



News Release

CONSUMER PANEL PLAN TO FOCUS ON 40% OF PEOPLE NOT ONLINE

The Communications Consumer Panel has announced plans to focus on promoting and protecting the interests of the 40% of the population that is still not yet online, and making them central to Government policy on broadband access.

Launching the Panel's *Work Plan 2009/10* today, Chair Anna Bradley said: "Broadband will soon be an essential part of people's lives, but being unable to use online services will put many people at a significant disadvantage - broadband will no longer be just 'nice to have'.

"That's why over the coming year the Communications Consumer Panel will focus much its energy on the 40% of people who are not yet online. The Government has made an important commitment to ensure that broadband is available throughout the country," but Anna Bradley says "this is just the beginning, the barriers to take up include: cost, skills, the design of equipment, on-line security and perhaps critically, the provision of content that will inspire or encourage people to get online."

The policy issues that the Panel will be focussing on are:

- **Universal service** – influencing decisions about the services that should be available to everyone now and in the future so that they reflect the views of consumers and citizens.
- **Consumer and citizen empowerment** – influencing policy interventions so that they reflect, and are designed to meet, the full spectrum of consumers' and citizens' needs.
- **Trust and security** – highlighting concerns about security and misuse of personal data, and the potential for people to be deterred from going online or getting the most out of being online.

The Panel will also be contributing to the development and implementation of the Government's **Digital Inclusion Action Plan** so that it focuses on the groups of consumers and citizens who most need help in getting online.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

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. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chairman)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Louisa Bolch
- Kim Brook (member for Wales)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Leen Petre
- Damian Tambini
- Bob Warner

For a copy of the Communications Consumer panel *Work Plan 2009/10* go to www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

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