

Taking the lead: the Consumer Panel reports a year of action

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The role of the Ofcom Consumer Panel was brought more sharply into focus during the last year as consumer concerns about advertised broadband speeds became widespread, the Panel reports in its 2007-08 annual report.

Consumer Panel chair, Anna Bradley, said: "The Panel took specific action to respond to a pressing consumer concern, and the regulator responded. Work over the past year has also involved developing a toolkit study that was able to reveal how Ofcom has taken on board a much stronger sense of the consumer interest than it had when it started five years ago."

The Panel also commissioned key consumer research, and advised and helped Ofcom shape the policy work that affects UK consumers in communications markets. These examples show how the Panel has pursued the wider consumer interest over the past year.

"Consumer awareness in the communications field is growing rapidly. It is an exciting time and full of potential for consumers and wider society, but we need to ensure that all communities feel those benefits. This is why the Panel will be looking at access and inclusion for people who are disabled, and how where you live affects the services that you can access," Anna Bradley commented.

"The Consumer Panel is now moving into a new phase of work. We will take a fresh view of our role, building on the first four years and extending our influence across the communications world. Next generation broadband access will be a key priority, and we have co-sponsored research on its economic and social value.

"It is also important to say that this Consumer Panel annual report reflects the work and leadership of founding Panel Chairman Colette Bowe, who stepped down at the beginning of January 2008. Her contribution has been invaluable in establishing the name of the Consumer Panel firmly in the communications world," Anna Bradley concluded.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

1. The 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.ofcomconsumerpanel.org.uk for more information.

2. The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley, Chair
- Ruth Evans, Deputy Chair
- Fiona Ballantyne
- Roger Darlington
- Simon Gibson
- Graham Mather
- Kevin McLaughlin
- Jeremy Mitchell
- Kate O'Rourke
- Bob Twitchin
- Allan Williams

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