

The Federation of Communication Services (FCS) response to Ofcom's Media Literacy Strategy

The FCS represents companies which provide professional communications solutions to business users. Our members deliver telecommunications services via mobile and fixed line telephony networks, broadband, satellite, wi-fi and business radio. Our members' customers range from SMEs, home-workers and micro-businesses up to the very largest private enterprises and public sector users. FCS is the largest trade organisation in the professional communications arena, representing the interests of circa 350 businesses which supply B2B services nationwide.

FCS supports the need for a Media Literacy strategy and believes that the ability to use, understand and create media and communications across multiple formats and services is increasingly important to individuals and businesses. Ofcom is well-placed to act as a catalyst to bring together players across the communications industry and beyond and the FCS welcomes Ofcom's multi-year Media Literacy Strategy. The three main planks of the plan are well thought out and contain clear goals and success criteria.

Media literacy is a key skill and, as well as benefitting individuals, should help to produce a better informed and skilled workforce which businesses increasingly need. Improving the level of trust of on-line information and helping people to identify where information might not be based on fact is crucial for the future success of on-line businesses. Additionally, it is important that media literacy does not just focus on individuals, many micro enterprise and small businesses would benefit from help in this area, and further research should be undertaken on this specific cohort with associated actions agreed.

The FCS agrees that improvements to media literacy will not come about by Ofcom's interventions alone and it will be important that shared aims and goals are developed with platform providers. The FCS also suggests that Ofcom builds links with the wider business community in their People and Partnerships workstream. The business sector beyond platform providers has a useful part to play and the FCS would be very happy to engage with Ofcom to facilitate discussions with its members.