



e-newsletter November 2009

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www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

Latest news...

Delivering Digital Britain in Scotland

The Communications Consumer Panel, Consumer Focus Scotland and Peter Peacock MSP (member of the Scottish Parliament) recently held a seminar to discuss how the recommendations set out in Digital Britain report could be implemented in Scotland. Participants explored three questions:

- Do citizens and consumers in Scotland have specific needs and, if so, what can be done to make sure those needs are met?
- How well do current delivery plans in Scotland meet these needs and what needs to change?
- Are there specific issues surrounding the implementation of the UK Government's digital communications proposals in Scotland where policy responsibility for areas such as enterprise, rural development, public services and digital inclusion are devolved but areas such as telecommunications and fiscal policy are reserved to Westminster? How might this impact on consumers?

Watch this space for the report of the seminar's conclusions and the recommendations that emerged. Check the Consumer Panel website for further updates:

www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

Mainstreaming the consumer interest

Speaking at the Institute of Government regulation summit in London, Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that there are four things that can help to mainstream a consumer-focused approach to regulation:

- knowing what the consumer risks and opportunities are so they can be explored and if necessary addressed;
- predicting or modelling what the likely outcomes of alternative approaches will be for consumers;

- supporting a consumer-focused organisational culture; and
- establishing external sources of challenge and support.

She told the summit that a counterweight to industry is always needed because large industry players would be unlikely to give up lobbying, “and it is easy to lose sight of quieter voices in the face of significant pressure”.

Read Anna Bradley’s speech to the Institute of Government regulation summit on 9 November 2009 in full at:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/091109%20IOG%20AB%20speech%20final%20version.pdf>

Panel calls for more interactive public services online to get more disadvantaged people online

Speaking at a Westminster eForum debate on the future of broadband in the UK, Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that public services could play a central role in stimulating demand for current- and next-generation broadband. But, she added that the people who are very heavy users of public services – older people and people on low incomes – are mostly not online. “Better, more interactive public services online could give more people a reason to get online.” But, she told the eForum that this would only happen if online services are designed around the needs of consumers “rather than to achieve the biggest cost savings”.

Read Anna Bradley’s speech to the Westminster eForum at www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

TV access services – responding to Ofcom’s consultation

Responding to Ofcom’s consultation into TV access services, the Communications Consumer Panel said that it strongly supports their provision and values the contribution that they make to enabling people with disabilities to participate in society. The Panel said that it wanted to see an increase in the amount of audio description that broadcasters are required to provide, recognising that many exceed the current requirement already.

Click here to read the response:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/cms.php?page=272>

Don’t forget the Panel blog

Read about the latest on the November Panel meeting, and check out what other Panel members are saying and doing by going to our home page and clicking on the Blog link:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/news-and-media/blog>