

Content Board minutes 195(25)

Publication Minutes of the one-hundred and ninety-fifth meeting of the Content Board held on 1 July 2025 at Riverside House, London SE1 9HA and via Microsoft Teams

Present

Clive Jones	Chair and Ofcom Board Member
Dekan Apajee	Non-Executive Member for England
Simon Bucks	Non-Executive Member
Bob Downes	Non-Executive Member and Ofcom Board Member (via Teams)
Will Harding	Non-Executive Member and Ofcom Board Member
Peter Horrocks	Non-Executive Member
Ali Marsden	Executive Member and Director, Standards and Audience Protection
Maria McCann	Non-Executive Member for Northern Ireland
Ruth McElroy	Non-Executive Member for Wales
Cristina Nicolotti Squires	Executive Member and Group Director, Broadcasting and Media (Items 1-6 and 8-11)
Yolisa Phahle	Non-Executive Member
Kim Shillinglaw	Non-Executive Member

Apologies

Peter MacMahon	Non-Executive Member for Scotland
Chinmay Parikh	FCA/ Next-Generation NED observer

In attendance

Sharon Malley	Governance Manager
Siobhan Walsh	Director of Policy Development (Items 1-6)
Anthony Szykaruk	Content Policy Director (Items 1-5)

Item 1: Welcome and introduction

1. The Chair noted apologies from Peter MacMahon and Chinmay Parikh.

Item 2: Declaration of members' interests

2. There were no interests to declare.

Item 3: Minutes of the meeting held 29 April 2025 and matters arising – Content Board minutes 194(25)

3. The minutes of the Content Board meeting held on 29 April 2025 were **APPROVED**. There were no outstanding actions.

Item 4: Chair's report

4. The Chair updated Content Board on the work of the Ofcom Board, including progress with the appointment of a new chair of Channel 4, the launch of Ofcom's Map Your Mobile, implementation of the Online Safety Act and developments in the mobile market.
5. Content Board noted that the online safety regime had moved into a new phase and success would be measured by the impact of the measures. Many of the bigger players were cooperating with the new requirements but where there was resistance the first enforcement actions may begin fairly quickly.
6. Content Board **NOTED** the report.

Item 5: Broadcast and Media Group Policy and related teams' update – Paper CB 11(25)

7. Cristina Nicolotti Squires updated Content Board on Ofcom's work over the previous weekend in relation to comments by acts at Glastonbury which had been available to view on the BBC iPlayer. The team, including legal and standards, were considering next steps. She said the BBC report on Gaza would be published shortly, as would its Annual Report. Content Board discussed the Glastonbury incident and the BBC's response.
8. Cristina Nicolotti Squires said the Public Sector Media Review was on track for publication in mid-July. She had attended a roundtable with platforms and broadcasters to discuss prominence for PSM content, with conclusions that platforms and broadcasters could work better together and that broadcasters could work to make content available. YouTube appeared to have a mature relationship with broadcasters and was positioning itself as a new version of broadcast television. Content Board discussed YouTube's approach to commissioning and their relationships with independent production companies.
9. Content Board discussed the BBC's commissioning in nations and regions and noted that some independent producers who were based in nations and wanted to work nationwide were concerned that the current guidelines would discriminate against them. This would be monitored.
10. Content Board discussed Ofcom's consultation on requiring local commercial licensees to provide local news (including locally gathered news) and information. The issues regarding 'locally gathered' were noted.
11. Content Board **NOTED** the paper.

Item 6: News debrief 2025 – Paper CB 12(25)

12. A paper was presented on Ofcom's forthcoming publication on news consumption in the UK. The report showed that interest in news was declining but almost all adults consumed some news in some form. Younger people were less likely to be interested in news than adults and those who did not follow news gave reasons including it being depressing, boring or untrustworthy.
13. Proportions of people getting news from TV including on-demand continued to slightly decline and were now on a par with those getting news online. News audiences in radio, newspapers and social media remained steady this year. Younger people were more likely to get news online while older people were more likely to use TV, particularly BBC1. Of the top 20 news sources, BBC1 was most viewed, Facebook had moved into second place above ITV and Channel 4 had dropped out of the top 10.
14. Content Board discussed the paper and noted that it was not always clear whether people who said they got their news from social media were referring to posts from traditional news providers posted on social channels or were referring to non-traditional news sources such as influencers. It was noted that the contract for this programme of research was recently re-tendered and thought was being given on how best to capture details on news consumption. In future reports, information on consumption provided by platforms would also be incorporated in the report. It would be helpful to have as much granularity on this as possible.
15. Content Board noted that many people found their news on social media and that algorithms for news providers, including PSBs, would be driven by their commercial understanding of their own audiences and how best to reach them.
16. Content Board **NOTED** the paper.

Item 7: Media Act Accessibility Requirements – CB 13(25)

17. A paper was presented on accessibility requirements for disabled people in the Media Act. She said content providers designated as Tier 1 would need to meet new standards on subtitling, signing and audio description, provide information to users about accessibility services and report annually. The Act also introduced accessibility requirements for regulated connected TV interfaces, including that they should provide information about which programmes carried accessibility services. There would still be some gaps between the two regimes and Ofcom was considering how to use its convening powers to mitigate this.
18. Content Board discussed the paper and noted that changes in the consumption of media were happening rapidly. The Act allowed Tier 1 services a long time to adopt the new provisions and Ofcom would look at using its influence to persuade the industry to move more quickly.
19. It was noted that providers likely to be designated as Tier 1 had a generally good track record of providing accessibility services but the new provisions

may help resolve some anomalies, such as subtitles not being available on the iPlayer via Apple TV.

20. The Act's signing requirements would be more complicated to deliver than subtitling and audio description and this would need to be monitored. It was noted that adding sign interpretation to existing content was cheaper than producing original content in sign language but audiences may prefer to have original signed content where possible. For members of the deaf community with low literacy levels signing was more accessible than subtitles.
21. Advertising was explicitly excluded from the programme accessibility requirements under the Act. A note on this would be provided to the Content Board.
22. Content Board **NOTED** the paper.

Item 8: Media Nations report – CB 14(25)

23. A paper was presented on Ofcom's draft Media Nations 2025 report, which was due to be published at the end of July.
24. Content Board discussed the report and noted that there had been a small decline in total in-home viewing, with the drop in linear viewing not compensated by the increase in digital formats. The key trend was a move from linear viewing to online viewing.
25. Content Board discussed the listed events regime and the relationship between major sporting events and viewing figures. It was noted that Ofcom's work on the PSMR also referred to listed events and it would be helpful to discuss with Siobhan Walsh and Cristina Nicolotti Squires whether to identify the listed events in the Media Nations report.
26. It was noted that Northern Ireland watched more live TV than any other nation. It was not clear what was driving this, although it may be due to a high interest in news in Northern Ireland, which was mostly consumed live, and a lower take-up of connected TVs.
27. Content Board noted that the advertising categories used in the Media Nations report did not appear to be aligned with those used in the industry and this should be reviewed prior to publication.
28. It was noted that the viewing figures provided by BARB captured only at-home viewing so excluded any viewing on public transport or elsewhere outside the home. This allowed for comparisons with previous years but might mean some viewing minutes were lost.
29. Content Board noted the significant increase in podcast consumption across all demographics. The advertising revenue figures for podcasts excluded YouTube podcasting.
30. Content Board **NOTED** paper CB 14(25).

Items 9-10: Information items

31. Content Board **NOTED** the following information items:

- Minutes of the Ofcom Board of 2 April 2025 and 14 May 2025.
- Minutes of the Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD of 10 April 2025 and 15 May 2025.

Item 11: Any other business

32. There was no other business.

Item 12: Date of the next meeting

33. The next scheduled Content Board meeting would be held on 30 September 2025.