

COMMUNICATIONS  
CONSUMER  
PANEL

# Annual Report 2008/09

JULY 2009





The Communications Consumer Panel was established under the Communications Act 2003 as an independent advisory body. Its role is to influence Ofcom, Government, the EU, and service and equipment providers so that the communications interests of consumers and citizens are protected and promoted.

The Consumer Panel is made up of part-time members with a balance of expertise in consumer issues in the communications sector. There are members representing the interests of consumers in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England.

Consumer Panel Members are appointed by Ofcom, subject to approval by the relevant Secretaries of State. They are appointed in accordance with Nolan principles and are eligible for re-appointment. The Consumer Panel is assisted by a small advisory team.



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This Report is available on the Panel's website in English and Welsh:  
<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/about-us/about-us>

We can also provide it in alternative formats on request.



## Section 1

# Foreword

At the core of all the Communications Consumer Panel's work is the drive to ensure that policy and regulation in the communications sector is designed and implemented with consumers and citizens in mind. Over the past year, this has meant advising on a wide range of issues:

1. We ensured that the Government was alive to consumers' aspirations and interests in developing its plans for Digital Britain. In particular, we focused on the need to roll out current-generation broadband throughout the UK and stressed the importance of addressing the full spectrum of people's needs in promoting digital participation.
2. We pointed out the need for consumers to receive reliable information about broadband speeds.
3. We tracked digital TV switchover to see that the needs of vulnerable people were being met.
4. We helped to shape the Government's Digital Inclusion Action Plan.
5. We highlighted the social and economic benefits of investment in next-generation broadband.
6. We then reported on the investment in next-generation broadband already taking place at local level.

The Panel also carried out a major piece of research on the role of communications services and devices in meeting people's evolving needs. This research showed that people place a high value on these services and devices, which help to meet their needs by increasing access to information, providing new ways of keeping in touch, increasing convenience and flexibility, and providing new ways of being entertained. They believe that no one should miss out on the digital age and that soon broadband will be essential for everyone.

But in a world where digital communications are becoming more and more important, people need to feel confident about their security and privacy. They also need help to deal with constant change and innovation, and with what feels like ever increasing complexity. And while they accept that they have responsibilities, they believe that Government, regulators and service providers should meet their responsibilities too. These research findings have informed our advice and helped to shape our priorities for the year ahead.

During the course of the last year, we changed our name from the Ofcom Consumer Panel to the Communications Consumer Panel. This reflects the Panel's role in advising Ofcom and other bodies across the communications sector, including Government. It also conveys more clearly the Panel's independence from Ofcom.

We have also taken steps to make the Panel's activities more visible, setting up a new website, introducing a monthly newsletter and launching a blog to enable Panel members to share ideas and information, and stimulate input from stakeholders. For the first time, we consulted stakeholders on our Work Plan, holding an event so that people could feed in their views.

The membership of the Panel has changed too, with seven new members joining last autumn. I would like to thank all the members who stepped down during the past year for their valuable contributions to the Panel's work in protecting and promoting consumer and citizen interests in the communications sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Bradley', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Anna Bradley**

**Chair, Communications Consumer Panel**



## Section 2

# Panel's role and how it works

## Introduction

The Communications Consumer Panel was established under the Communications Act 2003 as an independent advisory body, with the role of advising Ofcom, and such other persons as the Panel thinks fit, on the interests of consumers and citizens in the communications sector. The Panel defines its role more specifically as:

“To influence Ofcom, Government, the EU, and service and equipment providers so that the communications interests of consumers and citizens are protected and promoted.”

To carry out this role, the Panel needs to understand what is in the interests of consumers and citizens. In particular, the Panel has a duty to have regard to the interests of people from the different parts of the United Kingdom, people in rural and urban areas, older people, small businesses, and disadvantaged people, including people with low incomes and people with disabilities.

The Panel keeps track of what is in consumers' and citizens' interests in four main ways. First, it draws on the broad range of experience and expertise of its Members. In particular, the Panel has Members with specific responsibility for identifying and articulating the concerns of people in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively. The Panel Members are listed below and you can read their biographies in Annex 1:

- Anna Bradley, Chair
- Fiona Ballantyne
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington
- Maureen Edmondson
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

Secondly, the Panel draws on the research that it commissions itself and the research carried out by Ofcom and others. Thirdly, it applies general principles about how products and services should be supplied. For example, consumers should be able to make an informed choice about whether to buy a product or service, and they should be able to get redress if things go wrong. Fourthly, it engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including

communications providers and groups representing consumers and citizens, in order to understand how the sector is changing and the issues that are important to people.

In Section 3 we highlight the action that we have taken over the last year to protect and promote consumers' and citizens' interests. In Section 4 we discuss our priorities for the current year.

## Strategic priorities

The Panel has three strategic priorities. These are set out in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Communications Consumer Panel's strategic priorities**

1. Provide Ofcom with valued advice	By providing evidence-based advice, the Panel can help to ensure that consumers' and citizens' interests are reflected in Ofcom's policy development processes and decisions.
2. Influence UK and EU policy makers	By advising the UK Government and EU, the Panel can influence policy decisions that affect consumers and citizens in the UK communications sector.
3. Work with service and equipment providers to encourage them to address issues that are of concern to consumers	The Panel has a role in encouraging service and equipment providers to address issues that matter to their customers or potential customers.

## Types of activity

The Panel believes that in order to achieve its strategic priorities, it should carry out a range of activities. These activities can be divided into three categories:

- **Influencing policy processes** – this involves helping policy makers to improve their processes so that they identify consumers' and citizens' interests and take proper account of them. The main vehicle that the Panel has used to influence policy-making processes is the Consumer Interest Toolkit. This is a series of questions that can be used to inform both particular policy decisions and, more broadly, the culture of an organisation. The Toolkit has been adopted by Ofcom and has contributed to its increased focus on consumers' and citizens' interests. More information about the Toolkit can be found on the Panel's website.<sup>1</sup>
- **Influencing policy decisions** – this means ensuring that the decisions reached at the end of the policy-making process – by Ofcom, and UK and EU policy makers – are in the interests of consumers and citizens. This is the main focus of our work and in Section 4 we set out the policy areas that we are focusing on during the current year. The fact that the Panel's statutory remit is not coterminous with Ofcom's means that it is able to work across regulatory boundaries. This is increasingly important because the issues that matter to people are dealt with in a variety of ways, from formal regulation applied by regulators to self-regulatory codes applied by industry. The Panel is also able to advise policy makers, in the UK and EU, as they develop the regulatory frameworks within

<sup>1</sup> This is the link to the relevant page:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/consumer-interest-toolkit/publications>

which regulators and industry must then operate. It is vital that the interests of consumers and citizens are taken into account at this early stage and given due weight.

- **Calls to action** – this involves highlighting an issue publicly where that is the most efficient way to serve consumers' and citizens' interests. It could mean calling for action from service providers, equipment providers or policy makers. In the past, the Panel has highlighted the need for the interests of vulnerable consumers to be addressed during the process of switchover to Digital TV. This led to the introduction of the Digital Television Help Scheme. More recently, the Panel pointed to the unacceptable gap between the headline broadband speeds advertised to consumers and the speeds they experienced in practice. As a result of the Panel's action, Ofcom carried out research that provided concrete evidence of the problem and sponsored the development by industry of a self-regulatory code that should lead to consumers being much better informed about the broadband speeds they can expect to receive. The Panel will issue further calls to action as and when this would be of benefit of consumers and citizens.

## Guiding principles

The Panel is guided in its work by five principles. These are set out in Figure 2 and will inform the way that it carries out its work over the coming year and beyond.

**Figure 2: Communications Consumer Panel's guiding principles**

<b>Evidence-based</b>	The Panel provides advice that is based on sound evidence.
<b>Constructive</b>	The Panel provides advice that is constructive and geared towards outcomes that are achievable.
<b>Targeted</b>	The Panel operates in a targeted way, focusing on the areas where it can have the most significant impact.
<b>Collaborative</b>	The Panel works collaboratively with other groups where pooling resources and expertise is the best way of tackling an issue.
<b>Transparent</b>	The Panel operates in a transparent way, reporting on its activities, publishing the advice that it gives and involving stakeholders in defining its priorities.

## Funding

Ofcom provides funding for the Panel to carry out its activities and also provides the small Advisory Team which supports the Panel. The Advisory Team is made up of the equivalent of four full-time employees and helps the Panel to maximise its impact by, for example, enabling it to provide advice that is based on sound evidence.

The Panel's expenditure during 2008/9 totalled £712,000. This comprises three main types of expenditure – £194,000 on Panel members' fees, £152,000 on the Advisory Team's salaries and £268,000 on research and consultancy. More information about the Panel's budget and expenditure is available in Annex 2.

## Section 3

# Action and influence

## Advising across the communications sector

During the past year the Communications Consumer Panel has protected and promoted consumers and citizen interests in a variety of different ways:

- providing advice to Ofcom, both formally and informally;
- influencing the development of the Government's Digital Britain report and the Digital Inclusion Action Plan;
- working with the Broadband Stakeholders' Group to develop a combined industry and consumer perspective on next-generation broadband;
- engaging with industry to highlight issues of concern to consumers and citizens, such as the need for emergency mobile roaming; and
- commissioning research to inform the Panel's advice.

This Section outlines the Panel's main areas of activity and shows how it has engaged with the key policy debates in the communications sector. Across all its areas of activity, the Panel has sought to ensure that issues are viewed through the eyes of consumers and citizens.

## Next-generation broadband

### Communities take the lead

In the most comprehensive review to date of community broadband schemes, the Panel mapped an extensive and growing network of community-led next-generation broadband schemes across the UK. We found around 40 schemes of different sizes and at different stages of development. They show a range of funding and business models, and various technical delivery options. The Panel believes that this regional and local activity should contribute significantly to the national debate on the timing and form of the rollout of next-generation broadband in the UK.

### Placing a value on next-generation broadband

The Panel led the debate about the value of next-generation broadband. We believe that speeds of up to 100m/bits will deliver new services and products across the UK that will bring huge benefits to consumers and citizens. Some of the benefits will be economic, but many others will be social.

We co-hosted a major conference with the Broadband Stakeholder Group to launch a discussion about how the benefits of next generation access can be assessed. Our joint, and co-funded report, *A framework for evaluating the value of next generation broadband*, made clear that benefits will become greater as more of us access next-generation broadband,

and that some of these benefits will not be achieved until the remotest areas of the UK are included.<sup>2</sup>

### **Developing the regulatory framework**

The Panel supported Ofcom's decision about how best to promote the development of next-generation broadband in the UK. The Panel believes that the regulatory framework strikes the right balance between encouraging investment now, so that consumers and citizens can benefit from new services and applications, and holding the door open for competition to develop in the future. We believe that Ofcom's approach gave industry the certainty needed to invest in next-generation broadband, and this has been borne out by the rollout plans announced by Virgin Media and BT, as well as plans announced by smaller operators such as H2O.

However, next-generation broadband has to be available to as many people in the UK as possible and the market will not deliver universal availability. So we welcome the focus given to next-generation broadband in the Government's Digital Britain report and will be scrutinising the Government's plans to subsidise additional rollout. The Panel will be keen to see plans that are designed around the needs of consumers and citizens.

### **Broadband speeds**

#### **Better information, better choice**

The introduction by industry of a voluntary Code of Practice addresses the concerns that the Panel raised with Ofcom last year about the mismatch between the broadband speeds that consumers think they will get, and what they actually get in practice. The code ensures that internet service providers (ISPs) give people better information about broadband speeds to help them to make informed choices. But ISPs will now need to honour their commitments, and if they do not, it may be necessary to call for a mandatory code.

### **Mobile**

#### **Taking a broader of view of consumers and citizen concerns**

The Panel has held meetings over the last year with all of the mobile operators. Through such dialogue we are encouraging the mobile operators to take a wider view of the issues that matter to consumers and citizens, focusing not just on the issues that people phone up to complain about. We are pleased that the mobile operators are now committed to introducing emergency roaming so that people can call '999' using another network if their own is not available. This is not something that people would complain about unless they knew that it was technically feasible. We would now like to see more focus on the issue of improving mobile coverage in general.

#### **A consumer perspective on mobile termination rates**

Mobile termination rates are charges made by mobile operators for connecting calls to customers on their networks. As they are wholesale rather than retail charges they do not affect consumers directly, but they are reflected in retail prices. Ofcom and the European Commission are both looking at the moment at what is the appropriate level of mobile termination rates. To cast some light on what can seem like an arcane and technical issue,

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<sup>2</sup> Here is the link to the report:

[http://www.broadbanduk.org/component/option,com\\_docman/task,doc\\_view/gid,1009/Itemid,63/](http://www.broadbanduk.org/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_view/gid,1009/Itemid,63/)

the Panel commissioned a report on the topic from Antelope Consulting. We published this on our website and will continue to engage with the issue over the coming months.<sup>3</sup>

## Digital Britain

### Broadband is essential for all

The Communications Consumer Panel supports the Government's action to bring the benefits of the digital age to consumers and citizens across the UK. Our key concern is the need to ensure that all consumers have a broadband connection that allows them to use the online services, including public services, which are necessary to participate fully in society.

We said in our initial submission to Digital Britain that consumers and citizens must be at the heart of the Government's digital plans and their needs must drive policy-making. This was based on the Panel's research report *No one should miss out: consumers say what they want from the digital future*.<sup>4</sup> We then carried out further research to test how widespread is the belief that broadband is an essential service, and to understand better the services and activities that people are using it for. We presented the findings to the Digital Britain Steering Group, and wrote to Lord Carter.

Among a number of proposals that we made, we asked Government to make clear to citizens and consumers which services they will and will not have access to with a broadband speed of 2Mb/s. You can read the Panel's response to the Digital Britain interim report and its subsequent letter to Lord Carter on the website.<sup>5</sup>

### Addressing the full spectrum of people's needs

The Panel supports the Government's intention to deliver a step-change in digital participation in the UK, which our research shows is an objective with clear public support. We contributed to the Digital Britain Media Literacy Working Group, tasked with developing an Action Plan to deliver this step-change. The Working Group produced some valuable proposals, in particular the idea of a consortium to lead a social marketing programme highlighting the benefits of digital participation.

In responding to the Government's interim Digital Britain we highlighted the need to take account of the full range of consumers' and citizens' needs as highlighted in Figure 3.

### The Digital Inclusion Action Plan

The development of the Digital Inclusion Action Plan signals the Government's recognition that there is a growing digital divide between on the one hand, people on low incomes, older people and people with disabilities, and on the other hand, the rest of the population, who tend to be more technology-savvy. We welcome the move to appoint Martha Lane-Fox as Digital Inclusion Champion to drive the changes needed to close the digital exclusion gap. We are pleased too that Panel Chair Anna Bradley has been appointed to the Digital Inclusion Taskforce that will provide advice to the Champion.

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<sup>3</sup> Here is the link to the report:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/MTR%20implications%20for%20consumers.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Here is the link to the report:

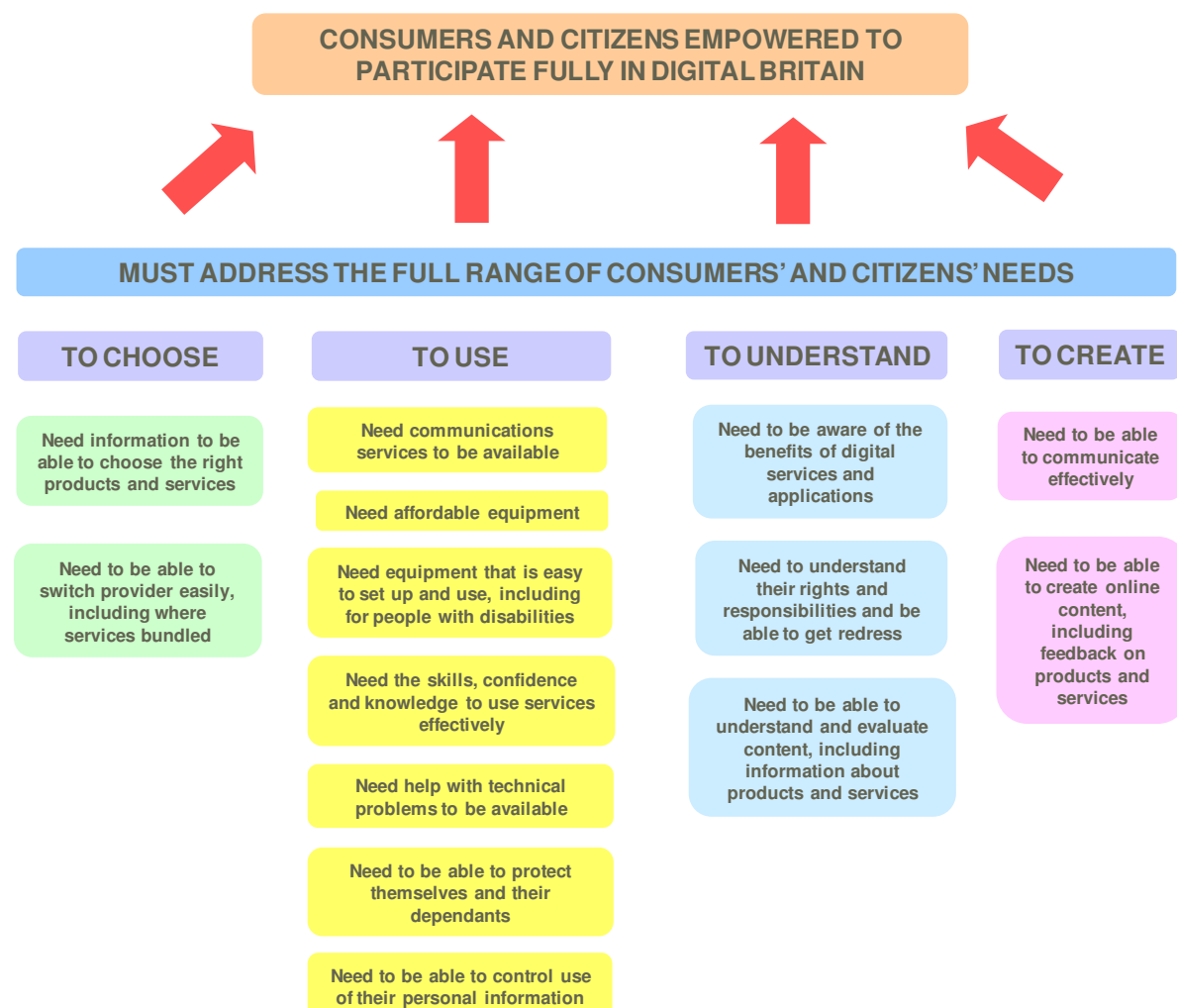
[http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/No%20one%20should%20miss%20out\\_digital%20future%20research%20report.pdf](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/No%20one%20should%20miss%20out_digital%20future%20research%20report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Here is the relevant web page: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/digital-inclusion/digital-inclusion>



The Digital Inclusion Champion will play a central role in promoting a joined-up, strategic approach to enhancing consumer and citizen participation in the digital age, working across Government and industry. It will be important to challenge Government and industry not only to help people to get online, but to deliver more attractive content – particularly better online public services that could encourage people to try out the internet.

**Figure 3: Digital participation framework**



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## Section 4

# Priorities for 2009/10

## Different types of activity and engagement

There are many issues in the communications sector that matter to consumers and citizens and which the Panel could potentially address. But given the limited resources at our disposal, we need to be clear about our priorities.

Figure 4 shows the different issues that the Panel will be addressing during the current financial year, 2009/10. These are broken down into the three types of activities mentioned in Section 2: influencing policy process; influencing policy decisions; and calls to action. We also show the type of engagement that will be involved in addressing each issue. Our *Work Plan 2009/10* explains how we determined our priorities and provides more detail about the issues that we will be addressing and what we are seeking to achieve. It is available on our website.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 4: Issues to be addressed and nature of engagement**

	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (July-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-March)
Influencing policy processes		Extending Toolkit to cover citizens		
		Ofcom’s engagement with consumer groups		
Influencing policy decisions	Universal service (significant proactive engagement)			
	Consumer and citizen empowerment (significant proactive engagement)			
			Trust and security (significant proactive engagement)	
	Mobile (limited proactive engagement)			
	Digital Inclusion Action Plan (limited proactive engagement)			
	Consumer protection (monitoring with engagement as appropriate)			
	Next-generation broadband (monitoring with engagement as appropriate)			
	Watching briefs: digital switchover, broadband speeds			
Calls to action	As and when necessary			

## Influencing policy processes

This type of activity involves helping policy makers to improve their processes so that they identify consumers' and citizens' interests and take proper account of them. The main vehicle that the Panel has used to influence policy-making processes is the Consumer Interest Toolkit. In the coming year, the Panel will be working with Ofcom to enable it to engage better with groups that represent consumers and citizens. The Panel will also be

<sup>6</sup> Here is the link to the Panel's *Work Plan 2009/10*:

[http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/downloads/Work%20plan%202009\\_10.pdf](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/downloads/Work%20plan%202009_10.pdf)

developing the Consumer Interest Toolkit so that it explicitly covers the interests of citizens as well as consumers.

### Influencing policy decisions

Influencing policy decisions will form the bulk of the Panel's work. The Panel will be focusing on a number of issues, although it is important to note that the nature of the Panel's engagement will vary from issue to issue, ranging from significant and proactive, to simply holding a watching brief.

#### Significant proactive engagement

- **Universal service** – influencing decisions about the services that should be available to everyone now and in the future so that they reflect the views of consumers and citizens. This will include engagement at EU-level in relation to the Commission's planned review of universal service.
- **Consumer and citizen empowerment** – influencing policy interventions so that they reflect, and are designed to meet, the full spectrum of consumers' and citizens' needs.
- **Trust and security** – highlighting concerns about security and misuse of personal data, and the potential for people to be deterred from going online or getting the most out of being online. This is another issue with which the Panel will need to engage at EU-level as the regulatory framework governing data protection and privacy is determined in large part in Europe.

#### Limited proactive engagement

- **Mobile** – advising on mobile issues that matter to consumers and citizens, such as the absence of reliable coverage in significant parts of the UK. In relation to this area of work, we will be working closely with Consumer Focus so that we complement their work in the mobile sector and together address the issues that matter most to consumers and citizens.
- **Digital Inclusion Action Plan** – influencing the development and implementation of the Government's Digital Inclusion Action Plan so that it focuses on the groups of consumers and citizens who most need help in getting online.

#### Monitoring with engagement as appropriate

- **Consumer protection** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, Ofcom's policy and enforcement activities so that consumers and citizens are protected from harmful conduct.
- **Next-generation broadband** – monitoring, and influencing where appropriate, public policy and regulatory decisions about the rollout of next-generation broadband so that the interests of consumers and citizens are identified clearly and properly taken into account.

#### Watching brief

- **Digital switchover** – continuing to track developments as digital switchover progresses and highlighting any concerns that arise.

- **Broadband speeds** – observing how the voluntary code on fixed broadband speeds is implemented and raising any concerns about whether consumers are receiving appropriate information from providers.

As mentioned in Section 2, in addressing these policy areas the Panel will need to fulfil its duty to have regard to the interests of particular groups of people. The interests of these groups are likely to be relevant across the full range of the Panel's work, but the Panel's *Work Plan 2009/10* highlights the areas in relation to which these interests are particularly relevant.

### **Calls to action**

The Panel may decide to highlight issues publicly where this is the most efficient way to serve consumers' and citizens' interests. This could mean calling for action from service providers, equipment providers or policy makers. As mentioned in Section 2, in the past the Panel has successfully highlighted issued calls to action in relation to digital television switchover and broadband speeds. During the coming year, the Panel will issue further calls to action as and when this would be to the benefit of consumers and citizens.

## Annex 1

# Panel Members

**Anna Bradley** (Chair) is Non-Executive Chairman of the Soil Association's Organic Standards Board, a member of the board of Addaction, Britain's largest drug and alcohol treatment agency, and a member of the General Optical Council. She was Consumer Affairs Director of the Financial Services Authority (2002-5) having been Chief Executive of the National Consumer Council (1999-2002).

**Fiona Ballantyne** is a founding member of the Consumer Panel. She is an experienced Director in the field of Marketing and Business Development and specialised in small business development for 11 years with the Scottish Development Agency. She is managing director of Ballantyne Mackay Consultants, Chair of Museums Galleries Scotland and a trustee of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

**Louisa Bolch** is a Council member at the Advertising Standards Authority and former Editor, Science at Channel 4. She joined the Clore Leadership programme as a prelude to moving into strategy and policy in science communication and the arts. She is a Council and Strategy Sub-committee member of Arts Council London.

**Kim Brook** was for seven years, up to December 2008, the Chair of the Community Foundation in Wales which is an independent charity dedicated to raising and distributing funds to community projects across Wales. From this work he has gained considerable experience of the realities of life in the most deprived areas in Wales and has developed a Wales-wide network of contacts in community organisations. After an Army career he worked for IBM and then Misys in sales, industry marketing and business development positions related to IT, telecoms and insurance.

**Colin Browne** is a Partner of the Maitland Consultancy - one of the UK's leading financial and corporate communications consultancies. He had a career in the Post Office/BT from 1969 to 1994, ending as Director, Corporate Relations responsible for BT's external and internal corporate communications. He was Director Corporate Affairs, a member of the Board of Management and of the Executive Committee at the BBC from 1994-2000.

**Roger Darlington** is a founding member of the Consumer Panel. He was a member of Postwatch and is now a member of the Board of Consumer Focus (aka the 'New' National

Consumer Council). He is a part time consultant to the communications union Connect. He was previously the independent Chair of the Internet Watch Foundation for six years.

**Maureen Edmondson** chairs the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee and is the NI Board member at the Food Standards Agency. She was chair of Postwatch NI Regional Committee and on the Postwatch Council. A scientist by training, she had a career with Mars Inc initially in research but progressing to become Director of International Scientific Affairs from 1992 to 2000. She served on the Council of Ulster University from 2000 until 2004 and on the Board of the Northern Ireland Office from 2002 until 2006.

**Leen Petré** is Principal Manager: Media and Culture at the RNIB and has recently completed a secondment at Help the Aged. She is Chairman of the Consumer Expert Group (CEG) on digital switchover, appointed by the Culture Secretary. She has expertise on consumers with visual impairments, is able to lead and take a view on disability and older people and has worked on European and international consumer policy issues. Leen is also a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce and a lay consumer member of the Food Standards Agency General Advisory Committee on Science.

**Damian Tambini** is a senior lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Director of its Masters Degree in Communications Regulation and Policy. Previously he was head of the Programme in Media Law and Policy at Oxford University. He has published extensively on communications regulation and given papers at numerous conferences and gatherings, in the UK and abroad. He has considerable research, consultancy and policy development experience.

**Bob Warner** completed his five year term as chief executive of Remploy - the company that assists disabled people into employment – in October 2008. He worked for BT and O2 from 1991 to 2002, where he led Cellnet (now O2 UK) and BT's Payphone business and was Finance Director for BT in the UK.



## Annex 2

## Budget and expenditure for 2008-09

Under Section 16(1) of the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to maintain effective arrangements for consultation about the carrying on of their functions with consumers. The arrangements must include the maintenance of a panel of persons - referred to in the Act as "the Consumer Panel". Ofcom agrees a budget for members' remuneration, expenses and any work we commission. Neither Ofcom nor Ofcom's Accountable Officer approves the expenditure met within that overall provision. Our budget for the 12 months ending 31 March 2009 was £781k - see the table below. Non-audited expenditure for this period was £712.3k. In the table we have included the cost of the team of Ofcom colleagues that support the Panel.

	<b>Budget</b> April 08-March 09 (12 months) £000	<b>Actual</b> April 08-March 09 (12 months) £000
<b>Panel members' fees, expenses and support</b>		
- Fees(1)	263.7	194.3
- Expenses(2)	26.2	34.6
- Ofcom colleagues(3)	216.6	151.8
<b>Professional fees</b>		
- Research and consultants(4)	240.0	267.9
<b>Sundries(5)</b>	34.5	63.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>781.0</b>	<b>712.3</b>

Notes:

1. Panel members were paid flat fees.
- The Chair, Anna Bradley, whose commitment is 6 days a month, received £30,900.
  - The Deputy Chair, Ruth Evans, whose commitment was 2 days a week until July 2008 and 4 days a month from August 2008 until January 2009, when her appointment came to an end, received £17,862. The Panel no longer has a Deputy Chair.
  - The appointments of five members came to an end in July 2008, one in October 2008 and one in February 2009. Their time commitment was 4 days a month and they received an amount based on an annual fee of £13,046.

- New appointments were made to the Panel in October 2008: five members with a time commitment of up to 4 days a month and an annual fee of £13,046; one with a time commitment of up to 3 days a month and an annual fee of £9785; and three with a time commitment of up to 2 days a month and an annual fee of £6523.
  - The figure for fees includes employer's National Insurance. There was an under-spend due to changes in Panel membership, a short delay in making new appointments and a reduction in the Deputy Chair's time commitment.
2. Expenses cover travel and subsistence for Panel members and the Advisory Team. All monthly Panel meetings were held at Ofcom's office in London. This required overnight stays and travel for some members. There was an element of expenses as a result of speaking engagements in Europe. Actual spend on expenses (£34.6k) exceeded planned spend (£26.2k) but was on a par with spend in 2007-08 (£38.6k), taking account of changes in Panel membership.
  3. The Panel is supported by an Advisory Team, which is made up of the equivalent of four full-time Ofcom colleagues. The Advisory Team was reorganised during the year and there was an under-spend because the team was below full complement for part of the year. Figures include salaries, employer's National Insurance and pension contributions.
  4. This included expenditure on: work to re-design and re-launch the Panel's website; studies by consultants; recruitment consultants; research on the economic and social value of next generation broadband and a two-stage project on the future of broadband.
  5. Sundries included items such as couriers and stationery, publications and co-sponsorship of a conference on next generation broadband with the Broadband Stakeholders' Group and the costs of advertising to recruit new Panel members.



