

Press Release

For immediate release 2 February 2012

Panel urges action so consumers can compare broadband providers and packages more easily to get the best deal

Responding to the publication of Ofcom's new research into broadband speeds, Communications Consumer Panel Chair Bob Warner said:

"It's good news that average broadband speeds are improving. However, we remain concerned that many people with ADSL-based broadband connections continue to experience much lower average download speeds than the headline 'up to' advertised speeds. The Panel has already said that internet service providers (ISPs) should stop using misleading 'up to' speeds in their adverts."

The Ofcom research found that in November 2011, half of consumers who had paid for an 'up to' 8Mbit/s broadband package only received an average speed of 3Mbit/s or less. While half of consumers who had paid for an 'up to' 20/24Mbit/s service received average speeds of 5Mbit/s or less.

The Panel believes that the new CAP guidance, which comes into force from April, doesn't go far enough. It requires that speed claims should be achievable by at least 10% of an ISP's customers, and only where a significant proportion of customers are unlikely to receive a speed sufficiently close to that advertised should further qualifying information be included.

"This additional qualifying information must be equally prominent to consumers when they are thinking about which broadband package to buy. Consumers can only make an informed choice if they can easily compare different packages and providers. We will be watching carefully to see if the new guidelines are effective."

Ends

CONTACTS

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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.