# Ofcom Board minutes 15 October 2025

**Publication minutes of the three-hundred and twenty-eighth meeting of the Ofcom Board held on 15 October 2025 at Glaziers Hall, London SE1 9DD and via Microsoft Teams**

### Present

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| Michael Grade | Chair |
| Richard Allan | Non-Executive Member |
| Karen Baxter | Non-Executive Member |
| Natalie Black | Executive Member and Group Director, Networks & Communications |
| Melanie Dawes | Executive Member and Chief Executive |
| Angela Dean | Non-Executive Member |
| Bob Downes | Non-Executive Member |
| Will Harding | Non-Executive Member |
| Clive Jones | Non-Executive Member |
| Ben Verwaayen | Non-Executive Member |

### Apologies

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| Tamara Ingram | Deputy Chair |

### In attendance

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| Martin Ballantyne | General Counsel |
| Veronica Branton | Corporation Secretary |
| Sharon Malley | Governance Manager |
| Cristina Nicolotti Squires | Group Director Broadcasting and Media (Item 5) |
| Siobhan Walsh | Policy Development Director (Item 5) |

| | Action |
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| **Item 1: Welcome and declaration of members' interests**<br><br>1. No new declarations of interest were noted. | |
| **Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2025 – 327(25) and matters arising.**<br><br>2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 24 September 2025 were **APPROVED** as a correct record. | |

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| 3. A summary of progress against action points was **NOTED.** | |
| **Item 3: Chair's report**<br><br>4. The Chair updated the Board on his recent activities.<br><br>5. Since the last Board meeting he had held one-to-ones with all non-executive Ofcom Board members and had been encouraged that members thought the Board was operating well.<br><br>6. The Board **NOTED** the report. | |
| **Item 4: Chief Executive's report – Board 91(25)**<br><br>7. Melanie Dawes presented paper 91(25) on her activities. She said Ofcom had announced a fine of £21m against Royal Mail for failing to meet its 2024/25 delivery targets and was in the process of holding the mmWave spectrum auction.<br><br>8. She had given evidence to the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee, which had been the first opportunity to discuss online safety since new measures came into force before summer. The session had been constructive and had allowed Ofcom to explain its position in more detail. The next milestones included the second anniversary of the Online Safety Act and the publication of the first Online Safety Annual Report. Work on categorisation had been impacted by various factors which were outside Ofcom's control but enforcement of those parts of the regime that were already in force did not depend on categorisation and would continue.<br><br>9. Melanie Dawes updated the Board on recent enforcement activity, including a £20k fine imposed on 4chan, and noted that a number of filesharing websites had instituted hash matching in relation to child sexual abuse material, which was a positive step. The Board noted that some platforms had chosen to geoblock the UK rather than comply with the Online Safety Act and that the House of Lords had raised the issue of VPNs being used to potentially circumvent the Act's provisions.<br><br>10. Kate Davies had taken up her new role as Group Director Strategy and Research and a new Public Policy Director had been appointed and was due to start in January. The new Communications Director had now arrived at Ofcom and was settling in well. The Networks and Communications Group had been relaunched as the Infrastructure and Connectivity Group, to reflect the growing importance of infrastructure resilience and the fact that consumers tended not to distinguish between the different ways of getting connected. The Board noted that the definition of vulnerable consumers was evolving from those unable to access the internet to those with little understanding of how technologies such as AI were influencing their decisions and experiences online.<br><br>11. The Board noted that Ofcom's conclusions following its consultation on politicians as news presenters were due to be published shortly and the proposals had taken account of consultation feedback. | |

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| 12. Melanie Dawes said she had recently visited California to meet several US companies regulated under the Online Safety Act and had held conversations at a senior level on compliance. The conversations were more focused than previously now that the duties under the Act were in force and covered the steps being taken by the companies to comply with the requirements of the Act.<br>13. The Board discussed the economic growth of the US tech sector, driven in part by valuations relating to AI, and noted the importance of Ofcom continuing to focus on outcomes for consumers and UK network security.<br>14. The Board **NOTED** the report. | |
| **Item 5: BBC programme of work update – Board 92(25)**<br>15. Cristina Nicolotti Squires presented a paper on the BBC programme of work, including key findings for Ofcom's BBC Annual Report and Periodic Review, which may inform the Government's thinking as it prepared for the forthcoming BBC Charter Review process. Work for the Annual Report and Periodic Review had been carried out in parallel and had found that the BBC had generally performed well over the period of the Charter. It remained an important institution for viewers and producers across the whole UK but it faced challenges relating to funding and remaining relevant for all audiences, particularly younger and DE audiences and in the nations. It would be important for the BBC to develop and implement a strategy on this. The Board discussed the importance of the BBC continuing to locate more decision-making roles outside London.<br>16. It was important that the Annual Report and Periodic Review were clear on the achievements of the BBC, noting its continued performance delivery and good levels of audience satisfaction, while highlighting issues. The Board noted the significant decline in consumption among younger audiences and the policy challenge this would lead to.<br>17. The Board **NOTED** the report. | |
| **Item 6: Appointments to the National Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland – Board 93(25)**<br>18. The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Uel Johnston for a three-year term, from 15 November 2025 to 14 November 2028 and the reappointment of Aodhan O'Donnell for a three-year term from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2028 to the Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland. | |
| **Items 7-10: Standing items**<br>19. The Board **NOTED** the following information items:<br>• Non-executive member updates – paper 94(25)<br>• Quarterly performance report – paper 95(25)<br>• Board work programme – paper 96(25) and publication schedule – paper 97(25)<br>• Minutes of the Advisory Committee Communications Consumer Panel/ACOD of 17 July 2025, Online Information Advisory Committee of | |

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| 12 September 2025 and Risk and Audit Committee of 17 September 2025. | |
| **Item 11: Any other business**<br><br>20. There was no other business. | |
| **Item 12: Items in the Board reading room**<br><br>21. The Board **NOTED** the CCP/ACOD update. | |
| **Item 13: Date of the next meeting**<br><br>22. The next scheduled Board meeting would be held on 19 November 2025.<br>23. The meeting concluded at 10.25 am. | |

Approved: ________________________________________

Chair