

MEMO

To: [REDACTED]
cc: David Edwards, [REDACTED], Consumer Panel
From: [REDACTED]
Date: 15 February 2005
Ref / Subject: Ofcom's duty to encourage availability of easily usable apparatus and services

[REDACTED],

1. The Consumer Panel has reviewed the proposal contained in the draft Board paper (dated 19 January).
2. Whilst Panel members generally viewed the proposals as sensible, they did have some concerns about *Step 3 – Likely to be adopted quickly?* In particular, there was a worry that key longer term developments would be excluded when judged against the criteria specifying availability within three years. Examples of projects that might be excluded by the three year cut-off were talking EPGs and the transfer of the relay service to IP. This latter is important as it would enable the relay service scope to be extended.
3. Members were keen that Ofcom took a much more proactive stance in identifying and pursuing key longer term developments; monitoring in such critical areas was thought to be inadequate.
4. Finally, the Panel suggested that as part of the proposed consultation process they would like to use their occasional round-table consumer stakeholder meetings, the Consumer Forum, to identify needs in this area. This Forum is an informal, quarterly meeting with a range of consumer groups where current 'hot topics' relating to consumer issues in communications are discussed.

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