



## *e-newsletter* February 2009

### Welcome

Welcome to the February 2009 edition of the Communications Consumer Panel e-newsletter. If you'd like to receive our monthly newsletter and you're not on our mailing list, it's easy to join by going to our website:

[www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk)

### Latest news...

#### **No one should miss out on the digital future people tell the Consumer Panel in a new report**

Consumers and citizens must be at the heart of the Government's digital plans and their needs must drive policy-making, the Communications Consumer Panel says in its new research report.

The Panel's latest research report, *No one should miss out*, asked people to tell us how they want digital communications services to contribute to their lives in the future. They said loudly and clearly that they must be at the heart of the Government's plans and their needs must drive the policy-making.

Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley, said: "Up until now no one has been able to agree on what it is that consumers and citizens want and how this should shape the future of the communications sector. Our research is moving the debate forward and helping the Consumer Panel to develop evidence-based recommendations to Government."

The Consumer Panel has been feeding this research into the Government's Digital Britain Steering Group chaired by Lord Carter. Further work is underway to explore some of the findings in more depth, in particular the idea that broadband is increasingly becoming an essential service. The Panel will be carrying out research to understand what lies behind this belief: what services and other uses make broadband such an important part of people's lives? The results will inform the final Digital Britain report.

The research report is on the Panel's website at:  
<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future/consumer-views-on-the-digital-future>

## **Success for Communications Consumer Panel Consumer Interest Toolkit confirmed in *Rating Regulators* report**

Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that the Consumer Focus *Rating regulators* report confirmed the findings of the independent review commissioned by the Panel last year: "This concluded that the Panel's Consumer Interest Toolkit had influenced Ofcom's decision-making. The commendation that Ofcom received today from Consumer Focus is particularly gratifying because it is another endorsement for the toolkit and the way the regulator has continued to embed it in the way that it makes policy decisions."

The Consumer Interest Toolkit was introduced into Ofcom two years ago, and the resulting changes to Ofcom's culture have brought real benefits to communications consumers. This has prompted the European Commission to use the toolkit in its policy-making processes too.

"The needs of people must be central to everything that regulators and policy-makers do, and I hope other organisations will consider the benefits of our toolkit and be encouraged to adopt it in their own work," Anna Bradley added.

You can find a copy of the Consumer Focus *Rating Regulators* report at:  
[http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/en/content/cms/Consumer\\_Focus\\_Publi/Consumer\\_Focus\\_Publi.aspx](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/en/content/cms/Consumer_Focus_Publi/Consumer_Focus_Publi.aspx)

## **Ofcom's Annual plan – Panel wants to ensure consumer and citizen interest is a top priority**

The Communications Consumer Panel has fed in three issues into Ofcom's Annual Plan for 2009 that it believes are crucial for consumers and citizens in the communications sector: universal service; consumer and citizen empowerment; and super-fast broadband.

See the Panel's response on the website:  
[http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/CP\\_Annual\\_Plan\\_09\\_10.pdf](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/CP_Annual_Plan_09_10.pdf)

## **Don't forget our blog**

Don't forget to go onto the Communications Consumer Panel blog site for the latest news from the Panel, and keep up-to-date with what Panel members are saying and doing. Go to our home page and click on the blog link at  
<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/>