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DAME PATRICIA HODGSON  
Chairman

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*Dear Jo,*

### **Ofcom Draft Annual Plan 2014/15**

Thank you for your response to Ofcom's draft Annual Plan. May I take this opportunity to note the major contribution that the Panel and ACOD make as key sources of advice and advocacy to Ofcom. I look forward to working closely with you during my tenure.

Your thoughtful response to consultation raised a number of important and interesting points. Ofcom is committed to working to improve the consumer experience across all the areas discussed in your response. We will keep you informed on our progress throughout the coming year, and I am keen for us to maintain a model of engagement which enables the Panel to provide insight throughout Ofcom's works, including at the early stages of policy development. I therefore hope you will continue to input directly to the relevant teams at monthly Panel/ACOD meetings, as well as at your regular meetings with Claudio and members of his team working on consumer issues.

I would like to pick out a few points in your response.

### **Nuisance calls**

We continue to prioritise work on this as set out in our joint action plan with the Information Commissioner's Office. As announced on 23 May, we are reviewing our policy statement on the use of our powers in this area. We are seeking to identify if there are changes we could make to help tackle issues in this area. Where we are unable to make improvements ourselves we will continue to support Government. Specifically, we will be working with other stakeholders in the Which-led task force looking at lead generation and consent issues. The task force is scheduled to report to Government later this year.

I agree that it is important to focus on the needs of vulnerable users in our work on nuisance calls. We are working with consumer groups and charities on this and on 23 May we

published our advice to consumers in an 'Easy Read' format, with an accompanying video guide for those with learning difficulties or hearing impairment.

### **Information on availability and quality**

It is important for consumers to be able to make well-informed choices. We are focused on consumer information across all the sectors we regulate, and mobile coverage and quality is an important part of this. The team here are continuing to work on improving the quality of information for consumers and also making it accessible when they need it.

### **Switching**

This remains a priority area for Ofcom in 2014/15. As you will be aware, in December we published our final decision to harmonise and improve switching processes on the Openreach network. We are now working on switching issues in other sectors of the market, and we plan to publish a document on next steps this summer. We are considering non-process barriers, including those which may exist in contracts, as part of this. We continue to work with policy makers in Westminster and Brussels on the legislative underpinning which would support a good switching experience for consumers.

### **Customer Service**


I am grateful to the Panel for the work you have done to improve the understanding of customer service problems in the telecoms sector. Your 'Going Round in Circles' research provided powerful insights and has been useful to the team here working on GC9 enforcement and policy. We will continue our own research on the quality of customer service, and also on improvements in industry and ADR.

### **The Business Consumer**

I appreciate the work the Panel is doing on the experience of business consumers and that we have been able to collaborate on research in this area. As you know, the team here is drawing on the Panel's research, as well as our own, to improve our understanding of the needs of business users and how the market is delivering to these needs.

I know Ofcom will engage with you and your colleagues on these and other issues this year. Can I suggest that for any immediate follow up, you contact Chris Taylor, Ofcom's Director of Consumer Policy ([chris.taylor@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:chris.taylor@ofcom.org.uk), 020 7981 3594).

With best wishes

Kind regards & many thanks  


*cc. Ed Richards, Claudio Pollack, Chris Taylor (Ofcom)*