

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 20 May 2026

Members were welcomed to the 334th 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

1. No new declarations of interest were raised.

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2026

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 22 April 2026 were approved as a correct record
3. A summary of progress against action points was noted.

Chief Executive's report

4. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activities. The Online Safety teams had had a busy period including the imposition of a significant fine against a suicide forum based outside the UK. There had also been constructive supervision work with platforms to achieve improvements on protection of children and on hate and terror.
5. The Telecoms Access Review had been generally well received. Activity in relation to Royal Mail and the implementation of the Media Act was continuing.
6. The Board noted an update on discussions with Ofcom's recognised union on this year's pay review and on hybrid working arrangements.
7. The Board noted that work was underway to build relationships with US satellite stakeholders in the context of security and consumer as well as spectrum.
8. The Board discussed the work on online safety supervision and noted its importance to delivering Ofcom's desired outcomes. The Board discussed the responses of major services to the Online Safety Act and Ofcom's priorities and strategy for enforcement.
9. The Board noted the report.

Risk and Audit Committee update

10. The Board discussed an update on the meeting of the Risk and Audit Committee of 19 May. The Committee had discussed the overdue Internal Audit actions and had noted their complexity and that they involved interdependencies across the organisation. These would continue to be monitored.

11. The internal auditor's annual opinion on Ofcom's internal controls was moderate assurance with recommendations for improvement being more joined-up processes across teams and better embedding of new policies and procedures.
12. The external audit continued and was ahead of programme compared to previous years.
13. The Committee had discussed a deep dive on the strategic risk of Effectively Responding to Changes in Technology, Markets and Consumer Behaviour.
14. The Committee had reviewed a small historic error in relation to WTA fees and had noted the work to rectify the error and institute a more robust framework for the future.
15. The Board noted the update.

People Committee update

16. The Board discussed an update on the meeting of the People Committee on 29 April. The Director of People, Culture and Workplace had updated the Committee on a number of current issues. The Committee had approved the Diversity and Inclusion two-year strategy, the measures associated with Ofcom's priorities for 2026/27, Board succession planning and Group Director succession planning and pay reviews. It was agreed that the Board skills matrix would be circulated for information.
17. The Board noted the update.

Full-year review 2025/26

18. The Board discussed a paper on the review of delivery of the 2025/26 Ofcom Plan of Work. Overall the delivery had been strong with Ofcom reprioritising where necessary and managing changes in the external environment.
19. The Board noted the investment in stakeholder engagement for the year ahead. The Board noted the areas of challenge over the year and the causes of them, with many relating to factors outside Ofcom's control such as legislative timetables. Issues relating to the implementation of the Media Act and these had been addressed through the introduction of additional project management resource.
20. The Board noted that many areas of Ofcom's work crossed the regulatory groups and its work as a converged regulator was increasingly effective.
21. The Board noted the full-year review.

Children online: research findings and Big Tech commitments

22. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's latest research exploring the impact of the Child Safety Duties on key child user outcomes. The findings, from research conducted between early 2025 and early 2026, included that children spent on average 3.5 hours a day online, 90% of children aged 8 to 12 used an online service with a minimum age of 13 and 73% of children aged 11 to 17 had been exposed to at least one piece of content defined as harmful in the OSA in a four-week

period. The proportion of children who had seen content that upset them or made them feel uncomfortable had fallen from 29% to 24%.

23. It was noted that Ofcom had engaged with the six largest services used by children to publicly seek commitments on grooming protections, safer feeds for children, ending product testing on children and implementing effective minimum age policies.
24. The Board discussed the research and the actions of the platforms. It was noted that children stated they saw more material that was defined as harmful in the OSA than material they found upsetting, suggesting that they regarded viewing some harmful material as part of their online experience and tended to scroll past it.
25. The Board discussed the likely stakeholder reaction to the research and the engagement plan.
26. It was noted that services required targeted measures as those with algorithms led to different harms to those used for messaging. It was noted that children may be verified without realising as not all verification was visible to the user, and that the OSA only required highly effective age assurance for services and/or content that was for over 18s and this would be explained in the report.
27. The Board noted the report.

Mobile connectivity

28. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's proposed approach and workplan on mobile connectivity. It was noted the aim was to better inform consumers about connectivity and to focus attention on the connectivity challenges in the UK.
29. The Board noted that consumers' use of mobile had shifted from voice traffic to data services and assessment of the quality of mobile coverage needed to reflect this so that consumers could understand whether they would be able to access the services they wanted. The four areas of particular focus for improvement were urban areas, shared public spaces, trains and rural areas, with each presenting its own challenges. Ofcom wanted to engage the sector on delivering improvements.
30. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring consumers were offered choice in relation to quality as well as price. It was noted that the network with the best coverage did charge slightly more than others but that generally consumers were extremely price conscious. Ofcom's net neutrality rules permitted the use of tiered offers, with premium coverage in return for a higher price, but it was not clear whether consumers would welcome this.
31. The Board noted the report.

Ofcom's Strategic Approach to AI: update on Publication and Strategic Prioritisation Framework, 2026-2027

32. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's strategic approach to AI. Ofcom's annual AI publication would give transparency to stakeholders and the market on Ofcom's thinking in this area and it had been produced following extensive cross-Ofcom working to draw out the significant issues.

33. The publication would note that Ofcom welcomed its regulated sectors using AI in a secure and safe way with the expectation that services should mitigate risks though Ofcom may need to intervene in some areas in line with its regulatory duties. The publication would make clear that overarching regulatory principles, proportionality and a focus on outcomes, would apply in areas relating to AI as in all other areas of Ofcom's work.
34. The Board discussed the paper and noted that it may offer opportunities for more efficient broadcasting compliance work through tools such as easier transcription of programmes. The technology team had been strengthened and was able to support policy teams in these areas.
35. The Board noted that Ofcom's role was not to regulate AI but to continue to meet its duties in relation to its sectors and their operations. The case studies in the publication expanded on this.
36. The Board noted the paper.

Non-executive reappointment to the Content Board

37. The Board approved the reappointment of Simon Bucks for a three-year term from 1 September 2026.

Standing items

38. 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 24 February 2026, Advisory Committee for Scotland of 25 February 2026, Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland of 12 March 2026, Advisory Committee for Wales of 19 March 2026, Communications Consumer Panel/Advisory Committee for Older and Disabled People of 19 March 2026, Content Board of 31 March 2026 and Online Information Advisory Committee of 10 April 2026.

Any other business

39. There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting

40. The next Board meeting would be held on 17 June 2026.