

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 3 March 2025

Members were welcomed to the 322nd meeting of the Ofcom Board. In addition to Board members, Martin Ballantyne (General Counsel), Veronica Branton (Corporation Secretary), Francesca Carter (Head of Governance) and Sharon Malley (Governance Manager) attended throughout.

Declaration of members' interests

1. No new interests were declared.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 5 February 2025 were approved as a correct record and progress against actions was noted.

Chair's report

3. The Chair updated the Board on his activity, including meetings and Ofcom's letter to the BBC on its recent documentary on Gaza. He updated the Board on progress with the appointment of the Chair of Channel 4.
4. The Board noted the report.

Chief Executive's report

5. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activity, including Ofcom's work on the Upper 6 GHz band, forthcoming publications, recent litigation decisions and online safety work.
6. The Board discussed the Chief Executive's report, including the difficult investment climate for telecoms recent judgments in two cases against Ofcom, both looking at issues of due impartiality.
7. The Board noted the paper.

Risk and Audit Committee update

8. Angela Dean updated the Board on the meeting of the Risk and Audit Committee held on 26 February 2025, including internal audit work, a deep dive on changes in technology, markets and consumer behaviour, and updates on pensions and environmental reporting.
9. The Board discussed the update, including data sovereignty and security.
10. The Board noted the update.

Annual review of the Strategic Risk Register

11. The Board discussed a paper on the Strategic Risk Register. She said the Risk and Audit Committee had discussed the paper at its February meeting and had requested more information on how individual mitigations related to the overall picture of risk across Ofcom.
12. The Board approved the paper including a change to the target risk rating of the Trusted Regulator strategic risk.

Ofcom programme of work 2025/26 – budget and plan of work

13. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s Budget and Plan of Work 2025/26. The Board noted that the consultation on the Plan of Work had been constructive that the consultation document had anticipated views well and so no major changes were being proposed. 2025/26 would be the first year of the new Three-Year Business Plan and a brief summary of the plan would be published alongside the Plan of Work to provide context.
14. The Board discussed the proposed 2025/26 Budget, including the spending cap, potential investment opportunities and the proposed transformation programme. The Board noted the impact of the budget on regulated industries.
15. The Board approved the paper.

Update on protecting children from harm online: April statement

16. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s Protecting Children from Harms Online Statement. It was noted that Ofcom was on track to meet the statutory deadline for publication of the statement and that new regime would introduce more robust age checks, safer algorithms, better moderations and more support for children using in-scope services.
17. The Board noted the potential responses that platforms may adopt, including changing or removing their minimum age provisions. The Board discussed how the success of the regime would be measured, including through the use of research among children and parents.
18. The Board noted the proposed approach to the statement and the steps to publication.

Board and Committee review report 2024/25

19. The Board discussed a paper on the outcomes of the 2024/25 Board and Committee review. The noted that an external evaluation would be carried out in 2025/26.
20. The Board noted the paper.

Corporate Governance Framework 2024/25

21. The Board discussed a paper on the annual review of Ofcom’s Corporate Governance Framework. The Board noted that the substantive changes related to the Financial Authorities

Framework had been recommended for approval following discussion with the Risk and Audit Committee.

22. The Board approved the revised Corporate Governance Framework and the Codes of Conduct for the Advisory Committees, the Content Board and the Communications Consumer Panel/Advisory Committee for Older and Disabled People to be effective from 1 April 2025.

Disinformation and Misinformation Committee

23. The Board discussed a paper on the statutory Advisory Committee on Disinformation and Misinformation. The Board discussed the role of the committee, which would be research-led, and asked that revised Terms of Reference be brought to the next Board meeting for approval, alongside the proposed appointments, bringing out the objective and evidence focussed approach proposed for the Committee which could provide practical advice on protecting people against specific types of harm.
24. The Board noted the paper.

Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland

25. The Board approved the appointment of Dr Colm Murphy as the Chair of the Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland from 10 March 2025 until 9 March 2028.

Annual Health and Safety reports

26. The Board approved the 2024 Health & Safety Annual Update and the Health and Safety Strategy.

Standing items

27. The Board noted the following standing items:
- Non-executive member updates
 - Quarterly performance report
 - Board work programme and publications schedule
 - Minutes of the Advisory Committee for Wales of 26 November 2024, Communications Consumer Panel of 16 January 2025, and Content Board of 21 January 2025.

Items in the Reading Room

28. The Board noted the Plan of Work 2025/26 consultation document, the full Corporate Governance Framework and the Codes of Conduct for Advisory Committees, CCP/ACOD and Content Board.

Any other business

29. The Board noted that this was Lindsey Fussell's final meeting as a member of the Ofcom and recorded its sincere gratitude for her contribution over the years.

Date of the next meeting

30. The next Board meeting would be held on 2 April 2025.