

**PUBLICATION MINUTES OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF  
THE OFCOM BOARD HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2024  
AT THE BARBICAN CENTRE, EC2Y 8DS, AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Present**

Michael Grade	Chair
Karen Baxter	Non-Executive Member
Melanie Dawes	Executive Member and Chief Executive
Angela Dean	Non-Executive Member
Bob Downes	Non-Executive Member
Lindsey Fussell	Executive Member and Interim Group Director, Online Safety
Will Harding	Non-Executive Member
Clive Jones	Non-Executive Member (via Teams)
Ben Verwaayen	Non-Executive Member

**In attendance**

Natalie Black	Group Director, Network and Communications (from November 2024)
Martin Ballantyne	General Counsel
Veronica Branton	Corporation Secretary
Francesca Carter	Head of Governance (via Teams)
Sharon Malley	Governance Manager
Cristina Nicolotti Squires	Group Director, Broadcasting and Media (Item 6)
Siobhan Walsh	Director of Policy Development (Item 6)
Ali-Abbas Ali	Director of Broadcasting Competition (Item 6)
Adam Baxter	Director, Standards and Audience Protection (Item 6)

	Action
<b>Item 1: Declaration of members' interests</b>	
1. No new interests were declared.	
<b>Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2024 (317(24)) and matters arising</b>	
2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 25 September 2024 would be reviewed by the Chair and Karen Baxter and presented to the next meeting for approval.	
3. A summary of progress against action points was <b>NOTED</b> .	
<b>Item 3: Chair's report</b>	
4. The Chair updated the Board on two non-executive appointments to the Ofcom Board. He said he had visited the Manchester office and had received informative briefings from the teams based there. He had also attended a constructive meeting with the CEO and representatives of Netflix to discuss their plans. The Board discussed Netflix's strategy and noted the relationship between the development of UK talent and skills, public service media and the ability of broadcasters such as Netflix to invest in production in the UK.	
5. The Board <b>NOTED</b> the verbal report.	

	Action
<p><b>Item 4: Chief Executive's report – Board paper 101(24)</b></p> <p>6. Melanie Dawes presented paper 101(24) on her activities. She had attended the government's investment summit where business leaders, ministers and regulators had discussed opportunities for economic growth and she had participated in a discussion on telecoms. The event had been positive and encouraging.</p> <p>7. Melanie Dawes updated the Board on the hearings relating to the proposed merger between Vodafone and Three and noted that compliance work with GB News continued, although she was not personally involved in these activities.</p> <p>8. Online safety work was proceeding and Ofcom would shortly be publishing a progress report and an updated roadmap for 2025 and beyond. There would be resequencing of work in some areas and the team was prepared for questions from stakeholders on this. Lindsey Fussell said there was shortly to be an exchange of letters with the Government on Ofcom's work following the civil disorder in the Summer and that she would be attending the All Party Parliamentary Group on online safety in the next week. Ofcom was emphasising to stakeholders including the Government that at the end of the year the first Codes would be concluded, and from the start of 2025 the duties would begin to be enforceable one by one. This would mark a switch from policy-making to action by the platforms, and Ofcom was preparing enforcement plans.</p> <p>9. The Board discussed the draft Statements of Strategic Priorities for online safety and telecoms. The importance of providing regulatory certainty to industry was noted.</p> <p>10. The Board discussed the extent to which the transparency of social media platforms would be increased following their completion of risk assessments in 2025. It was noted that the process of conducting the risk assessments would help to consolidate the work to date on developing the relationships between Ofcom and platforms.</p> <p>11. The Board <b>NOTED</b> the paper.</p>	
<p><b>Item 5: Report from the Chair of the People Committee</b></p> <p>12. Ben Verwaayen updated the Board on the meeting of the People Committee held on 8 October 2024. He said the Committee had discussed the findings of the Colleague Survey, which had shown improved levels of colleague satisfaction and engagement in all key areas. The Committee had also discussed Ofcom's new pay framework and had noted various matters relating to pay and bonuses.</p> <p>13. The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update.</p>	
<p><b>Item 6: Update on the BBC programme 102(24)</b></p> <p>14. Siobhan Walsh presented paper 102(24) on Ofcom's BBC programme. She said it had been a busy period, with the BBC making several changes to its operations in response to financial constraints. Ofcom's Annual Report on the BBC would assess its compliance with the requirements in its operating licence and in areas such as competition and standards. The report would be informed by Ofcom's mystery shopping research, which had looked at how the BBC had responded to Ofcom's previous concerns on complaint handling, and would be linked to Ofcom's work on the Public Service Media Review and the Local Media Review.</p>	

	Action
<p>15. The Board discussed the mystery shopping research and noted that the early findings were positive and gave broad support to the BBC's assertion that it had sought to implement Ofcom's previous recommendations on complaint handling. The research would be helpful in the context of the forthcoming BBC Charter review and was a concrete demonstration of the value of Ofcom's regulation of the BBC. The Board noted that the scope of the research was more extensive than that previously conducted and compared favourably on cost compared with other recent pieces of audience attitudes research.</p> <p>16. The Board noted that the BBC had appointed a new Head of News in 2022. She had a commercial background and was bringing this experience to the role. Proposed changes to BBC news were aimed at making savings, improving efficiency in news production, removing duplication and extracting as much value as possible from the BBC's news offering.</p> <p>17. The Board noted that Ofcom had supported moves to give the BBC more flexibility to innovate and the next Charter review would take stock of the broader market context in which the BBC operated. The tension between the BBC's global position, where it was not dominant, and its local landscape, where it could have more impact, was noted.</p> <p>18. The Board <b>NOTED</b> the paper.</p>	
<p><b>Items 7-10: Standing items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board <b>NOTED</b> the following information items:</li> <li>• Non-executive member updates – Board paper 103(24).</li> <li>• Monthly performance report – Board paper 104(24)</li> <li>• Board work programme – Board paper 105(24), and publications schedule – Board Paper 106(24)</li> <li>• Minutes of the Communications Consumer Panel (25 July 2024) and Risk &amp; Audit Committee (18 September 2024).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Item 19: Any other business</b></p> <p>19. Bob Downes noted that Ofcom had recently published its new Channel 4 licence and it appeared that stakeholders in Scotland were waiting for Channel 4 to publish its response before making their own statements.</p>	
<p><b>Item 18: Date of the next meeting</b></p> <p>20. The next scheduled Board meeting would be held on 13 November 2024.</p> <p>21. The meeting concluded at 10.25 am.</p>	

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair