panel also signposted Ofcom to the work of the Essential Services Access Network's (ESAN) on alternatives to social tariffs, advising that many of the price points of social tariffs may be too high for those they are targeted at.

9.5 The Panel advised that the data presented might not fully reflect the difficulties consumers are experiencing and requested information on how many people had downgraded or left broadband services to reduce household costs.

9.6 Concerns were also raised by the Panel about the quality of some social tariffs, with examples given of lower speed services being offered at only marginally reduced prices, which Members felt appeared tokenistic. They questioned whether further research is planned in this area.

9.7 Additional concerns were raised that the social tariff offered by BT appeared to be high compared to other Communications Providers (CP) tariffs. Panel Members felt



that older consumers were more likely to remain loyal to their provider and prefer to not switch to a cheaper alternative.

9.8 Panel Members suggested that every CP should allow customers to leave their tariff without penalty if they become eligible for a social tariff and chose to switch in order to get the best deal.

9.9 The Panel referenced the Minimum Digital Living Standard (MDLS) programme, noting that a single, uniform social tariff fails to meet the differing digital needs of households.

9.10 Panel Members also advised that a similar model to the Department for Work and Pensions' arrangements with energy companies could be explored in this sector.

## **10. Panel Priorities**

10.1 The Panel reflected on their contributions and achievements in 2025 and began considering plans to develop a strategy and workplan for 2026.

## **11. Any Other Business**

11.1 The Panel discussed plans to hold a meeting in Belfast in May 2026.