

Ofcom Spectrum Advisory Group: terms of reference (effective 10 March 2026)

Role and responsibilities

Section 3 of the Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to secure optimal use of the radio spectrum taking account of the different needs and interests of all users.

The Ofcom Spectrum Advisory Group (OSAG) was established by Ofcom on 19 May 2004 and is a continuation of a group originally established by the Government in the 1990's to advise on wireless and which transferred to Ofcom with the Radiocommunications Agency. The role of OSAG is to provide independent, strategic advice to Ofcom on matters that directly or indirectly have a bearing on policy issues to do with future communications architectures, access methods, physical layer technologies, spectrum, services and applications. This provision of independent strategic advice will help Ofcom to carry out its remit.

In formulating its advice, OSAG is to consider the future communications landscape from technological, economic and societal perspectives, consonant with Ofcom's statutory duty to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters.

1.1 In particular, OSAG is to advise on:

- a) Ofcom's spectrum strategy, major UK national allocation decisions, spectrum management, and the application of spectrum pricing/trading;
- b) issues that are currently "beyond Ofcom's headlights" to which Ofcom should start to give attention;
- c) new communication technologies;
- d) new means of managing the radio spectrum and their implications for Ofcom; and
- e) whether Ofcom's current and developing policy stance is appropriate and where new policy might be needed.

1.2 The OSAG may also be asked to advise on:

- a) the extent to which future wireless and fixed communications infrastructure and services may be complementary or compete with one another;
- b) new and novel technologies;
- c) emerging uses of spectrum in various sectors, for example, transport,

- healthcare and scientific research;
 - d) ways to measure and assess the effectiveness of spectrum management policies;
 - e) the development of market-led initiatives;
 - f) the balance between licensed and license-exempt spectrum;
 - g) the stimulation of innovation through spectrum policy;
 - h) trends in international relations; and
 - i) ways that spectrum policy could be used to further the interests of the citizen and the consumer.
- 1.3 With the support of Ofcom staff, reporting shall include an Annual Report, publication of key findings on the Ofcom or OSAG website and hosting occasional Open Forums.

Membership

- 1.4 Independent Members of OSAG should be drawn from a mix of commercial, academic and consulting backgrounds, in order to assess topics in a multidisciplinary manner, and to advise Ofcom on matters of strategic significance in such areas as the future communications architectures, access methods, physical layer technologies, spectrum, services and applications. Independent Members shall serve a maximum of two four-year terms, with the option for an additional two-year extension.
- 1.5 Membership of OSAG will include ex-officio members from His Majesty's Government, the Group Director, Spectrum and other relevant experts who work for Ofcom; such ex-officio members will participate fully in discussions but reserve the right to abstain from agreement on substantive matters. Members will not receive remuneration other than reimbursement of expenses.
- 1.6 Independent Members, including the Chair, shall be recruited by Ofcom's Spectrum Group and appointed by Ofcom's Policy and Management Board, following the advice of the Group Director, Spectrum.
- 1.7 Ex-officio members shall be appointed by the Group Director, Spectrum.
- 1.8 OSAG shall have a quorum of six members, one of whom must be the Group Director, Spectrum Group or his designated Alternate and excluding ex-Officio Members. Member attendance through a telephone or video link is acceptable for the purpose of determining a quorum.

Conduct of meetings

- 1.9 OSAG shall meet three times a year. Ad-hoc meetings of OSAG can be arranged if necessary, with the agreement of the Chair.

- 1.10 Where the Chair of OSAG considers it appropriate, matters may be considered in between meetings by email.
- 1.11 Papers shall be circulated at least three working days before each OSAG meeting. Extensions to this will be on an exceptional basis and must be agreed by the Chair.
- 1.12 To avoid any conflict of interest, members of OSAG will not have access to confidential information pertaining to Ofcom decisions affecting specific companies. This does not, however, preclude discussion by members of potential Ofcom policies.
- 1.13 Persons other than Members are permitted to attend meetings for particular items if the Chair of OSAG agrees.
- 1.14 OSAG meetings will be supported by a Meeting Secretary and minutes will be prepared after each meeting.
- 1.15 These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed periodically, as and when required. Any amendments shall be approved by the Ofcom Chief Executive, usually via the Ofcom Policy Management Board (PMB).