

# Note of the Ofcom Board held on 11 March 2026

Members were welcomed to the 331st meeting of the Ofcom Board. In addition to Board members, Martin Ballantyne (General Counsel), Veronica Branton (Corporation Secretary), Francesca Carter (Deputy Corporation Secretary) and Sharon Malley (Governance Manager) attended throughout.

## Declaration of members' interests

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1. No new declarations of interest were raised.

## Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026

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2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 17 December 2025 were approved as a correct record, with the exception of Item 9, which would be brought to the next meeting.
3. A summary of progress against action points was **NOTED**. Richard Allan said he had met the team responsible for safeguarding policies in relation to colleagues working in online safety and had confirmed to them that the Board took this issue extremely seriously.

## Chair's report

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4. The Chair updated the Board on his activities, including his recent meeting with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

## Chief Executive's report

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5. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activities. She said she had attended the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi with the Group Director for Infrastructure & Connectivity, and had had useful conversations about the telecoms market in India. Natalie Black updated the Board on her attendance at the recent Munich Security Conference.
6. The Board discussed developments in the fixed telecoms market and Ofcom's forthcoming statement on the Telecoms Access Review.
7. The online safety environment had developed over the previous month. The Government was consulting on further measures to protect children and Ofcom had engaged extensively with Parliamentarians on the proposals.
8. The Board noted the report.

## Risk and Audit Committee update and annual review of risk management function and Strategic Risk Register

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9. Angela Dean updated the Board on the meeting of the Risk and Audit Committee of 4 March 2026. She said the Committee had approved the annual internal audit plan including audits of

the transformation programme, online safety delivery, corporate governance arrangements, spectrum monitoring, tariff setting, and AI governance.

10. The committee had reviewed two internal audit reports, both of which had been rated substantial assurance. The committee had also reviewed a readiness report which had received an amber rating and work on implementing the recommendations was well in hand. The external audit was proceeding on an earlier timetable than previously.
11. The Committee had reviewed the Group-level risk registers and had discussed whether the overall ratings were correct. This would be reviewed by the executive.
12. The Committee had received a briefing on an issue relating to Royal Mail fees and the measures put in place as a result.
13. The Board noted the update.
14. Angela Dean presented a paper on the annual review of Ofcom's risk management function and Strategic Risk Register.
15. The Board noted the annual review of the risk management function.
16. The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register.

## People Committee update

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17. Tamara Ingram updated the Board on the meeting of the People Committee of 10 March. She said the Committee had discussed the draft Hybrid Working Policy and had approved the annual pay review. The Committee had noted the reduction in colleague turnover and would discuss this at a future meeting.
18. The Board noted the update.

## Broadcasting and Media Group programme update – BBC Charter Review; PSMR follow-on work; Media Act Part 4: Tier 1 Standards Code Consultation

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19. The Board discussed papers on the Broadcasting and Media Group programme, the BBC Charter Review, PSMR follow-on work and the Media Act Part 4 Tier 1 Standards Code Consultation. It was noted that the papers were connected through the sustainability of public service media and had been informed by Ofcom's Transmission Critical report published in summer 2025.
20. The Board noted that there had been a broadly positive response to Transmission Critical and discussions with DCMS about the recommendations Ofcom made were underway. At the same time, Ofcom was providing input to DCMS as it worked through responses to the BBC Charter Green Paper.
21. The Board discussed the need to ensure stability for the BBC while supporting the broader public service broadcasting environment. It was noted that the detail of the funding model was a matter for Government.

22. It was noted that the BBC was a source of internationally trusted news. The Board discussed the BBC's role in providing trusted local and regional news and its relationship with other local and regional news sources. The Board discussed the future of digital terrestrial television.
23. The Board noted that the Media Act gave platforms such as Netflix due impartiality obligations for the first time, with Ofcom having enforcement powers in this area.
24. The Board noted the papers.

## 2026/27 Plan of Work and budget

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25. The Board discussed a paper on the 2026/27 Plan of Work and budget. Stakeholders had engaged well with the consultation on the Plan of Work. Responses had largely focused on policy areas that were already in the plan and as such no significant changes were being proposed.
26. The Board discussed the proposed 2026/27 budget to support the Plan of Work. The budget would include a programme of efficiencies. The introduction of online safety fees meant the majority of Ofcom's income in future years would be from fees rather than WTA receipts.
27. The Board discussed the budget and noted the risks around income, expenditure and efficiencies, including around low rates of colleague turnover.
28. The proposed fees and tariffs were noted, including an increase for the radio sector, and these would be monitored during the course of the year.
29. Overall fees had been kept below the rate of inflation and Ofcom had a strong record of cost control for fee payers. It would be important to be clear what additional work was being carried out in cases where individual fees were increasing.
30. The Board approved the 2026/27 Ofcom Plan of Work, subject to final sign-off, approved the proposed 2026/27 budget and noted the update to stakeholder tariffs.

## Update on Post issues

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31. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's Post work, including the financial sustainability of the USO and how it might be addressed by Royal Mail. The key change needed was for the company to implement changes to the USO that Ofcom had facilitated in 2025. The Board noted that it was for Royal Mail to implement the changes that Ofcom had enabled, and Ofcom was monitoring the position carefully. The Board noted that Royal Mail's quality of service was significantly below the level required and it was likely that investment by the owner and delivery of the new USO would be necessary to secure financial stability and improvements to quality of service.
32. The Board discussed international comparisons and noted that many international postal companies received some public subsidy or were publicly owned and that all were undergoing similar USO reforms.
33. The forthcoming Select Committee meeting hearing with the Royal Mail owner and representatives from the Communication Workers Union would be important and Ofcom's position and the role it played as regulator would need to be stated clearly.
34. The Board noted the paper.

## Online safety update: securing commitments from the largest services to protect child users

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35. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s work to secure additional child safety commitments from the largest online services. It was noted that this put greater pressure on services to adopt the safety by design culture envisaged in the Online Safety Act and to account to the public for their actions.
36. Ofcom would shortly write to Snap, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Roblox to set out four core expectations around grooming, algorithms, testing on children and applying their own minimum age requirements. Ofcom would be making these expectations public, would strongly recommend firms publish their responses and would publish its own summary of them in May. This work would build on previous activity to ensure services were complying with their duties under the Online Safety Act and would mark a shift in Ofcom’s public posture.
37. The Board noted the paper.

## Annual health and safety report and strategy

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38. The Board approved the Health & Safety Annual Report and the Health and Safety Strategy.

## Online Information Advisory Committee – advice note 3 topic

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39. The Board approved the topic of elections for the third advice note produced by the Online Information Advisory Committee.

## Standing items

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40. The Board noted the following standing items:
- Non-executive member updates
  - Monthly performance report
  - Board work programme and publications schedule
  - Minutes of the Advisory Committee for Scotland of 2 December 2025, Communications Consumer Panel of 15 January 2026 and Online Information Advisory Committee of 23 January 2026.

## Any other business

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41. The Chair said he would be meeting the Channel 4 Chair for a routine update shortly.
42. Karen Baxter said she was aware that the UK Fraud Strategy had recently been published and it was important for Ofcom to engage with the Financial Conduct Authority and other partners in relation to fraud prevention.

## Date of the next meeting

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43. The next Board meeting would be held on 22 April 2026.