

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 22 April 2026

Members were welcomed to the 333rd 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. The Board noted a new declaration from Richard Allan.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 and 11 March 2026

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meetings held on 11 February 2026 and 11 March 2026 were approved as a correct record
3. A summary of progress against action points was noted.

Chair's report

4. The Chair updated the Board on his activities. The Board noted the report.

Chief Executive's report

5. The Chief Executive updated the Board on her activities. She reiterated her thanks to the Chair for his work and support throughout the duration of his term.
6. She said the Telecoms Access Review had been launched and updated the Board on developments in the telecoms market. On post, Natalie Black had given evidence to the Business and Trade Committee and had emphasised the need for Royal Mail to deliver on the change to the USO and to improve their quality of service through a clear plan backed by investment.
7. On online safety, Ofcom had announced in March a set of demands of the platforms most used by children. Enforcement action was continuing in relation to several services. Two Bills were currently progressing through Parliament that would extend the online safety regime and this would have resource implications for Ofcom.
8. It was noted that the Secretary of State for DSIT had asked Ofcom for information on how it was working with its sectors on the cyber security implications of Frontier AI and Ofcom's letter to industry on this had now been published.
9. The Board noted the report.

2026/27 Ofcom organisational priorities

10. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom's organisational priorities and objectives. The objectives related to delivery of the Plan of Work and implementation of the Transformation programme to make Ofcom a stronger and more efficient organisation. The measurable outcomes would be approved by the People Committee at its next meeting.
11. The Board discussed the outputs associated with the objectives and the differences that would be shown in Ofcom's work. It was noted that colleagues would better understand how their individual role contributed to Ofcom's overall objectives. They were aware of the ambition of the Transformation programme and there was excitement about the improvements it aimed to deliver.
12. The Board approved Ofcom's organisational objectives for the financial year 2026/27.

Communications strategy 2026/27

13. The Board discussed a paper on the 2026/27 Communications strategy. The strategy aimed to shift from a publication-led approach to more thematic and focused communications. The Board supported the aim of developing a smaller number of core messages and to target comms resources on these.
14. The Board discussed the language in the strategy and the need for it be believable and authentic.
15. It would be important to ensure that colleagues understood the reasoning behind the new strategy and the implications for the comms support for their projects.
16. The Board noted the importance of ensuring that comms addressed Parliaments in all four nations. The comms team worked closely with colleagues in the nations offices and with the public policy team to ensure this was achieved.
17. The Board noted the Communications strategy.

Annual litigation review

18. The Board discussed a paper on the annual review of litigation. The Board noted the environment around broadcast standards regulation remained high profile but there was little current activity in relation to telecoms or spectrum.
19. The volume of litigation relating to online safety was increasing. The Board discussed recent civil litigation against social media platforms in the US and the implications of this on compliance in the UK.
20. The Board noted that litigation was not uncommon when new legislation was implemented and that it could be helpful in clarifying points of law.
21. The Board discussed Ofcom's appetite for risk in relation to litigation. It was noted that stakeholders would be generally supportive of Ofcom using the full extent of its powers and taking a robust approach to enforcement and litigation.
22. The Board noted the litigation review

Spectrum update – December 2025 to March 2026

23. The Board discussed a paper on recent activity in the Spectrum Group. The main areas of activity had been on the next steps for the Upper 6 GHz band, the auction of more spectrum in the 1.4 GHz band and the development of direct to device (“D2D”) satellite mobile services.
24. The Board discussed the paper and noted consolidation in the satellite market with both Amazon and SpaceX making acquisitions. In recent emergency situations in the US where communications networks had been damaged by storms the satellite service had been opened to all and enabled communication via text message. The main use for D2D services would be in sparsely populated areas and in emergencies and they would continue to act as a complement to other comms networks rather than a replacement.
25. Ofcom was beginning to introduce satellite communication to its work alongside fibre and broadband to connect consumers, with satellite connectivity reducing the number of consumers in scope of the broadband USO from 44,000 to 4,000. Ofcom was considering its approach to competition in the satellite market and how to continue to ensure security and resilience of the satellite networks.
26. The Board **NOTED** the update.

Reflections for new Group Director Strategy and Research

27. The new Group Director Strategy and Research updated the Board on her reflections since taking on the role. She said the Strategy and Research Group was key to protecting Ofcom’s reputation through its work in building the evidence base underpinning policy choices, ensuring Ofcom was fit for the future including through developing an overarching strategy, and building relationships with key stakeholders domestically and internationally.
28. Preparation for the next three-year strategy and plan provided an opportunity to consider the significant strategic choices facing Ofcom’s sectors. The research function and wider use of data was being developed, including through exploring greater interrogation of the data sets available to continue Ofcom’s evidence-based approach.
29. The Board discussed Ofcom’s approach to research and noted that work was underway to review programmatic and ad hoc research.
30. The Board noted the update.

Annual review of the Corporate Governance Framework

31. The Board approved the updated Corporate Governance Framework to be effective 23 April 2026 and an update to the Code of Conduct for the Content Board, the Nations and Online Information Advisory Committees and the CCP/ACOD.

Contract award

32. The Board approved proceeding with the award of a three-year contract for software licences and noted the budgetary approval for the precise value of the contract would be part of the budget approval process that required annual agreement by the Board.

Contract extension

33. The Board noted the intent to exercise Ofcom's option to extend the facilities contract by two years from January 2027 and approved the revised estimated contract value.

Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland appointment

34. The Board approved the reappointment of Paul Wickens to the Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland for a three-year term from 1 September 2026.

Advisory Committee for Scotland appointment of Chair

35. The Board approved the reappointment of Jess McBeath as Chair to the Advisory Committee for Scotland for a second term for a period of three years from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2029 inclusive.

DRCF workplan 2026/27

36. The Board noted the DRCF workplan 2026/27

Standing items

37. The Board noted the following standing items:
- Non-executive member updates
 - Monthly performance report
 - Board work programme and publications schedule
 - Minutes of the Content Board of 20 January 2026, Communications Consumer Panel of 20 January 2026, Online Information Advisory Committee of 27 February 2026 and Risk & Audit Committee of 4 March 2026.

Any other business

38. The Chair recorded his thanks to the Corporation Secretary, colleagues and Board members for their support during his term.

Date of the next meeting

39. The next Board meeting would be held on 20 May 2026.