Ofcom's proposed Plan of Work 2025/26
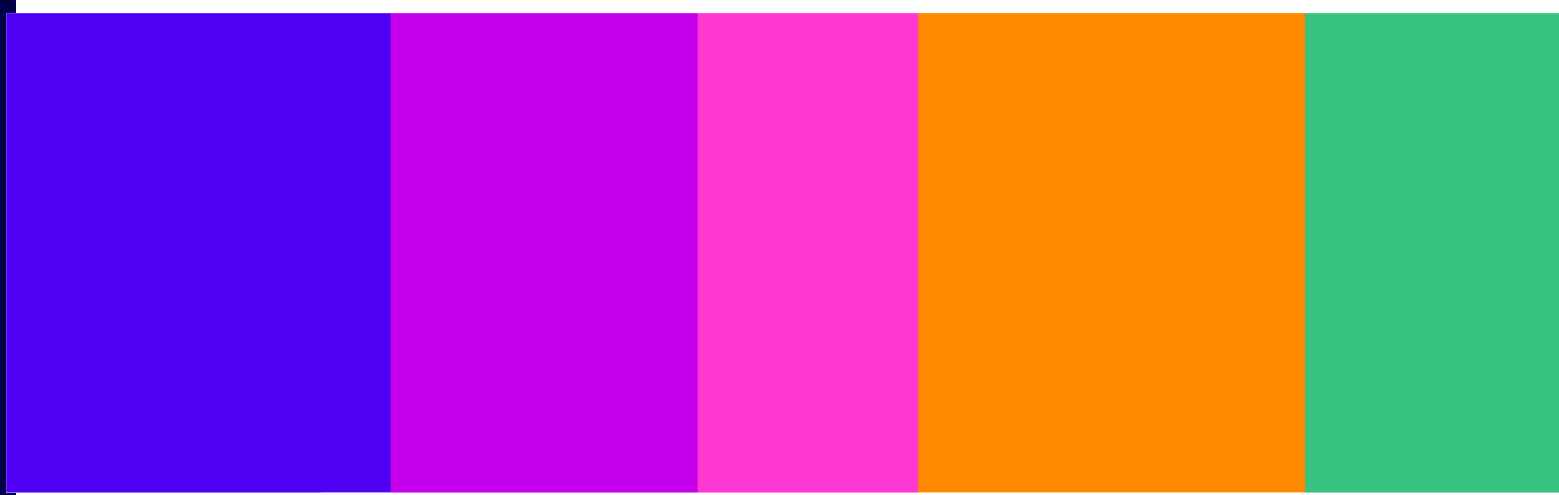
Making communications work for everyone

Welsh version available

Consultation

Published 04 December 2024
Closing date for responses: 29 January 2025

Contents

Section

1. Overview

1.1   As the UK's converged communications regulator, Ofcom works with industries that have technology at their heart. These are sectors that have driven significant innovation and economic growth over many decades. Our approach to regulation has sought to foster and support growth and disruption, believing that competition for ideas as well as markets is the right way to achieve sustainable outcomes for citizens, consumers and the economy.

1.2   We have a role to play in the evolution of both networks and services, from making spectrum available for satellite and mobile broadband, to helping people live safer lives in an online world with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-generated content.

1.3   This Plan sets out the work we will do in 2025/26 towards our mission to make communications work for everyone, and how we will deliver.

Our sectors

1.4   Secure and reliable networks are central to all aspects of our digital lives and a key driver of economic growth. Our most recent Connected Nations report showed that gigabit-capable broadband is now available to up to 24.0 million homes (80% of all UK homes). We will continue to support investment in networks through our Telecoms Access Review which will provide regulatory certainty for the five years from April 2026, as part of the 10-year strategy we set out in 2021.

1.5   In a changing media landscape, we want audiences to continue to find and access trusted and valued content. This year, for the first time, more adults consumed news online than on TV, and more than half of us now get our news through social media. In 2024, the Media Act – the first major update to UK legislation in this area in over 20 years – took forward a number of important recommendations of our 2021 'Small Screen: Big Debate' review of Public Service Media (PSM), including proposals regarding PSM prominence. We are now implementing the Media Act, updating our rules alongside considering whether further reform is needed through our next PSM review, with our findings to be published in the summer of 2025.

1.6   This year has also been Ofcom's first full year as the UK's online safety regulator, with new rules coming into force from December 2024. Later this month we will publish the final rules on illegal harms and will be turning the spotlight on services: their duties will start to kick in from the new year, and we will expect them to act swiftly to deliver changes for users. By the spring we will have finalised the measures to protect children and published our final Protection of Children Codes of Practice, as well as finalised our guidance for providers of pornographic content. Once the Codes are approved by Parliament, and have come into force, we will be able to enforce where companies do not take the necessary action.

1.7   Growth and innovation in the way the UK's airwaves are used by an increasing range of industries, including a growing space and satellite sector, has implications for our spectrum work. For example, there are now over 10,000 active satellites in orbit, compared to around 2,000 in 2018. Our focus is on identifying and making available spectrum to support the

needs of our sectors and to foster both new and existing services. In particular, our spectrum auction in 2025/26 will award the mmWave spectrum licences in high density areas.

The year ahead

1.8   We are developing this Plan in the context of a new UK Government, which we are engaging with to understand its priorities as it sets out its Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP) for telecoms, spectrum and post. The Government has already published its draft SSP for Online Safety for consultation.

1.9   Our Plan of Work is centred on our four priorities, **'Internet and post we can rely on'**, **'Media we trust and value'**, **'We live a safer life online'** and **'Enabling wireless in the UK economy'**.

Internet and post we can rely on

- Availability of high-quality networks and services where they are needed
- Reliable and secure networks and services that people can depend on
- Efficient and sustainable markets where competition delivers choice, value and high-quality services
- Consumers treated fairly at every stage of the customer journey, regardless of their circumstances
- A sustainable, affordable postal service available across the UK that meets evolving customer needs.

Media we trust and value

- Audiences can find and access a wide range of content, including PSM content which is produced across the UK and reflects its diversity
- Audiences can find and access a plurality of news that is duly accurate, duly impartial and trusted
- Media providers compete fairly and openly for audiences
- Audiences are protected from harm, and freedom of expression is safeguarded

We live a safer life online

- Set up the online safety regime for success, with the right people, systems, processes and relationships in place
- Stronger safety governance in online services based on clear understanding of risks
- Online services designed and operated with safety in mind
- Increased choice for users so they can have meaningful control over their online experiences
- Enhanced trust in the online world through more transparency in how platforms keep users safe – and what Ofcom is doing to push forward changes

Enabling wireless in the UK economy

- Assure stakeholder access to spectrum and mitigate harmful interference through licensing, planning, monitoring and compliance activities that enable wireless services
- Identify and make available spectrum to meet evolving needs of sectors, including mobile broadband and space services
- Evolve our spectrum management frameworks to support increased efficiency of use, enhance speed and flexibility of access and improve spectrum availability
- Lead and influence international discussions on spectrum access while effectively representing UK interests

Our work supporting delivery of **Internet and Post we can rely on** in 2025/26 includes:

- The Telecoms Access Review and Wholesale Voice Markets Review
- Telecoms and Digital Infrastructure security
- Postal Universal Obligation (USO) Review

Our work supporting delivery of **Media we trust and value** in 2025/26 includes:

- Media Act Implementation
- PSM review
- BBC periodic review
- Protecting audiences from harm

Our work supporting delivery of **We live a safer life online** in 2025/26 includes:

- Establishing effective regulation of the online safety regime
- Tackling illegal harms and protecting children online
- Working with partners

Our work supporting delivery of **Enabling wireless in the UK economy** in 2025/26 includes:

- International engagement on spectrum management
- Supporting innovation through timely spectrum availability and greater sharing
- Sustained efficiencies through advanced spectrum management capabilities

Our supporting work

1.10   In order to deliver on our priorities in the year ahead we will continue to invest and build our skills and capabilities across the organisation. Our research programme provides us with a robust evidence base to help inform our policy decisions, while our horizon-scanning programme helps us to understand key developments and future trends. We will also adopt more agile internal processes, making better use of new technologies and data across our work.

1.11   Externally, our collaboration with regulators is vital both through our growing international relationships and our work with other regulators domestically in fora such as the Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum (DRCF). We will also continue to draw on a broad range of established partnerships with academia, industry, charities and other experts.

2. Our priorities for 2025/26

2.1   As the UK communications regulator, our mission is to make communications work for everyone. Our duties and functions are set out in a number of Acts of Parliament and other legislation (a full summary is included in Annex 1), and our principal duty is to further the interests of citizens and consumers in relation to communications matters, where appropriate by promoting competition.

2.2   As an independent statutory regulator, our Plan of Work is informed by these duties, the UK Government's Statement of Strategic Priorities and statutory guidance[1] and a wealth of evidence gathered through robust research, analysis, insights and engagement. The Plan of Work is centred around four evidence-based priorities: **'Internet and post we can rely on', 'Media we trust and value', 'We live a safer life online'** and **'Enabling wireless in the UK economy'**.

Statements of Strategic Priorities

2.3   Where the UK Government sets out its strategic priorities for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum and postal services, or for online safety matters, in an SSP, we must have regard to the statement when carrying out our regulatory functions.[2]

2.4   The new UK Government has confirmed that it intends to designate a new SSP for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum and postal services, and an SSP for online safety matters. We will include a review of what we have done in consequence of the SSP(s) in our Annual Report.

---

[1] Ofcom has a duty to have regard to statutory guidance published by the UK Government setting out how regulators in scope of the growth duty can better support sustainable economic growth through the decisions they take and through the way they regulate. (See Annex 1 for details about Ofcom's duties including the growth duty.)

[2] In 2019, the then Government designated an SSP for telecommunications, the management of the radio spectrum and postal services. No SSP for online safety matters has been designated to date, but the UK government has published its draft SSP.

Our priorities

The following section details our four priorities and how their delivery will be supported by our projects and programmes over the course of 2025/26.

A comprehensive list of associated project work is set out in the Plan of Work 'Project Annex' (Annex 2).

Internet and post we can rely on

This priority is about ensuring that UK consumers have access to high quality full-fibre and gigabit-capable networks, and the availability of communication and postal services. Our focus is on improving the security and resilience of networks to meet the demands of citizens.

2.5   We aim to protect the interests of consumers and enable everyone, everywhere to access fast and reliable networks and services. Our communications markets should deliver consumer choice and value, enabling a wide range of digital services which drive economic growth. Consumers relying on letter and parcel delivery should benefit from affordable, reliable and sustainable postal services that meet the needs of all consumers, and particularly those who are more vulnerable.

2.6   In undertaking our work to deliver 'Internet and post we can rely on', we seek to achieve the following outcomes for consumers:

- Availability of high-quality networks and services where they are needed.
- Reliable and secure networks that people can depend on.
- Efficient and sustainable markets where competition delivers choice, value and high-quality services.
- Consumers treated fairly at every stage of the customer journey, regardless of their circumstances.
- A sustainable, affordable postal service available across the UK that meets evolving customer needs.

2.7   Ensuring the availability of digital infrastructure where it is needed continues to be a priority. This year we will conclude the next Telecoms Access Review, which will set the regulatory framework that applies from April 2026 to March 2031, with the aim of promoting competition and investment in gigabit-capable broadband. We will continue to monitor compliance with the rules we set in the Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review, which will remain in place until March 2026, ensuring that competition plays out fairly, including through the ongoing work of our Openreach Monitoring Unit.

2.8   As risks evolve due to technological and geopolitical developments, security threats facing UK telecoms networks and services continue to increase in volume and complexity. To ensure public networks and services are safe and secure, we will continue to work closely with telecoms firms to seek to improve their security and to monitor their compliance with their security duties. This work is intended to ensure that public providers have appropriate and proportionate measures in place to identify and reduce the risks of security compromises and are prepared for future risks. We will also continue our work with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), equipment vendors and the standards community.

2.9   The postal market has undergone significant change in recent years as demand shifts from letters to parcels. Our goal is to ensure that all postal users continue to have access to affordable and reliable services across the UK that meet their evolving needs. We also need to consider the financial sustainability and efficiency of the universal postal service in line with changing consumer behaviour. Our current work is largely focused on considering whether and how the universal service for letters needs to be reformed. In the future we will look further at how to ensure that post continues to be affordable, and that Royal Mail is incentivised to deliver a more reliable service.

3.9 billion parcels were sent in 2023/24

8.3% more than in 2022/23

2.10   During the coming year our key projects and programmes to deliver the priority of 'Internet and post we can rely on' will include:

• **Telecoms Access Review:** The current regulatory framework that we set in 2021 ends in March 2026. We will publish our provisional assessment of wholesale fixed telecoms markets ahead of publishing our decision on the new regulatory framework, which will set out regulations from April 2026 to March 2031. This will cover the markets for physical infrastructure access, wholesale local access, leased line access and inter-exchange connectivity.

• **Telecoms Access Review (in the Hull Area):** The current, separate regulatory framework that we set in 2021 ends in October 2026. This review will cover the fixed telecoms markets in the Hull Area for the period November 2026 to October 2031. We will assess whether the framework we put in place in 2021 remains appropriate in the light of emerging infrastructure competition.

- **Wholesale Voice Markets Review:** The Wholesale Voice Markets Review will assess our regulation of call termination that supports the provision of landline and mobile telephone services in the UK. We will put in place regulation which will apply for five years from April 2026.

- **Wholesale A2P SMS Termination Review:** We will publish a consultation setting out our analysis of the Wholesale Application-To-Person ('A2P') SMS Termination market, and how it impacts the bulk messages sent by businesses and public bodies to consumers and citizens (e.g. hospital appointment reminders, delivery notifications), with the aim of issuing a statement in Autumn 2025.

- **Telecoms and Digital Infrastructure security:** Using our powers introduced by the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021, we will continue to monitor communications providers' compliance with the new security framework. In line with our new reporting function (s.105Z), we will submit our annual report to the Secretary of State on telecoms security. We will implement any monitoring direction issued by the UK Government under the high-risk vendor framework. Under our Network & Information Systems Regulations responsibilities, we will continue to monitor that operators of essential services in the digital infrastructure sector are managing their security risks through an assurance programme, which includes formal information gathering. We will also continue to carry out our incident monitoring function and run our voluntary penetration testing scheme (TBEST) for communications providers. We will continue to engage with vendors and technical standards bodies to ensure we maintain a broader understanding of the evolving ecosystem.

- **Postal Universal Service Obligation (USO) review:** We recognise the urgent need to align the postal USO to the needs of its users while also considering sustainability of the service. We will continue our work regarding reform of the provision of a universal postal service with the aim of publishing a decision in Q2 2025/26. We will also continue our work to ensure our quality-of-service regime incentivises Royal Mail to improve its performance and universal postal services continue to be affordable.

2.11 In addition to the areas of focus outlined above, we also have ongoing programmes that support our work in this area:

- **Mobile coverage:** We will continue working with industry to improve the accuracy and consistency of available coverage and performance information. We will explore how different sources of real-world data can provide consumers with more information about the mobile performance they can expect, including coverage not-spots. We will consider how we can improve the presentation and communication of this information so that consumers and stakeholders can use it most effectively.

- **Tackling scam calls and texts:** We will continue delivering our strategy to make it difficult for scammers to use UK telecoms networks to harm consumers. We will use our existing rules to disrupt scams, collaborate and share information across sectors to ensure a joined-up approach and consider whether further measures are necessary to protect consumers from scams.

- **Global Titles:** We will continue our work to tackle malicious signalling originating from [UK Global Titles](#) (GTs), raising network security concerns. GTs are created from UK mobile numbers by mobile operators to enable access to the global mobile signalling network. GTs normally underpin the provision of legitimate mobile services, but there is evidence that GTs are sometimes being misused, for example to illicitly locate and track people using their mobile phones on other networks. Following the publication of our statement in March 2025 setting out any new or strengthened rules to tackle misuse of GTs, we will monitor the implementation of any rule changes to ensure that bad actors are prevented from accessing the global mobile signalling network.

- **Legacy transitions:** The managed transition away from legacy services such as [traditional public switched telephone network (PSTN) landline telephony](#) and [2G/3G mobile networks](#) is key to ensuring that people continue to benefit from reliable and more effective networks. We will continue to work with industry and government to ensure that customers are supported and protected through the transitions.

- **Review of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in telecoms:** ADR provides an important protection through independent and impartial assessment on unresolved complaints between a consumer and their provider. We will complete our review assessing consumers' ability to access ADR, consumers' journey through the ADR processes and on Ofcom's oversight of the schemes.

- **Digital markets:** The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Ofcom establishes how we will work with the CMA in digital markets. As will be set out in the MoU, we will be engaging with the CMA and its Digital Markets Unit (DMU) where the DMU's functions impact on our regulatory remit and vice versa.

- **Data reporting:** We will continue to report on the coverage, take-up, usage and availability of broadband and mobile networks across the nations and regions of the UK. We will also report on the forward-looking plans of providers to deploy gigabit-capable networks.

- **Postal monitoring:** We will continue our monitoring work across the postal sector, which will look at the impact of obligations on the parcels market for the handling of complaints, the new obligation on operators to ensure the fair treatment of disabled customers, as well as Royal Mail's efficiency progress and the longer-term sustainability of the postal USO.

- **Premium rate services:** We will monitor compliance with the new regulatory framework for services charged to consumers' telephone bills. We will ensure consumers continue to be protected when using these services following the transfer of day-to-day regulatory responsibility from the Phone-paid Services Authority (PSA) to Ofcom.

Media we trust and value

This priority is about ensuring audiences across the UK can continue to access a variety of broadcast media and are protected against harmful content. As people increasingly move online for entertainment and information, it is particularly important that they are able to access trusted, duly accurate and duly impartial broadcast news.

2.12   The broadcasting sector is a vital part of the UK's culture and economy and is constantly changing as a result of global competitors, digital convergence and technological innovation. We aim to ensure that all audiences can continue to find and enjoy a broad range of relevant, high-quality content, whether on scheduled TV and radio, or on streaming and on-demand.

2.13   In undertaking our work to deliver 'Media we trust and value', our programme of work seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- Audiences can find and access a wide range of content, including public service media (PSM) content which is produced across the UK and reflects its diversity.

- Audiences can find and access a plurality of news that is duly accurate, duly impartial and trusted.

- Media providers compete fairly and openly for audiences.

- Audiences are protected from harm, and freedom of expression is safeguarded.

2.14   Supporting the sector to adapt to changing audience habits and ensuring that our regulatory approach remains effective, is one of our priorities for the year ahead. Last year saw the first major update to UK broadcasting legislation in 20 years. The Media Act 2024 (the "Media Act") reflects recommendations we made in our last review of PSM in 2021. We will continue to implement these new legislative measures through 2025/26, including by making sure UK audiences maintain easy access to live and on-demand PSM, extending editorial standards protections to Tier 1-designated video on-demand (VoD) services (i.e., those subject to the new VoD Code and the new accessibility requirements) and securing the future of local news on radio services across the UK.

Breaking News 21m ago
For the first time, more adults access news online (71%) than via TV (70%), marking a generational shift in the balance of news media

2.15   The ongoing pace of change means we must continue to assess whether further reform may be required to protect essential PSM for UK audiences. We will conclude our next PSM review in 2025/26, focusing on opportunities to maintain and strengthen public service media and the availability of high quality and accurate news that audiences can trust.

2.16   We will continue to enforce compliance with our content standards rules for TV and radio. The safeguarding of broadcasters' and audiences' right to freedom of expression will remain an important consideration, while we prioritise the enforcement of rules regarding potential harm to audiences.

2.17   Our key projects over the next year to support our priorities are:

- **Media Act implementation:** We have published a roadmap for implementation but an overview of its programme of work is below:

  o **Updating Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) regulatory requirements:** We are developing our proposals for implementing changes to the PSB framework as a result of the Media Act. Following consultations in early 2025, we will publish guidance for statements of programme policy (SoPPs) and guidance on quotas and commissioning from independent producers in Q2 2025/26.

  o **Listed Events:** We will consult on our proposals for implementing the Media Act's changes to the Listed Events regime, and subsequently publish our final statement in Q3 2025/26.

  o **Prominence and availability of PSB on-demand:** We will submit advice to the Secretary of State about which TV platforms should be subject to new regulation, and consider applications from PSBs for their players to come within the new regulation. We will also consult on a code of practice and guidance for platforms and PSBs about how to comply with the regime.

- o **New audience protection measures for VoD:** We will prepare a report on the operation of the VoD market in the UK, responding to a request from the Secretary of State in September. The Secretary of State must have regard to the contents of Ofcom's report before making regulations that determine the services that are designated as 'Tier 1' services. Subject to the Secretary of State's decision on designated Tier 1 providers, we will consult on the introduction of accessibility requirements for VoD services in scope.

  - o **Radio regulation:** We will publish our statement on new local news and information requirements for analogue commercial radio and new requirements for digital radio multiplexes in Q2 2025/26.

  - o **Voice assistants:** We will advise the Secretary of State on which radio selection services (RSS) should be designated in Q1 2025/26. We will then put in place a process for internet radio services to notify us to benefit from the legislation. We will consult on a code of practice for RSS once the Secretary of State has designated relevant services.

- **PSM Review:** Our review looks at how the provision of PSM content can be maintained and strengthened for the next decade and beyond. We will publish the findings of our review by the end of Q2 2025/26. This could include areas where we are planning to consult on changes to some of our rules, as well as identifying where further UK Government intervention may be needed.

- **Implement changes from the BBC's Mid-Term Review:** Following publication of the updated Framework Agreement between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the BBC, we will update competition guidance; develop a BBC Online Material Code and conduct a regular review of the BBC's Executive Complaints Unit's decisions that have not been escalated to Ofcom.

- **Proposed changes to BBC audio services:** As part of our ongoing work to monitor the BBC performance and market impact, we will complete our assessment of the BBC's Public Interest Tests on four planned new BBC DAB+ stations and changes to BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra and will publish the outcome of our assessment.

- **Conduct BBC Periodic Review:** We will deliver the next Periodic Review before the BBC Charter ends in December 2027, which we expect to complete by Q4 2025/26.

- **Less Healthy Foods (LHFs) advertising:** We will continue to work with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to prepare for the implementation and enforcement of restrictions on the advertising of less healthy food and drink products, which come into force in October 2025.

2.18 Our Plan of Work also includes an ongoing programme of activity to secure the outcomes for all audiences:

- **Continue to set and enforce content standards for broadcast TV and radio:** We will prioritise cases involving potential harm to the audience, such as content likely to incite crime and uncontextualised hate speech, as well as upholding due impartiality and due accuracy in news and due impartiality in current affairs. We will refresh our

Broadcasting Code Guidance and publish this alongside the new VoD Code resulting from the Media Act in Q3 2025/26.

- **License TV and radio broadcast services:** We will continue to issue, manage and maintain licences for all national and local commercial TV, digital commercial and digital community radio services and restricted analogue radio services. We will respond to stakeholder requests to make changes to their licences where appropriate. We will publish a statement in Q1 2025/26, following a consultation on amendments to our General Procedures for investigating broadcast licences.

- **Support platforms for broadcast services:** We will continue to license small-scale DAB digital radio services throughout the UK and complete the process for renewing the Local TV licences.

- **Accessibility of TV services:** We will continue to enforce requirements for broadcast access services – subtitles, audio description and signing. Our annual report on TV accessibility will be published in Q1 2025/26.

- **Equity, diversity and inclusion in broadcasting:** We will continue to engage with stakeholders in this area, and report in Q3 2025/26 on the diversity of broadcasters' workforces.

- **Monitor BBC performance and market impact:** We will continue to assess the BBC's compliance with specified requirements in the Framework Agreement, the Operating Framework and under the Operating Licence. We will also report on the BBC's performance in our Annual Report on the BBC in Q3 2025/26.

We live a safer life online

This priority is about establishing the online safety regime to continue our work in building a safer life online for all UK users, especially children. Our focus will shift to ensuring that providers comply with their legal obligations to protect users, while continuing to implement the regime.

2.19   Our goal is to create a safer life online for people in the UK, especially children. Since the Online Safety Act 2023 (the "OSA") was passed, we have been focused on establishing the foundations of the regime. The OSA is complex and detailed, and debates continue about many of the harms and issues it addresses. We have prioritised our work to implement the areas we expect to have the greatest immediate benefit to the UK public as quickly as possible, as outlined in our Online Safety Progress Update.

2.20   In December 2024 we will publish the first Illegal Content Codes of Practice. In January 2025 we will issue guidance for online pornography providers about age assurance, alongside our guidance on children's access assessments that all user-to-user and search services must do. We expect to publish the first Protection of Children Codes of Practice in April 2025. This signals an important shift towards implementing and enforcing the Online Safety regime – starting with the risk assessments user-to-user and search services must do. For the first time, services will be required to understand who their users are, the risks posed to them by the service and the steps the service will take to mitigate these risks.

2.21   Our dedicated supervision team will continue to work closely with industry and ensure providers are taking the appropriate steps to tackle the harms that exist on their services. We expect services to take action and stand ready to use our enforcement powers where we consider it is appropriate to do so, in line with our regulatory principles.

2.22   We will also start to put in place the additional regulatory requirements that fall upon categorised services under the OSA. Once the thresholds are confirmed, our work may then begin towards discharging our transparency duties, which we expect to be most effective in improving users' safety by shining a light on services' actions – and in particular by providing hard evidence, for the first time, about the impact of their safety measures.

Protecting children online is more important than ever

Compared to last year, a higher proportion of all 5–7 year olds use apps/sites to do each of these activities:

Use social media apps or sites	Messaging or making voice/video calls	Watch livestreaming apps or sites	Gaming online
▲	▲	▲	▲
38%	**65%**	**50%**	**41%**
30% in 2023	59% in 2023	39% in 2023	34% in 2023

2.23   We also know that informed and empowered users have a key role to play in driving online safety and we will continue our long-standing work to improve media literacy through our Making Sense of Media programme.

2.24   In undertaking our work to deliver 'We live a safer life online', we seek to achieve the following outcomes for consumers:

- Set up the Online Safety regime for success with the right people, systems, processes and relationships in place.

- Stronger safety governance in online services based on clear understanding of risks.

- Online services designed and operated with safety in mind.

- Increased choice for users so they can have meaningful control over their online experiences.

- Enhanced trust in the online world through more transparency in how platforms keep users safe – and what Ofcom is doing to push forward changes.

2.25   Over the next year, our key programmes of work to support this priority will include:

- **Tackling illegal harms and protecting children online:** Once the Illegal Content Code of Practice and the Protection of Children Codes of Practice are approved by Parliament, and have come into force, we will be able to enforce where companies do not take the necessary action. We will build on these first Codes over time, beginning with a consultation on additional measures to protect users in spring 2025. We will also finalise our best practice guidance on protecting women and girls online in late 2025.

- **Assuring compliance:** We are already working with services that pose particular risks to ensure they meet their new duties and are preparing for our initial enforcement programmes. We will also launch broader multi-service or sector-wide compliance programmes where we believe there may be systematic issues that need swift and comprehensive action. We are targeting risky as

well as large services and are working with them to assess and improve their safety measures. In addition, we have a programme of work dedicated to helping all services understand and fulfil their new duties and obligations.

- **Duties on categorised services:** We will begin establishing the rules for categorised services following completion of the register, which we expect to be in summer 2025. We will aim to start issuing draft transparency notices to services soon after the register of categorised services has been published, and to issue final transparency notices following that. We expect the first transparency reports mandated by our notices to be published by services around the end of 2025. We are also aiming to publish draft Codes of Practice and draft guidance regarding additional duties on categorised services no later than early 2026.

- **Establishing the regime:** We continue to build our technological and data capabilities, needed to support effective regulation of the online safety regime. Additionally, as with our other regulated sectors, industry fees will fund the cost of regulation of online services, and we are taking steps to commence implementation of the fees regime, with the expectation that invoices will be issued for the 2026/27 financial year.

- **Working with partners:** We continue to work closely with partner regulators in the UK as part of the DRCF, and with international regulators, including through the Global Online Safety Regulators Network (GOSRN) and our coordination agreement with the European Commission. Our goal is to align our regulatory approaches and guidance where appropriate to facilitate firms' compliance with all relevant rules. We are also developing the OSA's super-complaints process to enable eligible entities to highlight systemic issues that arise across services, or in exceptional circumstances, on one service.

2.26   We have been regulating UK-based video-sharing platforms (VSPs) since 2021. The rules on VSPs remain in place until the regime is superseded by the broader online safety rules. In January 2024 we published our updated strategy for the VSP regime which summarised how we have regulated services so far, and our priorities for the remainder of the regime. Looking ahead to 2025/26 we will focus on:

- **Transition to Online Safety:** We will continue to align the VSP priorities to the online safety strategic priorities for the next three years. We will ensure that all the work we carry out during the remainder of the VSP regime directly links to the Online Safety regime and prepares notified VSPs for the transition.

- **Platform supervision:** We will build on the effective supervisory relationships we have built with platforms. We will continue to require platforms to make improvements to their services under VSP regulation, while ensuring they are complying with their online safety duties and getting ready for online safety regulation.

- **Enforcement:** We will continue to use our full range of enforcement powers to promote compliance with the VSP regime.

- **Industry transparency:** We will continue, where appropriate, to publish outputs which give greater insight into how VSPs are carrying out their duties under the VSP regime.

2.27   The UK Government will set a date for repeal of the VSP rules, which we expect to be after the online safety Protection of Children Codes come into force, in summer 2025. Ofcom will support VSP providers in moving to the Online Safety regime.
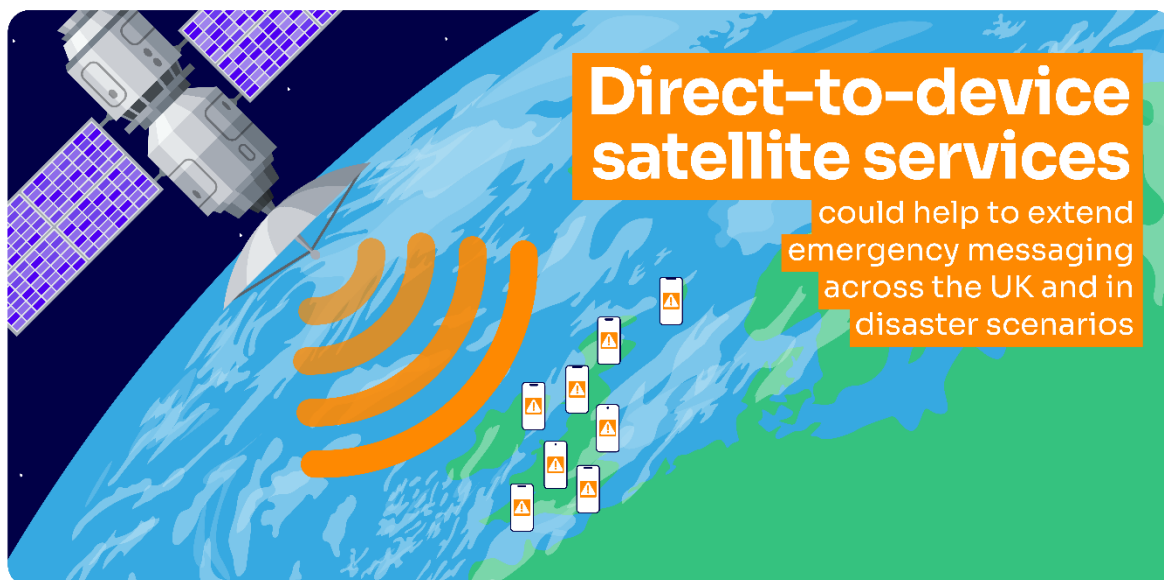
Making Sense of Media

- Our vision is for a UK where people have the media literacy skills they need, and where online services and broadcasters play their part to ensure people can navigate content and safely flourish online. Our media literacy duties are most applicable to our priorities of 'media we trust and value' and 'we live a safer life online' but we know that they touch on all our sectors.
- Our first three-year media literacy strategy outlines the way we intend to make media literacy everyone's business. We have developed our media literacy strategy prioritising three central elements:
- **Research, Evidence and Evaluation:** This builds on our heritage of research and evidence gathering about the daily realities of adults and children, as well as our well-received evaluation resources.
- **Engaging Platforms:** Online platforms and services, alongside broadcasters, are a primary conduit for communications and media consumption. They have a significant role to play in encouraging media literacy for their audiences.
- **People and Partnerships:** Media literacy is about people, and impact is best achieved through local trusted partners, who are experts in delivery.

Enabling wireless in the UK economy

This priority is about ensuring that spectrum remains an effective enabler for wireless communication for all people, businesses, and sectors. We seek to ensure that spectrum continues to support the growing demand for a variety of services, enable innovation and, importantly, aid economic growth.

2.28   Radio spectrum is vital for the delivery of a wide range of wireless services and technologies that we use in our everyday lives, and that enable the running of businesses and public services. These services include mobile, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, broadcast radio, television and satellite navigation. Moreover, spectrum remains critical in supporting the emergency services, climate monitoring, air traffic control and radar and our armed forces.

2.29   With demand for radio spectrum from both existing and new users continuing to increase, our goal is to ensure this essential resource is used efficiently to benefit everyone in the UK. In particular, we will support economic growth through facilitating innovation in mobile, satellite and unlicensed (Wi-Fi) services. We will do this by enabling timely access with flexible authorisation approaches and encouraging greater sharing between different applications and uses.

Direct-to-device satellite services could help to extend emergency messaging across the UK and in disaster scenarios

2.30   In undertaking our work of 'Enabling wireless in the UK economy' we seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Assure stakeholder access to spectrum and mitigate harmful interference through licensing, planning, monitoring and compliance activities that enable wireless services.
- Identify and make available spectrum to meet evolving needs of sectors, including mobile broadband and space services.
- Evolve our spectrum management frameworks to support increased efficiency of use, enhance speed and flexibility of access and improve spectrum availability.
- Lead and influence international discussions on spectrum access while effectively representing UK interests.

2.31   Our work to support these outcomes is focused on the following areas:

- **International engagement on spectrum management:** We represent UK interests in the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) and in European spectrum work to pursue international outcomes that align with UK interests. Through this, we aim to ensure that citizens and consumers can benefit from international technological innovation and harmonised equipment ecosystems. Our priorities are to encourage greater sharing between different users and wireless technologies; ensure sufficient spectrum and adequate protection of space science services; and improve the satellite regulatory framework that supports innovation and growth of the sector.

- **Supporting innovation through timely spectrum availability and greater sharing:** We want to enable timely access to spectrum to support competition, innovation and growth across different sectors. We are preparing to award the mmWave (26 and 40 GHz) spectrum, designing rules for the award of 1.4 GHz spectrum and continuing to explore authorisation options for the upper 6GHz band. We will consult on making more spectrum available to support increased capacity for satellite services through access to Q/V and E band for satellite gateways and additional access to Ku and Ka band for satellite terminals on ships and planes. Working with the UK Government, we aim to ensure spectrum availability for critical national infrastructure.

- **Sustained efficiency through advanced spectrum management capabilities:** We will continue our programme of work to modernise and enhance our licensing platform to deliver greater automation, improve user experience and increase spectrum efficiency.

2.32   These areas of focused activity are complemented by ongoing programmes of work to deliver our outcomes. This includes:

- **Research and planning:** We carry out radio propagation and radio equipment measurements to inform our policy development to improve spectrum efficiency. We continue to engage with spectrum users, international counterparts, industry, the UK Government and academia to understand technological and market changes that may affect spectrum requirements of different users and sectors. For example,

we are exploring innovative sharing approaches as part of our spectrum sandbox and considering spectrum implications arising from any future decision on digital terrestrial TV. We are also working with the UK Government to enable greater sharing in defence spectrum.

- **Evolving our spectrum management framework:** We are reviewing our satellite licensing framework for non-geostationary satellite (NGSO) systems and our satellite gateway licence fees policy and will consult on updating our satellite filing procedures. We are also planning to consult on introducing a regulatory framework to enable satellite services direct to mobile handsets, where there is agreement with relevant mobile spectrum licensees. We plan to update some of our maritime licences to simplify and align with international framework changes. We are also reviewing mobile spectrum licence fees to ensure efficient use of spectrum. We continue to simplify and streamline our licence products/process where appropriate to improve operational efficiency.

- **Licensing, compliance and assurance:** We manage around 400,000 live spectrum licences which includes planning of frequencies for licensees such as special events, microwave fixed links, shared access, business radio, NGSO systems, radio and TV broadcasting; and providing advice and assistance to these spectrum users. We investigate harmful interference and unauthorised/illegal use of spectrum and reduce this risk by limiting the availability of non-compliant equipment.

3. Nations

3.1   Communication services need to work for all people and businesses, and to ensure this, we work to understand the different needs across the UK. There are unique challenges, but also opportunities for communication services in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. This is informed by research that is nationally representative across all of the UK's nations and regions. Two of the priority areas of work for Ofcom's nations teams are ensuring access to good-quality telecommunications services in rural areas, and making sure content is available that reflects the diverse experiences of people in different nations.

3.2   Our statutory National Advisory Committees help us to understand and address the specific interests and concerns for all stakeholders living and working in each of the four nations and integrate this into our policy work. In addition, our teams in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London and Manchester ensure that we have a broad understanding of the needs of the UK, but also the specific circumstances of consumers and stakeholders in each nation. We also have field engineers placed across the UK to support our spectrum work, including in Baldock and Birmingham.

3.3   MoUs in each nation ensure that the views and interests of stakeholders, consumers and audiences in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are represented at Board level within Ofcom, through the inclusion of non-executive directors who represent the interests of each of the four nations. We will continue to engage constructively with the signatories of each MoU, including the relevant governments and parliaments, in delivering on our priorities for 2025/26.

3.4   The views of UK audiences are also represented to Ofcom's Content Board, which has members representing each of the nations. There is also a statutory requirement for each of the UK nations to have its own representation on the Communications Consumer Panel, which highlights the needs of older and disabled people, people in rural areas and those on low incomes.

3.5   The work detailed in our priorities above will affect the whole of the UK, and each nations team will work to ensure the unique needs of each nation are represented in the implementation of our projects. An outline of the key areas of work and priorities for each of our nations is described below.

Scotland

3.6   Our telecoms priorities in Scotland include engagement with stakeholders on our Telecoms Access Review, as we continue to provide a stable regulatory framework that supports commercial rollout of full-fibre and gigabit capable fixed connectivity across Scotland. We will also continue to provide input and data, where appropriate, to support the delivery of current UK and Scottish Government funded programmes – both fixed and mobile – including Project Gigabit, Reaching 100 and the Shared Rural Network.

3.7   More broadly, we will advise on the role of other technologies in solving connectivity challenges in remote areas, such as Low Earth Orbit satellite and Direct to Device

connectivity. With a growing space and satellite sector in Scotland, our space spectrum strategy will also support and enable technical innovation.

3.8   We will recognise the interests of rural and island communities in Scotland in affordable, resilient connectivity, including monitoring how the rollout of new technologies in Scotland complements the withdrawal of legacy technologies such as the move to Voice-Over Internet Protocol services and the switch-off of 3G and 2G services.

3.9   In our postal work, we will engage with consumers, business groups and other stakeholders across Scotland as we consider reform to the provision of a universal postal service.

3.10   As we look at how the quality of public service broadcasting can be maintained and strengthened through the PSM review, we will engage with the Scottish Government, industry, academia and other stakeholders as part of the process. Our focus will be on ensuring this delivers for audiences in Scotland and takes account of the distinct broadcasting ecology in Scotland with a different (from the rest of the UK) Channel 3 licence holder in the form of STV, and MG ALBA's role providing Gaelic language content in partnership with the BBC.

3.11   In supporting consumers to live a safer life online, we will continue our engagement with the Scottish Government to ensure the smooth implementation of the online safety regime in a devolved context. Particularly, we will cooperate with the Scottish Government on its goal of eradicating violence against women and girls by working on understanding and preventing the use of technology in perpetrating this violence. Strong working ties here will also aid our own work in providing Guidance on protecting women and girls from harm online that will be finalised during the year.

3.12   We will strengthen our partnerships with third sector organisations across Scotland operating at the local level to promote media literacy. We will work with stakeholders in Scotland to encourage the development of media literacy initiatives, particularly as it relates to our local media review and our Making Sense of Media programme.

Wales

3.13   We will continue to engage with government at all levels in Wales, ensuring that both elected representatives and officials are informed and supported on issues across Ofcom's remit, guided by the MoU between Ofcom, the Welsh Government, Senedd and the UK Government. We will provide advice to help inform policy discussions and decisions to deliver positive outcomes for citizens and consumers in Wales. Additionally, we will work with other regulators to share knowledge and best practice across sectors through various networks, forums and particularly the DRCF partnership.

3.14   We will continue to be an ally to the Welsh language, engaging with Welsh speaking communities to ensure their specific issues are heard and understood and that, where appropriate, the Welsh language is considered in Ofcom's policy making. We strive to perform our existing duties to a high level and will continue to review our processes and standards to ensure successful outcomes.

3.15   With Ofcom gaining formal powers to regulate providers of online services for online safety, we will work closely with the Welsh Government, civic society, and consumer advocacy groups in Wales to build understanding of the new regime and support efforts to help people to live a safer life online. The OSA has provided greater clarity and specificity to our media literacy duties[3]. Therefore, we will work with the Welsh Government and others to support media literacy work in Wales to help consumers navigate content safely and flourish online.

3.16   We will support improved connectivity, particularly in the harder to reach areas of Wales. We will do this through regular engagement with the Welsh Government, telecoms stakeholders and consumer advocacy groups, in relation to the Telecoms Access Review and on issues like full fibre rollout, satellite broadband, improved mobile coverage and resilience of communications networks to ensure Wales specific issues are heard and understood.

3.17   We will support the implementation of the Media Act and the PSM Review ensuring the views of the broadcasting, creative and other related sectors in Wales are kept informed of, and involved in, the consultation processes.

Northern Ireland

3.18   We will continue to engage government at all levels in Northern Ireland, ensuring that both elected representatives and officials are informed and supported on issues across Ofcom's remit, guided by the MoU between Ofcom, the NI Executive, Assembly and the UK Government. We will provide advice to help inform policy decisions, leading to better outcomes for citizens and consumers in Northern Ireland. Additionally, we will work with other regulators to share knowledge and best practice across sectors through various networks, forums and particularly the DRCF partnership.

3.19   We will support improved connectivity in Northern Ireland through regular engagement with government officials on issues such as full fibre rollout, mobile coverage and resilience of communications networks; and we will continue our engagement with local telecoms stakeholders and consumer advocacy groups to ensure issues specific to Northern Ireland are heard and understood – particularly through the Telecoms Access Review process and the PSTN and 2G/3G migrations.

3.20   With Ofcom's new powers to regulate providers of online services for online safety, we will work closely with the devolved government and civic society in Northern Ireland to promote understanding of the new regime and support efforts to help people live a safer life online. We will work with local organisations to design and implement a media literacy delivery plan for Northern Ireland to help consumers navigate content safely and flourish online.

3.21   As part of our PSM Review, we will ensure the broadcasting industry in Northern Ireland is kept informed and involved throughout the consultation process in order to deliver positive outcomes for audiences in Northern Ireland.

3.22   We will work closely with our regulator counterparts in the Republic of Ireland – ComReg and Coimisiún na Meán – and offer advice to the UK Government and UK consumer bodies

---

[3] As originally set out in the Communications Act 2003.

to ensure people and businesses in Northern Ireland continue to benefit from a good cross-border relationship.

3.23 As part of our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion inside our organisation and in the wider sectors we regulate, and ensuring compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we will publish how we propose to continue to fulfil our section 75 duties in a new five-year Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland.

England

3.24 We will continue to ensure that the diverse communication needs of people across England are met. The statutory Advisory Committee for England continues to support Ofcom's policy decisions by identifying issues affecting the communication sectors in all parts of the country.

3.25 Our commitment to supporting England's diverse media ecology, by making sure media is inclusive and reflects all audiences, remains an essential part of our work. We recognise the importance of local media and will deliver the new local news and information requirements for analogue radio stations.

3.26 We will continue our work with government, local MPs and local authorities to assist full-fibre rollout and to ensure greater mobile coverage in rural areas. In our annual Connected Nations report, we highlight our plans for the deployment of fibre networks to ensure high-speed broadband services to consumers, aiming to cover 99% of urban properties and 91% of rural properties by May 2027.

4. How we deliver

4.1   Working collaboratively within and outside of Ofcom helps us to deliver on our commitments. Outlined below is our approach to partnerships, our underpinning work and how we make the best use of our resources by investing in our organisational capability.

Partnerships

4.2   To be an effective converged regulator and deliver for consumers and our sectors, we increasingly rely on a range of important partnerships, both domestically and internationally.

Domestic partnerships

- **Continuing to work with fellow digital regulators through the DRCF.** We will continue to work together with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to support a coherent regulatory approach to digital services and issues. The DRCF members work together on Horizon Scanning and understanding the opportunities and risks of AI. We are also working particularly closely with the ICO to ensure alignment with data protection law as we implement the OSA. The DRCF has launched a public Call for Input, requesting views on what areas it should prioritise in its next annual workplan (2025/26), which will be published in April 2025.

- **UK Regulators Network (UKRN).** We work with other UK regulators to address challenges across different sectors, to share best practice and to drive forward positive change as a member of the UKRN. The UKRN also engages with external stakeholders to inform and contribute to policy debates, regulatory reviews and cross-sector issues. In particular, we will continue to contribute to joint work with the UKRN to improve outcomes for vulnerable consumers.

- **Engaging with the academic community to help develop our evidence base.** We have a focus on building relationships with academic researchers to ensure Ofcom's work is informed by the latest insights from academic research, expert groups and civil society organisations. This is particularly important for our regulation of online safety, where we will work with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure we have the insights we need to understand user experiences online and the impact of platforms' safety measures.

- **Continuing to work with our co-regulator, the ASA.** We will continue our co-regulatory arrangements of TV, radio, on-demand programme service and VSPs.

- **Making Sense of Media Network and Advisory Panel.** Our Making Sense of Media Network currently has 643 members representing a variety of organisations in the UK and internationally, collaborating to improve media literacy in the UK. Our Advisory Panel informs Ofcom's work to help improve the online skills, knowledge and understanding of UK adults and children.

- **NCSC.** We will continue to work with our technical authorities, the NCSC and the National Protective Security Agency.

- **Law enforcement and the intelligence community.** We will continue our working relationships with law enforcement and the intelligence community with regards to our online safety, telecoms security and spectrum responsibilities. This includes organisations such as the National Crime Agency, the Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police, Police Scotland and the NCSC.

- **Sustainability and climate change.** We have an interest in the long-term sustainability of our sectors, but our duties do not currently include specific climate change objectives. We continue to engage with the telecommunications industry to develop its understanding of the topic and to support and contribute to the advancement of net zero objectives.

International partnerships

4.3   Our international work continues to evolve as the services we regulate operate globally, as well as the platforms they use to reach consumers. Our international work involves representing Ofcom and the UK regionally and globally and using our evidence-based research to influence policy at an international level, while bringing back insights to inform our work domestically.

4.4   We focus on international developments in online safety, broadcasting, telecommunications, digital markets, security and resilience, and international technical standards. Our planned work for 2025/26 includes:

- In **online safety,** we will continue developing our international relationships, exchanging best practice and experience. In particular, we will continue to foster collaboration and advocate for shared norms in online safety, as founder-members of the GOSRN and through the International Working Group on Age Verification. We will also continue to work closely with EU counterparts on the implementation of rules for VSPs and other online platforms.

- In **broadcasting and media**, we will continue to participate in the global debates on regulatory responses to ensure the sustainability of PSM. We will continue to engage in networks such as the European Platform for Regulatory Authorities, the European Media and Information Literacy Taskforce and the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance to develop and exchange media literacy best practices globally. We will also continue our work with organisations such as the Council of Europe to collaborate with other international broadcast and media regulators on the common challenges that we face.

- In **telecoms**, we will continue to monitor and analyse emerging technologies, regulatory developments and market dynamics in the communications sectors in key jurisdictions, to help us to identify challenges, risks and opportunities that might affect the UK telecoms sector. We will continue to work closely with international counterparts on both a bilateral and multilateral basis, with the Independent Regulator's Group remaining our primary multilateral forum in Europe. We will also actively participate in other ad hoc international initiatives on areas of common

interest, including Unsolicited Communications Enforcement Network and the Global Informal Regulatory Antifraud Forum.

- In relation to **internet-based communications markets**, we will monitor and understand how competition develops in other jurisdictions that might influence or have an impact on our duties and sectors. For instance, we note the gradual emergence of ex ante regulation of online platforms globally, most notably in the EU with the Digital Markets Act. The experiences of other such regimes might influence the design of pro-competition interventions in the UK as different jurisdictions seek to regulate the same set of large digital platforms both individually and collectively for the same or similar conduct.

- In the areas of **security, network resilience and technical standards**, we have an ongoing programme of bilateral engagement with regulators and other stakeholders around the world to share expertise and updates on developments in our respective countries. Ofcom also works through the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), where we are an elected member of its governing council and we represent the UK in all three sectors (telecommunications, radiocommunication and development). We also serve as the chair of the lead spectrum committee and chair of the preparatory committee in the European region group. We closely follow discussions on technical standards impacting our sectors in industry-led standardisation organisations such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute and the 3rd Generation Partnership Project.

Growing skills and capabilities

4.5   While our sectors evolve and our remit expands, it is vital that we continue to invest in our most valuable asset, our people. We need to adapt to support effective delivery across every area of our business. We do this by:

- **Developing our data and digital function:** We continue to develop our capability to make the most of data and data-driven technologies across our whole organisation. We will continue to use technologies based on AI and machine learning where there is a clear business need and benefit, developing our own in-house solutions alongside purchasing off-the-shelf products where appropriate. This year, we will focus on improving our management of increasing volumes of complex data to ensure it continues to be locatable, high-quality and compliant with all relevant legislation. For our colleagues, we will continue to develop training to ensure we have the right mix of skills.

- **Strengthening our technology capability:** Technology will always play a critical role in shaping demand, driving emerging consumer trends and delivering advanced services to businesses and consumers alike. We particularly focus on technologies that: enable the delivery of new services that are safe to use and valued by people and businesses; improve the coverage, performance, and capacity of networks; lower barriers to entry, providing more choice for people; and ensures the security and resilience of service delivery. We will continue to invest in our technical

capabilities by building our workforce of experts across key technological areas such as: AI, extended reality, gaming and safety technology. Our expertise is supported by our continued engagement with stakeholders, our participation in professional forums, our interaction with standards communities and our work with government partners.

• **Building commercial understanding and horizon scanning:** We continue to develop our understanding of the sectors we regulate and how our stakeholders and markets are evolving. We achieve this through recruitment from a range of backgrounds and building skills and knowledge among our colleagues. Our horizon scanning programme is another key input to building our understanding of our sectors as we aim to anticipate future developments and trends through external engagement, research and analysis.

• **Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy:** Our five year D&I strategy ends in 2026. During this period, we have made significant improvement in representation across Ofcom. We are now working towards a new target of 19% for senior representation of ethnic minority colleagues and a new target of 15% for organisational wide representation for disability. We will continue to embed our new inclusive recruitment processes and focus on improving the experiences of Black and disabled colleagues. We are particularly proud of being awarded Public Sector Employer of the Year at the InsideOut Awards in June 2024, which celebrates achievements in the mental health space. We have an extensive existing programme of activities to promote mental, physical, financial and social wellbeing. Work is underway to determine our strategy beyond 2026.

• **Connected working strategy:** 26% of our colleagues are based outside of London and we expect to meet our 30% target by March 2026. Work is underway as part of our Strategic Workforce Planning to determine future goals.

Underpinning wider work across the sectors we regulate

4.6   Ofcom is an evidence-based regulator, and we obtain the evidence, intelligence and insight we require in a variety of ways across our sectors including:

• **Market research and intelligence:** We research communications markets and consumer preferences and behaviour to provide an up-to-date, thorough understanding of people and businesses. We explore innovative research methods including behavioural science where we have established a Behavioural Insights Hub to build a deeper understanding of how consumers make decisions. We combine our own consumer research with data collected directly from industry and third parties. In addition to informing our work, our research, and our commitment to making the findings publicly available, fulfils some of our statutory duties.

• **Data engineering and analytics:** We have teams that support our policy and operational work by using data and advanced analytics. We are developing data

products and tools to generate insights and help make decisions in an effective and efficient way. Alongside this we are implementing a comprehensive data and information management and governance framework as a foundation for our end-to-end use of data.

- **Technology insights:** Our technology functions have a dual purpose of advising our policy, supervision and enforcement teams to deliver on their current priorities and undertaking forward-looking work to prepare for future challenges. We are deepening our understanding of how technology is driving change within our sectors and the potential impact on how we work, including active engagement with academia to take advantage of expertise and research. We are also conducting in-depth testing and evaluation of existing and emerging approaches to online safety in our Online Safety Technology Lab. This lab allows for the examination of specific technical solutions, such as those in age assurance and automated content moderation.

- **AI:** Our work on AI is driven by its use across all our sectors and how it may impact the regulatory outcomes we seek to achieve across our remit. For example, we will be further exploring the merits of deepfake mitigation methods, such as watermarking, metadata schemes and content labelling. We will continue to consider the impact of AI on the media sector, particularly on the provision of accurate and trustworthy news as part of the PSM review. We will also continue our engagement with standards bodies, in particular European Telecommunications Standards Institute Securing AI. It is important that we understand the future opportunities and risks of AI across our sectors and we will continue to look at developments through our horizon scanning activities. We will also continue to work with our DRCF partners on our shared interests in AI and engage with the UK Government as it takes forward its AI agenda. Internationally, Ofcom will continue to monitor AI policy debates, engaging with stakeholders around the world to understand the uses and impacts of the technology, and follow discussions on AI standards in organisations like the ITU, where Ofcom represents the UK. We plan to publish an update to our [Strategic Approach to AI publication](#) in 2025/26.

4.7   We are also keen to understand the impact of our work for consumers and on the sectors we regulate. We do this in a number of ways including:

- **Impact assessments:** We use impact assessments in line with our revised guidelines to ensure our approach to evidence-based policy making adheres to best practices. We consider the effects of our interventions on a wide range of citizens and consumers, including those with protected characteristics as identified in equality legislation. Additionally, we assess the potential impact on the Welsh language. We continuously monitor and, in specific cases such as mobile telecoms end-of-contract notifications, evaluate the real-world impact of our work post-implementation to understand how our interventions have shaped consumer outcomes. This ongoing evaluation allows us to refine our policy making based on actual, rather than anticipated, outcomes. Where appropriate, we also consider the impact of our regulation on economic growth in accordance with our new statutory Growth Duty.

- **Discussion Papers:** We encourage debate on all areas of communications regulation through our ongoing discussion papers. They also contribute to our robust evidence base that supports our decision making.

- **Information gathering:** The Information Registry is the team that coordinates our formal and informal information requests and acts as the main point of contact for stakeholders requiring support. We are investing in software to be rolled out in the new year that will streamline the information gathering process for stakeholders through our new Community Portal. Our commitment to continuous improvement around our information gathering means that we have decided to establish an internal senior cross-Group forum to provide further oversight and accountability for the use of our information gathering powers. It is our intention that this senior forum, coordinated by the Registry, will assist in considering prioritisation, proportionality and the scope of requests. We are working to publish our General policy statement to provide further clarity for stakeholders about how we will exercise our information gathering powers.

Achieving value for money

4.8   Ofcom is committed to being an efficient and effective regulator, continuously seeking opportunities to enhance efficiency. Since the 2015 Spending Review, we have achieved real-terms savings in line with the wider public sector, maintaining our base cap with a one-off inflation adjustment in 2020/21. This has reduced the real-term cost of regulation.

4.9   We prioritise strategic planning and integrated budgeting to deploy our resources effectively. Investments are tightly controlled to maximize efficiency, utilising competitive procurement for optimal price and quality. We aim to streamline and automate processes, such as continuing to automate and digitise our approach to licencing, which enhances efficiency of our resources and user experience, and ensuring we leverage existing infrastructure for new duties where possible (e.g. the OSA and the Media Act). Additionally, we continue to optimise our estate use and have continued increasing our presence outside London in line with our connected working strategy, which has in turn led to more efficient use of our estate over the last three years.

Spending cap for 2025/26

4.10   The UK Government establishes our spending cap through the Spending Review, which guides our budget planning. As we approach the final year of the current Spending Review cycle (2024/25), we are in discussion with DSIT and His Majesty's Treasury to determine our spending cap for 2025/26. Since 2021/22, our spending cap has remained unchanged, with increases only for new responsibilities such as the OSA, the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021, the Media Act and LHFs.

A1. What we do

A1.1   Ofcom was established under the Office of Communications Act 2002 and operates under a number of Acts of Parliament and other legislation. We regulate fixed-line and mobile telecoms, TV and radio broadcasting, video-on demand services, post and the radio spectrum used by wireless devices, VSPs established in the UK and online safety under the Online Safety Act 2023.

A1.2   We act independently from governments and commercial interests to deliver our duties. However, we are accountable to Parliament, and to perform our role effectively we need to engage openly and constructively with the UK and devolved governments. We provide technical advice to governments (for example, our recent report to government on the future of TV distribution) and in some cases, we act as a formal representative of the UK Government (for example, in international negotiations on spectrum).

Our duties

A1.3   The Communications Act 2003 (the "Act") places a number of duties on Ofcom that we must fulfil when exercising the regulatory powers and functions we have been given. The Act states that our principal duty in carrying out our functions is to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters, and consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition. In postal services, we have a duty to carry out our functions in a way that we consider will secure provision of a universal postal service in the UK.

A1.4   In performing our duties, we are required to have regard to the principles under which regulatory activities should be transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent and targeted only at cases where action is needed, as well as any other principles appearing to us to represent best regulatory practice.[4]

A1.5   In exercising certain regulatory functions, our duties include having regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth.[5] This duty is referred to as the "growth duty" and aligns in particular with our duties to have regard to the desirability of: promoting competition in relevant markets; encouraging investment and innovation in relevant markets; and encouraging the availability and use of high speed data transfer services throughout the UK.

A1.6   We implement and enforce communications, competition and consumer protection laws; our competition powers are outlined later in this annex.

---

[4] See section 3(1) of the Act.
[5] The growth duty under section 108(1) of the Deregulation Act 2015 applies to Ofcom's exercise of its "regulatory functions" (as defined in section 111), but this is subject to certain exemptions.

Our main legal duties guide the direction of our work

A1.7   Our main legal duties in carrying out our work include securing that:

- the UK has a wide range of electronic communications services;

- optimal use is made of the radio spectrum;

- a wide range of high-quality television and radio programmes are provided by a range of different organisations, appealing to a range of tastes and interests;

- the maintenance of a sufficient plurality of providers of different television and radio services;

- people are protected from harmful or offensive material, unfair treatment and unwarranted invasion of privacy on television and radio;

- the adequate protection of citizens from harm presented by online content on regulated services, through the appropriate use by providers of such services of systems and processes designed to reduce the risk of such harm;

- the BBC is held to account on its compliance with appropriate content standards, its performance against its Mission and Public Purpose, and the impact of its activities on fair and effective competition; and

- the universal service obligation on postal services is secured in the UK.

A1.8   Since 2020 Ofcom has had responsibility for ensuring that VSPs established in the UK take appropriate measures to protect consumers who engage with those services from the risk of viewing harmful content.

On 1 October 2022 the regulatory regime established by Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021 formally commenced. This places strengthened security duties on telecoms providers, with powers from the Government to set out security requirements, and gives Ofcom responsibilities to make sure providers comply.

In November 2023 the Online Safety Act obtained Royal assent and Ofcom was appointed as the UK's online safety regulator.

Ofcom can enforce consumer law on behalf of consumers but does not have the power to resolve individual consumer complaints about telecoms or postal services unlike in TV and radio. Where appropriate, we provide advice to complainants and refer them to the ADR schemes that we have approved.

Ofcom's competition law powers

A1.9   In addition to our regulatory responsibilities set out above, we have powers in relation to communications matters to:

- enforce the prohibitions on anti-competitive agreements and abuse of a dominant position, set out in the Competition Act 1998;

- investigate markets and make references under the Enterprise Act 2002 to the CMA; and

- report to the Secretary of State under section 44A of the Enterprise Act 2002 in relation to media mergers.

A1.10   We consider whether it is more appropriate to exercise the Competition Act 1998 or sectoral powers in any given case, subject to the specific legislative requirements.

A2. Project Annex

Internet and post we can rely on

Project Details	Milestones
Telecoms Fixed Access Review. The Telecoms Access Review 2026 will review the main fixed telecoms markets in the UK and put in place regulation which will apply for 5 years from 1 April 2026.	Statement Q4[6] 2025/26
Telecoms Regulation in the Hull Area. We will review the main fixed telecoms markets in the Hull Area and put in place regulation which will apply for 5 years from 1 November 2026.	Consultation Q3 2025/26
Wholesale voice markets review. We will review our regulation of call termination that supports the provision of landline and mobile telephone services in the UK and will propose to put in place regulation which will apply for 5 years from the 1 April 2026.	Consultation Q1 2025/26 Statement Q4 2025/26
Wholesale A2P SMS termination market review. We will publish a statement following our planned consultation in early 2025 in which we may make proposals to regulate the wholesale A2P SMS termination market, given our competition concerns for the bulk messages sent by businesses and public bodies.	Statement Q2 2025/26
Security and Resilience policy development programme. We will engage with the UK Government through the drafting & parliamentary passage of the Cyber Security & Resilience Bill. We will monitor and prepare for enhancements and expansions in our regulatory responsibilities and will continue to work with Government and report on obligations under the Telecoms Security Act and Network Information Security Regulations.	Report Q3 2025/26
Telecoms Security Act including security regime, High Risk Vendors and TBEST. We will proactively monitor communication providers' compliance with security regulatory obligations. We will continue to engage with industry to carry out our threat intelligence-led TBEST (penetration testing).	Ongoing
Mobile coverage. We will continue to improve the reporting of mobile coverage and performance. We will hold the mobile network operators to account for the accuracy of their reporting. New approaches and data sources will also be analysed.	Ongoing

---

[6] Financial quarters are used throughout the Plan of Work

Project Details	Milestones
Global Titles & Mobile Network Security. We will consider whether to implement any rule changes to the use of Global Titles to ensure that bad actors are prevented from accessing the global mobile signalling network and monitor the implementation of any such changes.	Ongoing
2G/3G switch off. We will continue to work with mobile operators and other service providers reliant on 2G/3G networks to support switch off. Our aim is to help minimise any disruption during the switch off process and to help protect customers, particularly vulnerable customers, from harm.	Ongoing
PSTN Switch off. We will continue to work with communication providers and government to ensure issues raised by the migration to digital landlines, including the ongoing switch-off of the PSTN, are identified and addressed with the aim of protecting consumers from harm and minimising disruption.	Ongoing
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Review. Strategic review of how access to ADR and customers experience through the ADR process is working. The aim is to ensure that the rules we have in place for providers remain effective and to consider the reapproval of the two ADR schemes under the Communications Act.	Statement Q1 2025/26
Digital Comparison Tools (DCTs) accreditation scheme. We will continue to provide regulatory oversight to Ofcom's voluntary accreditation scheme for DCTs, ensuring consumers are able to compare between different providers. This includes carrying out regular audits to check that the site(s) work well, and that the information provided is accessible, accurate and up to date.	Ongoing
Protecting vulnerable consumers. We will continue to monitor whether providers, including smaller providers, are treating customers in vulnerable circumstances fairly and giving them the support, and services, they need. We will also continue to work with the UKRN to improve outcomes for vulnerable consumers.	Ongoing
Affordability. We will continue to monitor and report on affordability indicators for communication services every quarter. We will publish a report on social tariff availability and take-up figures as part of the pricing trends report.	Report Q3 2025/26
Reporting on pricing trends in communications services. We will publish our annual report that tracks the prices that consumers of telecoms and payTV services pay.	Report Q3 2025/26
Comparing customer service. We will publish a report looking at the quality of service provided to residential customers by fixed and mobile telecoms providers.	Report Q1 2025/26

Project Details	Milestones
Monitoring compliance with Consumer Protection rules. We will continue to ensure that our consumer protection interventions and voluntary initiatives are being properly implemented and that they have a positive impact on consumers.	Ongoing
Future of numbering policy. We will continue our strategic review of the telephone numbering plan to make sure it provides what consumers understand, want and need from numbers for the coming decade.	Ongoing
080 and 116 Access Review. We are carrying out a review of the access conditions we imposed in relation to wholesale call origination for free-to-caller 080 and 116 numbers, to understand the results of imposing the conditions and consider whether they should be modified or revoked.	Consultation Q2 2025/26 Statement Q3 2025/26
Telecoms Vendor Diversification. We will continue to enable newer vendors' ability to test technology in a commercially neutral environment through the SmartRAN Open Network Interoperability Centre Labs open radio access network testbed. We will also continue to share our insight and expertise with the UK Government across diversification issues including the UK Telecoms Lab.	Report Q1 2025/26
Connected Nations. Following the publication of our annual UK report and four nations report in December 2024, covering fixed and mobile networks and network security / resilience, we will also produce a mid-year update and an update on planned network deployment data.	Report Q1 2025/26 & Q3 2025/26
Net neutrality monitoring. We will publish an annual report on our monitoring of the open internet regulations. This will include an update on the overall quality of broadband experienced by consumers as well as any issues with compliance to the rules by internet service providers.	Report Q3 2025/6
Future development of postal USO. We will publish a detailed consultation in Q4 2024/25 on proposals for reform of the postal USO, recognising the urgent need to ensure the sustainability of service, while also continuing to meet users' needs. This will be followed by a decision statement on any changes to the USO.	Statement Q2 2025/26
Royal Mail monitoring. We will continue to monitor the impact of guidance and obligations in the parcels market for the handling of complaints and treatment of disabled customers. We will continue our enhanced monitoring of Royal Mail's efficiency progress and the long-term sustainability of the postal USO. In addition to continuing to report on market data, consumer research and Royal Mail's financial & efficiency performance in our annual post monitoring report.	Report Q3 2025/26

Media we trust and value

Project Details	Milestones
Media Act. We will continue to work towards the timelines set out in our published roadmap on how we will implement the Media Act and prepare for our new duties across different regulatory spaces. This will include a variety of consultations, statements, reports and licence variations in 2025/26. The Media Act implementation section of the Ofcom website provides regular updates to keep stakeholders informed as we progress our work. More information is provided for each area of our work below.	Ongoing
Part 1a: Media Act PSB reform. Following consultations in early 2025, we will publish guidance for statements of programme policy (SoPPs) and guidance on quotas and commissioning from independent producers in Q2 2025/26.	Consultation Q1 2025/26 Statement Q2 2025/26
Part 1b: Media Act Listed Events. We will issue a consultation on our proposals for implementing the changes to the Listed Events regime made by the Media Act 2024, followed by a statement.	Consultation Q1 2025/26 Statement Q3 2025/26
Part 2: Media Act Availability & Prominence. We will advise the Secretary of State on which platforms should be in scope of the new availability and prominence regime under the Media Act. We plan to consult to inform our final advice to the Secretary of State.	Consultation Q1 2025/26 Statement Q2 2025/26
Part 2: Media Act Availability & Prominence. We are also required to designate the commercial PSB players within scope of the new regime. We aim to publish our statement on the methodology we will use for determining PSB player designation in Q1 2025/26, and issue our final designation decisions in a statement in Q4 2025/26.	Statement Q1 2025/26 Statement Q4 2025/26
Part 2: Media Act Availability & Prominence. We plan to consult on our codes of practice on how platforms can comply with their new prominence and accessibility requirements as well as associated guidance in Q3 2025/26. We will then publish a statement in Q4 2025/26.	Consultation Q3 2025/26 Statement Q4 2025/26
Part 3: Media Act Channel 4 commissioning policy. We will consult on guidance for Channel 4 on preparing its statement of commissioning policy that will apply when it establishes a production business.	Consultation Q2 2025/26
Part 4a: Media Act VoD Code. We will prepare a report on the operation of the VoD market in the UK, responding to a request from the Secretary of State in September. The Secretary of State must have regard to the contents of Ofcom's report before making regulations that determine the services that are designated as 'Tier 1' services. We will engage with larger providers ahead of preparing the market report.	Report Q1 2025/26 Consultation Q2 2025/26

Project Details	Milestones
Review of VoD audience protection measures. Ahead of the VoD Code we will also be reviewing the audience protection measures that VoD providers have in place, to assess whether they are adequate for the protection of audiences from harm.	Report Q2 2025/26
Part 4b: On demand programme service (ODPS) VoD standards code and VoD accessibility code. Subject to the Secretary of State's decision on designated Tier 1 providers, we will consult on a proposed VoD code and on the introduction of accessibility requirements for VoD services in scope.	Consultation Q2 2025/26 Statement Q3 2025/26
Part 5: Media Act Radio regulation. We will publish our statement on implementing the changes required by the Media Act in particular new local news and information requirements for local commercial radio, as well as new requirements for digital radio multiplexes. We will vary licences accordingly.	Statement Q1 2025/26
Part 6: Media Act voice assistants. We will advise the Secretary of State on which radio selection services (RSS) should be designated in Q1 2025/26. We will then put in place a process for internet radio services to notify us to benefit from the legislation. We will consult on a code of practice for RSS once the Secretary of State has designated relevant services**.**	Report Q1 2025/26 Consultation Q4 2025/26
PSM review. Following publication of our review of PSB past performance and future PSM challenges in 2024/25, we will engage with stakeholders and publish our findings on how to strengthen the future provision of PSM content by the end of Q2 2025/26.	Report Q2 2025/26
BBC performance monitoring. We will set out how we have carried out our duties and assess the BBC's compliance with specified requirements in the Framework Agreement, the Operating Framework and under the Operating Licence. We will also publish our annual report on the BBC's performance across our duties, including delivering its Mission and Public Purposes across its public services and continuing to meet audience needs as it modernises its services.	Report Q3 2025/26
BBC Periodic Review. Ofcom is required to complete a second Periodic Review before the BBC Charter ends in December 2027. We will review the BBC's performance and relevance to UK audiences and expect to review aspects of the BBC's regulation to ensure it is fit for purpose.	Report Q4 2025/26
BBC Mid-Term Review competition guidance. Subject to completion of the new Framework Agreement between DCMS and the BBC, we will update our guidance on assessing changes to BBC services.	Statement Q1 2025/6
BBC Online Material Code. We will deliver a BBC Online Material Code that reflects the principles of the Standards Objectives that underpin the Broadcasting Code. We will consult on the Code and implement new rules within 12 months of the amended Framework Agreement being published.	Statement Q2 2025/6

Project Details	Milestones
BBC Audio. We will carry out an assessment of the BBC's Public Interest Tests on the four planned new BBC DAB+ stations and changes to BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra.	Statement Q2 2025/26
C4C Statement of Media Content Policy. We will publish our response to Channel 4 Corporation's Statement of Media Content Policy on its plans to deliver its remit and media content duties.	Report Q2 2025/26
Code Guidance review. We are aiming to publish our refreshed Broadcasting Code guidance alongside the final statement on the VoD Code.	Publish Q3 2025/26
Local TV renewals process. New legislation providing us with the power to complete the renewal process between March and November 2025 was laid before Parliament in November 2024.	Statement Q3 2025/26
General Procedures review. We will publish our statement on changes to the general procedures for investigating breaches of broadcast licences.	Statement Q2 2025/26
On Demand Programme Service (ODPS) accessibility monitoring. We will continue our ODPS accessibility monitoring and will publish our annual report (subject to timing in relation to ODPS accessibility Code consultation).	Report Q1 2025/26
Diversity in broadcasting monitoring and reporting. Alongside ongoing stakeholder engagement, we will continue our annual data collection for our report on the diversity of broadcasters' workforces.	Report Q3 2025/26
LHFs advertising. Restrictions on the advertising of less healthy food (LHF) and drink products come into force in Q3 2025/26. We will work with the ASA as it prepares for implementation and enforcement.	Ongoing
Media Nations. We will publish our annual report on key trends in the television, video, radio and audio sectors, which also features a version for each of the nations of the UK.	Report Q2 2025/26

We live a safer life online

Project Details	Milestones
Tackling illegal content online. Once the Illegal Content Code of Practice has been approved by Parliament, we will consult on further proposals to strengthen our Codes on the most significant online harms, which will add additional measures to the baseline established in our first Codes.	Consultation Q1 2025/26
Protection of Children. We will publish our Protection of Children Codes of Practice and risk assessment guidance, laying out how services should approach their new duties relating to content that is harmful to children.	Statement Q1 2025/26
Age verification for pornography providers. In Q4 2024/25 we will publish our final guidance on age verification for pornography providers, alongside our guidance on Children's Access Assessments. Subject to Parliamentary processes, we expect these age assurance duties to become enforceable from Q4 2024/25 and we will start to monitor compliance.	Ongoing
Violence Against Women and Girls. We are consulting in February 2025 and will finalise our best practice guidance later in 2025, which focuses on the content and activity which disproportionately affects women and girls.	Ongoing
Duties on categorised services. Subject to the necessary secondary legislation being passed by Parliament, we will publish a register of categorised services and issue draft transparency notices to services, setting out requirements for transparency reports. We will also consult on draft Codes of Practice and draft guidance on additional duties on categorised services.	Publication Q2 2025/26 Consultation Q4 2025/26
Minimum standards of accuracy for accredited technologies. Taking account of responses to our consultation, we will look to finalise our advice to the Secretary of State on minimum standards of accuracy in the detection of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) and terrorism content. We will publish guidance for Part 3 service providers about how we propose to exercise our new power to issue notices to deal with CSEA/terrorism content under Chapter 5 of Part 7 of the OSA.	Ongoing
VSP Programme. The UK Government has given VSPs notice of its intention to repeal the regime. Ofcom will support VSP providers in transitioning to the online safety regime and produce an end of regime report following repeal.	Report Q3 2025/26
Supervision. We will continue engaging with selected services. This targeted oversight includes understanding services' measures in detail, assessing how well they protect users, and pushing for timely improvements where necessary.	Report Q3 2025/26

Project Details	Milestones
Fees. The online safety regime will be funded by fees paid by providers of regulated services whose qualifying worldwide revenue (QWR) meets or exceeds a certain threshold, and who are not otherwise exempt. We will submit our advice to Secretary of State on the QWR threshold in Q1 2025/26.	Ongoing
Super-complaints. DSIT has consulted on the eligibility criteria for entities to make a super-complaint under section 169 of the OSA; criteria for a super-complaint to be admissible, and procedures for making a super-complaint. The Secretary of State will finalise these criteria in secondary legislation, after which Ofcom will consult on guidance about super-complaints.	Consultation Q1 2025/26
Enforcement. By the end of Q4 2025/26 duties related to illegal harms, protection of children and age assurance will all be in force. We will monitor compliance and where we see clear and consistent failures to comply with these duties, we will look at using our enforcement powers to take action.	Ongoing
Online Nation. We will publish our annual report on what people are doing online and their attitudes to, and experiences of, using the internet.	Report Q3 2025/26

Enabling wireless services in the UK economy

Project Details	Milestones
Award of mmwave spectrum licences (26 and 40 GHz). We plan to open applications for the auction of mmWave spectrum licences in high density areas and plan to grant licences to use the spectrum for mobile services in Q1 2025/26.	Spectrum auction Q1 2025/26
Enabling access to 1.4 GHz. We will decide the design of the auction of additional 1.4 GHz spectrum for mobile use.	Statement Q2 2025/26
Future use of upper 6 GHz. We are exploring options to make the upper 6 GHz band available for additional services taking account of international developments. We will also consider additional uses for the lower 6 GHz band.	Statement Q3 2025/26
Enabling access to 1900 MHz. We will issue a statement with respect to use and licensing rules for the 1900 MHz spectrum after completing our consultation in 2024/25 for national infrastructure users such as rail safety communication and emergency services.	Statement Q1 2025/26

Project Details	Milestones
Expanding spectrum access for satellite gateways. We will decide our approach, following consultation, to making additional spectrum available for satellite gateway use in Q/V and E bands to meet growing demand for satellite connectivity.	Statement Q2 2025/26
Expanding spectrum access for aeronautical and maritime satellite connectivity. We will consult on expanding spectrum access for aeronautical and maritime satellite services in Ku and Ka band, implementing WRC-23 decisions. This would provide additional capacity for provision of satellite broadband services for ships and planes.	Consultation Q2 2025/26 Statement Q4 2025/26
Updating our satellite authorisation framework. We are reviewing our NGSO licensing framework (introduced in 2021) and our satellite gateway licence fees policy. We will also update our Procedures for the Management of Satellite Filings, implementing WRC-19 and WRC-23 decisions.	NGSO licencing publication Q1 2025/26 Gateway Licence Fees publication Q2 2025/26 Management of Satellite Filings consultation Q2 2025/26
Regulatory framework for direct satellite to mobile handset connectivity. We will consult on putting in place a regulatory framework to enable satellite services direct to mobile handsets where there is agreement between satellite and mobile operators. This could extend mobile coverage and provide resilience to terrestrial mobile networks in emergency and disaster scenarios.	Statement Q2 2025/26
Simplifying and updating maritime licences. We will consult on proposals to update some of our maritime licences to implement WRC decisions and streamline licence terms and conditions.	Consultation Q3 2025/26
Review of mobile spectrum licence fees. We are reviewing the annual licence fees which we charge for 900, 1800 and 2100 MHz mobile spectrum licences, having considered the request from BT.	Statement Q2 2025/26

Cross–cutting projects

Project Details	Milestones
Media literacy. We will publish our statement of recommendations to aid platforms and broadcasters in providing better media literacy support for their users, more evaluation of the effectiveness of that support and longer-term funding for media literacy initiatives.	Statement Q2 2025/26

Project Details	Milestones
Reporting on adults' media literacy. We will publish our annual Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report, looking at media literacy among UK adults. Alongside this, we will publish our annual Adults' Media Lives report, detailing the findings from our small-scale, longitudinal, ethnographic research.	Report Q1 2025/26
Reporting on children's media literacy. We will publish our annual Children's Media Use and Attitudes report and our annual Children's Media Lives report, detailing the findings from our small-scale, longitudinal, ethnographic qualitative research among children and young people.	Report Q1 2025/26
News consumption report. We will publish our annual research into people's use of and attitudes to news services across television, radio, print, and online.	Report Q2 2025/26
Digital markets. We will continue to consider how digital competition and consumer issues in impact the sectors we regular and how best to respond, including through collaboration with the CMA / DMU.	Ongoing

A3. Impact assessment

Impact assessments provide stakeholders with a valuable evaluation of the options considered in making policy decisions and show why the chosen option was preferred. They form part of best practice policy making and regulatory practice. This is reflected in section 7 of the Communications Act, which requires Ofcom to carry out and publish an impact assessment in cases where implementing a proposal would be likely to have a significant impact on businesses or the general public, or where there is a major change in Ofcom's activities.

We recognise that the decisions we make can deliver significant value for citizens and consumers but can also impose significant costs on our stakeholders. Therefore, Ofcom carries out impact assessments in a large majority of policy decisions, to consider if our policy interventions are proportionate and appropriate.

In the case of the proposals for the 2025/26 Plan of Work, we have not carried out an impact assessment as each policy and all related publications and work programmes contained in the Plan are impact assessed individually as appropriate.

A4. Responding to this consultation

How to respond

A4.1 Ofcom would like to receive views and comments on the issues raised in this document, by 5pm on 29th January 2025.

A4.2 You can download a response form from https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/annual-reports-and-plans/consultation-ofcoms-plan-of-work-202526/. You can return this by email or post to the address provided in the response form.

A4.3 If your response is a large file, or has supporting charts, tables or other data, please email it to planofwork@ofcom.org.uk, as an attachment in Microsoft Word format, together with the cover sheet. This email address is for this consultation only and will not be valid once the consultation is closed.

A4.4 Responses may alternatively be posted to the address below, marked with the title of the consultation:

Plan of Work team

Ofcom

Riverside House 2A Southwark Bridge Road

London SE1 9HA

A4.5 We welcome responses in formats other than print, for example an audio recording or a British Sign Language video. To respond in BSL:

- Send us a recording of you signing your response. This should be no longer than minutes. Suitable file formats are DVDs, wmv or QuickTime files; or

- Upload a video of you signing your response directly to YouTube (or another hosting site) and send us the link.

A4.6 We will publish a transcript of any audio or video responses we receive (unless your response is confidential).

A4.7 We do not need a paper copy of your response as well as an electronic version. We will acknowledge receipt of a response submitted to us by email.

A4.8 You do not have to answer all the questions in the consultation if you do not have a view; a short response on just one point is fine. We also welcome joint responses.

A4.9 It would be helpful if your response could include a reference to the section and paragraph your response refers to. It would also help if you could explain why you hold your views, and what you think the effect of Ofcom's proposals would be.

A4.10　　If you want to discuss the issues and questions raised in this consultation, please send an email to planofwork@ofcom.org.uk.

Confidentiality

A4.11　　Consultations are more effective if we publish the responses before the consultation period closes. This can help people and organisations with limited resources or familiarity with the issues to respond in a more informed way. So, in the interests of transparency and good regulatory practice, and because we believe it is important that everyone who is interested in an issue can see other respondents' views, we usually publish responses on the Ofcom website at regular intervals during and after the consultation period.

A4.12　　If you think your response should be kept confidential, please specify which part(s) this applies to and explain why. Please send any confidential sections as a separate annex. If you want your name, address, other contact details or job title to remain confidential, please provide them only in the cover sheet, so that we don't have to edit your response.

A4.13　　If someone asks us to keep part of or all of a response confidential, we will treat this request seriously and try to respect it. But sometimes we will need to publish all responses, including those that are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations.

A4.14　　To fulfil our pre-disclosure duty, we may share a copy of your response with the relevant government department before we publish it on our website.

A4.15　　Please also note that copyright and all other intellectual property in responses will be assumed to be licensed to Ofcom to use. Ofcom's intellectual property rights are explained further in our Terms of use - Ofcom.

Next steps

A4.16　　Following this consultation period, Ofcom plans to publish a statement in March 2025.

A4.17　　If you wish, you can register to receive mail updates alerting you to new Ofcom publications.

Ofcom's consultation processes

A4.18　　Ofcom aims to make responding to a consultation as easy as possible. For more information, please see our consultation principles in Annex 5.

A4.19　　If you have any comments or suggestions on how we manage our consultations, please email us at consult@ofcom.org.uk. We particularly welcome ideas on how Ofcom could more effectively seek the views of groups or individuals, such as small businesses and residential consumers, who are less likely to give their opinions through a formal consultation.

A4.20　　If you would like to discuss these issues, or Ofcom's consultation processes more generally, please contact the corporation secretary:

Corporation Secretary

Ofcom

Riverside House 2a Southwark Bridge Road

London SE1 9HA

Email: corporationsecretary@ofcom.org.uk

A5. Ofcom's consultation principles

Ofcom has seven principles that it follows for every public written consultation:

Before the consultation

A5.1   Wherever possible, we will hold informal talks with people and organisations before announcing a big consultation, to find out whether we are thinking along the right lines. If we do not have enough time to do this, we will hold an open meeting to explain our proposals, shortly after announcing the consultation.

During the consultation

A5.2   We will be clear about whom we are consulting, why, on what questions and for how long.

A5.3   We will make the consultation document as short and simple as possible, with a summary of no more than two pages. We will try to make it as easy as possible for people to give us a written response.

A5.4   We will consult for up to ten weeks, depending on the potential impact of our proposals.

A5.5   A person within Ofcom will be in charge of making sure we follow our own guidelines and aim to reach the largest possible number of people and organisations who may be interested in the outcome of our decisions. Ofcom's Consultation Champion is the main person to contact if you have views on the way we run our consultations.

A5.6   If we are not able to follow any of these seven principles, we will explain why.

After the consultation

A5.7   We think it is important that everyone who is interested in an issue can see other people's views, so we usually publish the responses on our website at regular intervals during and after the consultation period. After the consultation we will make our decisions and publish a statement explaining what we are going to do, and why, showing how respondents' views helped to shape these decisions.

A6. Consultation coversheet

BASIC DETAILS

Consultation title:

To (Ofcom contact):

Name of respondent:

Representing (self or organisation/s):

Address (if not received by email):

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please tick below what part of your response you consider is confidential, giving your reasons why

- Nothing ☐
- Name/contact details/job title ☐
- Whole response ☐
- Organisation ☐
- Part of the response ☐

If you selected 'Part of the response', please specify which parts:

If you want part of your response, your name or your organisation not to be published, can Ofcom still publish a reference to the contents of your response (including, for any confidential parts, a general summary that does not disclose the specific information or enable you to be identified)?

Yes ☐   No ☐

DECLARATION

I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response that Ofcom can publish. However, in supplying this response, I understand that Ofcom may need to publish all responses, including those which are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations. If I have sent my response by email, Ofcom can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Ofcom aims to publish responses at regular intervals during and after the consultation period. If your response is non-confidential (in whole or in part), and you would prefer us to publish your response only once the consultation has ended, please tick here ☐

Name   Signed (if hard copy)