



News Release

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Government's universal broadband commitment must meet consumer needs, says Consumer Panel

The Communications Consumer Panel has stressed that the Government commitment to universal broadband, which was renewed in this week's budget, must be implemented in a way that meets consumers' needs.

The Communications Consumer Panel has today published a set of principles to guide the implementation of the universal broadband commitment. These principles will help deliver the commitment so that it meets the needs of consumers in all parts of the UK.

Anna Bradley, Communications Consumer Panel Chair, said today: "The Panel has developed a set of eight principles to guide the implementation of the universal broadband commitment by Broadband Delivery UK, the body set up by Government to make this happen.

"The ultimate test of success for the universal broadband commitment will be whether consumers can carry out essential online activities in a reliable and consistent way.

"To meet this challenge, the UK Government will need to work effectively with the Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales so that the benefits envisaged by the universal broadband commitment are available to consumers in all parts of the UK," Anna Bradley said.

The Panel recognises that the job of implementing the universal broadband commitment is complex. The Panel's eight principles are designed to ensure that the needs of consumers are central to this process.

Consumer Principles for Universal Service Commitment implementation

1. The Universal Service Commitment should enable consumers to carry out the online activities that they consider to be essential or will soon.
2. The Government should define the Commitment in a way that ensures quality and reliability of service.
3. The Government should help consumers to do what they can themselves to optimise their broadband connections.
4. The Universal Service Commitment should benefit people in all parts of the UK, using different types of broadband connection where necessary.

5. The Government should be proactive in identifying the parts of the UK that would benefit from the Commitment.
6. Consumers who benefit from the Commitment should have a choice of service providers.
7. The Government should ensure that the Commitment keeps pace with consumer demands over the years ahead.
8. The Government should deliver the Commitment using next-generation broadband where practicable.

Ends

NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

For a copy of the *Consumer Principles* go to the Communications Consumer Panel website at: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/digital-inclusion/universal-service-commitment>

For a copy of the Communications Consumer Panel's response to the Digital Britain report go to: <http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/smartweb/digital-inclusion/digital-britain>

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 (Chair)
- 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

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