



Ofcom proposed plan of work 2026/2027
Ofcom
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By email: planofwork@ofcom.org.uk

2 February 2026

Re: Consultation – Ofcom’s proposed Plan of Work 2026/2027

The Consumer Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Ofcom’s proposed plan of work 2026/2027. Our response is focused on two of the four priorities where we feel we have the relevant evidence and expertise:

- Internet and Post we can rely on
- We live a safer life online

Internet and Post we can rely on

The Consumer Council support this priority which aims to ensure markets work well for consumers, deliver choice and fairness through continued growth, and builds resilience and sustainability throughout telecoms and postal services. However, our research consistently finds that affordability and accessibility are key concerns for consumers living in Northern Ireland and we believe this will be a vital consideration for Ofcom to deliver effectively against this priority.

To this end, we are pleased to have worked with Ofcom to identify areas of joint concern that will be explored in our forthcoming Digital Inclusion - Northern Ireland Consumers’ Perceptions of Fair Treatment and Accessibility in Mobile and Broadband Services research, due for publication in Q2.



Accessibility

The Consumer Council strongly supports the priority of working towards a better-connected UK so people and businesses can benefit from an increasingly digital society. It is important to note that Northern Ireland faces persistent and unique challenges in many rural and border communities and continue to lack reliable gigabit broadband and 5G coverage. Understanding regional difference is a key driver to delivering trustworthy, inclusive, and accessible communication services that benefit everyone in the UK.

Affordability and pricing of postal USO services:

We note that Ofcom will complete a review of its approach to the affordability and pricing of postal services, ahead of the expiry of the current safeguard cap on Second Class letter prices in March 2027.

We strongly agree with this objective. The Consumer Council recognise the need for Ofcom to ensure the financial sustainability and efficiency of the universal service. Whilst we accept that the postal market has changed significantly in recent years, we believe the USO minimum requirements must still include consumer safeguards against detrimental market forces, particularly in relation to affordability.

We are concerned that if the safeguard cap on second class stamps were to be relaxed or removed, postal services prices may become unaffordable for some consumers.

We look forward to continued engagement with Ofcom on the pricing and affordability of postal services throughout 2026-2027.

Postal supervision programme

The Consumer Council welcomes Ofcom's decision to continue monitoring work across the postal sector. This is of particular importance in the year ahead as USO reform is implemented, in line with new delivery models. It is important that the new delivery model work in the best interest of consumers and continual monitoring should identify emerging trends and issues. We look forward to continued engagement with Ofcom on USO reform throughout 2026-2027.

We also welcome Ofcom's focus on the obligations placed on the parcels operators, particularly in relation to complaints handling processes and the obligation on operators to ensure the fair treatment of disabled customers.

It is important that consumer protections in relation to parcels match the growth of this market to ensure consumers do not face detriment.

We plan to commission research in 2026-2027 to better understand consumers' experiences of parcel deliveries. We look forward to continued engagement with Ofcom in this area throughout 2026-2027.

We live a safer life online

We welcome Ofcom's continued focus on tackling scam calls and texts. Consumer Council research shows that almost two in five (38%) consumers had been targeted by a scam in the past three years¹. As a founding member of the Scamwise NI partnership, we welcome continued engagement with Ofcom to provide support and practical guidance aimed at boosting consumers' online confidence and skills.

This has been a brief response and we will gladly provide more consumer insights, data or clarification if required, and look forward to continued collaboration with Ofcom in the year ahead.

¹ [Consumer Experiences in 2025](#), Consumer Council, November 2025