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## **Terms of reference for: Communications Consumer Panel**

Approved by the Ofcom Board on 24 May 2016  
Amended on 6 February 2019

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# 1. Statutory obligations

- 1.1 The Communications Act 2003 (“the Act”) requires Ofcom to establish and maintain effective arrangements for consultation about the carrying out of their functions with the types of consumers set out in section 16 (1)(a) to (c) of the Act. These arrangements must include the establishment and maintenance of a panel of persons referred to in the Act as “the Consumer Panel” with the function of advising both Ofcom and such other persons as the Panel think fit. Ofcom has established such a Panel called the Communications Consumer Panel (“the Panel”).

# 2. Functions

- 2.1 The functions of the Panel will be to:
- a) seek to identify issues affecting small business and domestic consumers and citizens in the communications sector, both collectively as a Panel and individually as Members, with particular reference to the sectors where they have particular knowledge or expertise;
  - b) provide advice to Ofcom about general and specific issues concerning the communications sector affecting small business and domestic consumers and citizens;
  - c) provide advice and comment as required on matters brought to the Panel by Ofcom;
  - d) offer comment, as appropriate, on consultations and research undertaken by Ofcom;
  - e) carry out research on behalf of Ofcom when requested by Ofcom to do so;
  - f) provide advice and comment to other bodies on consumer and citizen issues relating to the communications sector, as the Panel sees fit
  - g) publish such information as the Panel thinks fit about the advice it gives, about the carrying out of the Panel’s other functions and about the results of research carried out by the Panel or on their behalf;
  - h) make arrangements for the carrying out of research into such other matters appearing to the Panel to be relevant to the carrying out of the Panel’s functions as it sees fit;
  - i) prepare and publish an annual report of the Panel’s activities;
  - j) adhere to the principles set out in the Memorandum of Understanding with Ofcom; and
  - k) contribute information about its work to Ofcom’s annual report to ensure the work of the regulator within the communications sector on issues affecting consumers and citizens is reflected.

## 3. Membership

- 3.1 The Panel and the Chairman will be appointed by the Ofcom Board and shall consist of up to twelve Members at any time (all of whom will be non-executive).
- 3.2 Where the Chairman considers it appropriate, decisions may be taken by e-mail.
- 3.3 In the absence of the Chairman the remaining members shall elect one of their number to chair a meeting.

## 4. Quorum

- 4.1 A quorum for any meeting will consist of four Members plus the Chairman. Members' attendance through telephone or video link is permissible for the purposes of determining a quorum.

## 5. Meetings

- 5.1 The Panel will meet not fewer than 5 times and not more than 12 times a year.
- 5.2 Agendas will be approved by the Chairman with an invitation to any Member of the Panel to submit matters for inclusion on the agenda.
- 5.3 A formal minute will be taken of all Panel meetings. Once approved by the Chairman of the Panel, the minutes of each Panel meeting will also be published on the Panel website.
- 5.4 The minutes of each Panel meeting will be submitted direct to the Ofcom Board for noting.
- 5.5 The Chairman of a particular meeting shall have a casting vote in the event that the Panel is unable to reach a consensual decision.