

Your response

Question	Your response
Do you have any comments on our proposals?	<p>We welcome Ofcom's plan of work and recognise the positive points picked up from ACE's inputs to Ofcom throughout the past year.</p> <p>We recognise that the businesses regulated by Ofcom are each experiencing significant change driven by both technology developments and changes in the way their customers interact and use the services provided. This is true of Communications, Media and Post. Ofcom has to find the right balance between regulation and flexibility for the businesses to evolve to meet these challenges, and the plan provides a strong approach to delivering those needs.</p> <p>England is perhaps one of the most diverse of the four nations and we welcome the recognition of the needs of different groups of users, with different backgrounds, ethnicity and particular additional needs. We are pleased to see that Ofcom seeks to ensure that the regulated businesses reflect those differences in order to better serve their customers, and that Ofcom itself, as an organisation, seeks to reflect the full range of diversity in all its forms.</p> <p>It is important to note that users can be both individuals and businesses, both small and large, and that the needs of these groups varies immensely between urban, and rural areas. It is good to see that providing access for rural users is a focus area, particularly in Communications and Post. We will continue to provide advice to help to ensure that solutions for Rural areas are as joined up as possible, enabling services to be provided consistently regardless of location.</p> <p>We welcome in particular the work to encourage fibre deployment and more consistent mobile coverage throughout England, including transport spines. We welcome the work carried out by the Communications Consumer Panel, which provides an important contribution to research and evidence to identify and track those changing needs.</p>

Communications is already critical to the functioning of the whole UK and we note the additional security and resilience requirements which Ofcom will be monitoring as part of the “Enabling strong, secure networks” theme. We also welcome ongoing work to ensure that as network technology evolves those networks are able to support other Critical National Infrastructure including road, rail, air and utility networks. This is a rapidly evolving landscape and we will continue to advocate for the right protections to be in place to ensure that providers have taken appropriate measures, and are able to respond efficiently in the event of a breach.

As the communications networks evolve from copper based delivery towards full fibre, with the closure of the PSTN in 2025 we will provide advice to ensure that consumers are kept fully informed, and those with particular needs are not disadvantaged during the changes. We will also provide advice to help to ensure that the right measures are put in place to make sure that quality of service does not degrade – for example post-dial delay (the time between dialling and connecting a call) and the quality of the voice connection must be maintained to a high standard as the technology used to deliver voice calls over fixed and mobile networks evolves.

We welcome the ambition that Ofcom has set out in the Small Screen Big Debate proposals to involve the widest participation possible in its review of Public Service Broadcasting. We plan to offer our advice and support for the consultation programme in England and are fully engaged already in the key issues for this important review.

Over the coming year, ACE will continue to draw on its broad expertise, and that of external networks, to provide advice and support to Ofcom. Our goal is to ensure that the needs of consumers and businesses in England are met as consistently and effectively as possible regardless of where they reside in England or what additional needs they may have.