

Press Release

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Whatever the future, a strong independent consumer advocate is vital for the communications sector

Publishing the 2010/2011 Communications Consumer Panel's annual report *Putting the consumer first: the work of the Communications Consumer Panel*, former Panel Chair Anna Bradley said that she was "intensely proud of what the Panel has achieved over the last three years.

"We highlighted work on mobile coverage that brought the issue up the Ofcom agenda and persuaded operators and retailers to improve their coverage cancellation policies," she said. "We helped to secure the Government's commitment to universal broadband with our consumer research, and our framework for digital participation became the cornerstone of the Government's national plan to boost internet take-up."

Commenting on the Government review into consumer advocacy arrangements, she thought that Ofcom would continue to need independent advice "to articulate the consumer voice as a counterweight to the lobbying of industry and to pre-empt new issues of importance to communications consumers.

"Whatever the future holds," Anna Bradley said, "a strong, independent consumer advocate is vital in ensuring that regulators and policy-makers appreciate and address the issues that matter to consumers."

Introducing the Panel's work programme for the coming year, incoming Chair, Bob Warner, said that stakeholders' views had played "a significant part in shaping how the Panel is targeting its activity and action". He outlined the five key areas that the Panel will focus on proactively – the future of consumer advocacy, the future of communications regulation, reviewing progress on digital participation, how best to support consumers' decision making, and spectrum and mobile coverage.

Reiterating the Panel's commitment to being a strong consumer advocate, he added: "The Panel will be looking at issues from the consumer perspective to protect and promote their interests. We'll continue to use our expertise to deliver the best possible outcomes for communications consumers," he said.

Ends

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Communications Consumer Panel was established to advise Ofcom on the consumer interest in the markets it regulates. The Panel is independent and sets its own agenda. Visit www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information.