

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 14 May 2025

Members were welcomed to the 324th 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 2 April 2025

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 2 April 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 meetings with the Chair of the BBC and with officials at DSIT and DCMS.
4. The Board noted the report.

Chief Executive's report

5. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activity and said Ofcom was in the process of presenting to six Parliamentary committees over the course of six weeks, including the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, the Standards Committee and the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee as well as the Scottish Parliament Culture Committee and the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.
6. The Board discussed developments in online safety, Ofcom's work to improve its mobile coverage checker and the upgrade of the spectrum licensing platform. The new rules on Global Titles, closing a loophole to minimise abuse by rogue operators, were also welcomed.
7. The Board discussed updates on the regulation of data centres, the appointment of a new Chair for Channel 4 and the Board noted the departure of Yih-Choung Teh as Group Director for Strategy and Research after 20 years at Ofcom.
8. The Board noted the paper.

People Committee update

9. Ben Verwaayen updated the Board on the meetings of the People Committee held on 17 March 2025 and 29 April 2025. The Board noted the update.

Media Act programme update

10. The Board discussed a paper on work to implement the Media Act. The Board noted that the scope of the act was wide and work was on track, with some new duties in areas Ofcom had not previously covered such as prominence on smart TVs.
11. The Board discussed Ofcom's new duties and noted that Ofcom would publish guidance on how platforms and PSBs could meet their duties under the legislation to act consistently with objectives including not adversely affecting delivery of public service remits and not disproportionately restricting platform innovation.
12. The Board discussed the legislative requirement for local analogue commercial radio stations to provide 'locally gathered' news. Ofcom would be producing guidance in due course on this provision.
13. The Board discussed the prominence requirements and how to ensure they were most effectively implemented. The Board also discussed listed events.
14. The Board noted the paper.

Public Service Media Review

15. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's Public Service Media Review (PSMR). The paper set out some of the challenges being faced by UK PSBs. Much of the policy and funding in this area would be set by Government but Ofcom would need to set out the options and their implications.
16. The Board discussed the paper and noted the need for Ofcom to be clear on its overall aims for the sector. Ofcom's starting point was to ensure that audiences continued to have access to culturally relevant content, including reliable news, in ways and places they wished to consume it. The Board noted the business model challenges being faced by the commercial PSBs and the threat to their long term viability, as well as the challenges faced by the BBC. PSBs may need to focus on creativity and innovation as regulation alone would not be sufficient.
17. The Board discussed news and noted that Ofcom had gathered significant evidence of how viewers consumed news. PSBs needed to be in touch with their audiences to find ways of connecting with them, adapting their output on different platforms and for different audiences.
18. Ofcom had evidence that prominence of news on social media did drive engagement but the quality of the content being accessed may not always be reliable. PSBs may need to work harder to engage people who had begun to get news from unreliable sources.
19. The Board approved the policy positions set out in the paper.

Full-year review 2024/25

20. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's work over 2024/25, setting out how Ofcom had delivered its Plan of Work alongside a review of external factors that had affected the programme, including the earlier than anticipated UK general election.
21. The Board noted that the Plan of Work for 2024/25 had been delivered and that clear explanations had been provided where there had been delays.

22. The Board noted the paper.

People Committee terms of reference

23. The Board approved the updated terms of reference for the Ofcom People Committee.

National Advisory Committee for Scotland

24. The Board approved the appointment of a member to the National Advisory Committee for Scotland.

Ofcom/ASA deed for the regulation of broadcast advertising – update

25. The Board noted the paper.

Standing items

26. The Board noted the following standing items:

- Non-executive member updates
- Quarterly performance report
- Board work programme and publications schedule
- Minutes of the Advisory Committee for Scotland of 25 February 2025, Advisory Committee for England of 27 February 2025, Advisory Committee for Wales of 6 March 2025, Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland of 13 March 2025, Communications Consumer Panel of 13 March 2025 and Content Board of 18 March 2025.

Any other business

27. The Board noted that the Online Information Advisory Committee would shortly hold its inaugural meeting.

Date of the next meeting

28. The next Board meeting would be held on 18 June 2025.