

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 2 April 2025

Members were welcomed to the 323rd meeting of the Ofcom Board. In addition to Board members, Martin Ballantyne (General Counsel), Veronica Branton (Corporation Secretary) and Sharon Malley (Governance Manager) attended throughout.

Declaration of members' interests

1. No new interests were declared.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2025

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 5 February 2025 were approved as a correct record and progress against actions was noted.

Chair's report

3. The Chair updated the Board on his activity, including progress with the appointment of a new Chair of Channel 4.
4. The Board noted the report.

Chief Executive's report

5. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activity, including conversations with the Government on economic growth, work on the forthcoming Cyber Security and Resilience Bill and updates on online safety and the Telecoms Access Review. The Board noted that technology was a thread running through much of Ofcom's work and that competencies for economic regulation applied across several sectors.
6. The Board noted the paper.

2025/26 Ofcom organisational priorities and objectives

7. The Board discussed a paper on the proposed objectives and priorities for Ofcom in 2025/26. The objectives fell into three pillars through the delivery of the Plan of Work, investing in Ofcom for the future and creating a fantastic place to work together. The Board discussed the pillars and noted that key measurables for assessing delivery would be approved at the April meeting of the People Committee.
8. The Board approved the paper including the organisational priorities for the financial year 2025/26.

Economic growth and regulation

9. The Board discussed a paper on economic growth and regulation, including Ofcom's five commitments to the Government on growth and ongoing work to engage with Government on other areas of interest including regulatory performance. The Board noted that Ofcom's engagement with Government and Parliament was increasing through more Select Committee appearances and MP correspondence.
10. The Board noted the paper.

Online safety – plan for 2025/26

11. The Board discussed a paper on the Online Safety programme for 2025/26, noting that risk assessments for Illegal Harms were being received this week and that Ofcom was now moving into the operational stage of the regime. The Board noted an overview of the upcoming consultation on additional measures.
12. The Board discussed the Online Safety programme and noted relevant risks. The Board noted that Ofcom would be consulting in June on a small number of amendments to the Illegal Harms and Protection of Children codes.
13. The Board noted the need for oversight of compliance by service providers and the need to demonstrate progress across all Ofcom's regulatory objectives. The Board discussed wellbeing of Ofcom colleagues, resources and prioritisation and the need to measure the success of the regime. The Board noted the processes in place to decide on priorities for enforcement.
14. The Board approved the Online Safety plan for 2025/26.

Content Board update: Review of Editorial Standards work and Work Programme 2025/26

15. The Board discussed a paper on the work of the Content Board. The Board noted that UK viewing habits were changing fundamentally and rapidly, with material shifts from watching channels to watching content. The UK production sector was struggling in the face of commissioning strength of streamers.
16. The Board discussed the paper and noted the challenges of maintaining standards in the provision of distinctive British content and impartial news in the evolving media environment. The need to ensure consistent and effective governance of standards issues, and for the Content Board to reflect the new media environment, was considered.
17. The Board noted that governance structures and the way Ofcom worked would be a productive topic for discussion at the Board Strategy Day.
18. The Board approved the Content Board's work programme for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Annual litigation review

19. The Board discussed a paper on litigation over the previous year. The Board noted Ofcom's options for recovering costs following successful litigation and the difficulties relating to entities based outside the UK. The Board discussed recent cases and their implications for Ofcom.

20. The Board noted the paper.

Advisory Committee on Disinformation and Misinformation

21. The Board discussed a paper on proposals for establishing a new advisory committee as required by the Online Safety Act. The Board discussed the proposed terms of reference and noted that the proposal to name the Committee as the Online Information Advisory Committee more accurately reflected the proposed work of the Committee.

22. The Board approved the appointment of candidates, the terms of reference and the name of the Committee as set out in the paper and the consequential changes to the Corporate Governance Framework.

Advisory Committee for England

23. The Board approved appointments to the Advisory Committee for England.

DRCF workplan 2025/26

24. The Board noted the DRCF workplan 2025/26..

Standing items

25. The Board noted the following standing items:

- Non-executive member updates
- Quarterly performance report
- Board work programme and publications schedule
- Minutes of the Communications Consumer Panel of 12-13 February 2025 and the Risk and Audit Committee of 26 February 2025.

Items in the Reading Room

26. The Board noted the Communications Consumer Panel/Advisory Committee for Older and Disabled People update.

Any other business

27. There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting

28. The next Board meeting would be held on 14 May 2025.