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## **Ofcom Consumer Panel welcomes report by the Consumer Expert Group**

The Ofcom Consumer Panel – the independent body set up to advise Ofcom on consumer interests in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors – today welcomed the report by the Consumer Expert Group into consumer issues related to digital switchover.

Colette Bowe , Chairman of the Ofcom Consumer Panel, said:

“The Consumer Panel welcomes the careful work done by the Consumer Expert Group to identify consumer issues, especially for the most vulnerable groups, related to digital switchover. The report includes many helpful pointers on practical issues that we will be following up in our own work to ensure that the most vulnerable in society face minimum risks through the switchover process.”

On 22 July 2004, the Ofcom Consumer Panel was invited by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to prepare a report on the measures needed to ensure that the interests of the most vulnerable consumers are protected through the transition to digital. Work on this report is on-going with the Panel seeking advice and information from a wide range of consumer groups, community groups and industry.

Ends.

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs**

1. The Consumer Panel is the independent advisory body set up under section 16 (2) of the Communications Act 2003 to advise Ofcom on the consumer interests in broadcasting and telecommunications.
2. The Panel's eleven members appointed by Ofcom are:
  - o Colette Bowe , Chairman
  - o Ruth Evans, Deputy Chairman
  - o Azeem Azhar
  - o Fiona Ballantyne
  - o Nainish Bapna
  - o Roger Darlington
  - o Simon Gibson
  - o Graham Mather
  - o Kevin McLaughlin
  - o Kate O'Rourke
  - o Bob Twitchin

3. The Consumer Expert Group was appointed by the Broadcasting Minister, Lord McIntosh, to advise government on issues that will affect consumers in the run-up to digital switchover and analogue switch-off.
4. The report makes a number of detailed recommendations to address consumer barriers to switchover such as coverage, affordability, take-up, accessibility, protection for vulnerable groups, consumer support, protection for vulnerable groups and information. It advises government to take a more proactive approach to removing these barriers before it announces a switchover timetable.

For further details please visit [www.ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk](http://www.ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk).

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