

## Press Release

---

Strictly embargoed until 00.01 27 January 2011

### Make it easier to use mobile phones - Consumer Panel calls on industry for better design and labelling

Simple changes to the design of mobile phones could make them significantly easier for all users, the Communications Consumer Panel concludes in research published today. The Panel is calling on manufacturers to improve design, and to work with voluntary groups, operators and retailers to develop an industry-wide labelling system so consumers can see at-a-glance if the handset will meet their needs.

“Our research shows that making it easier to use mobile phones will benefit everyone, including older and disabled people”, Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley said. “We all like phones that are simple and intuitive to use. For many of us this is a nice-to-have, but for some older and disabled consumers a few simple improvements can make the difference between being able to use a mobile phone or not. Happily we all want many of the same things from phones, so we will all be winners if some simple steps are taken.”

The *Making mobiles easier to use* also highlighted the need for retailers to provide better staff training to help people choose the phone that meets their needs. Report findings showed that many older and disabled people often feel intimidated when they buy phones.

“The voluntary and third sectors have a part to play to support their client groups by working closely with manufacturers on design and publicising information about what phones and features are available for their clients,” she said.

#### Key recommendations

Voluntary and third sector organisations should:

- Work with manufacturers to source suitable volunteers for testing of mobile phones.
- Publicise information about what phones and features are available for their client groups.
- Consider providing or encouraging ongoing, peer-led mentoring and support for those of their beneficiaries who wish to learn to use technology, including mobile phones. This will, of course, depend on resources.

The research was carried out by the independent charity Ricability, which tests products for older people and people with disabilities.

**Ends**

**CONTACTS**

Consumer Panel Media Adviser Siân Evans on 07713997510 or 020 7981 3798

**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](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk) for more information.

The Panel's members appointed by Ofcom are:

- Anna Bradley (Chair)
- Fiona Ballantyne (member for Scotland)
- Colin Browne
- Roger Darlington (member for England)
- Maureen Edmondson (member for Northern Ireland)
- Bob Warner

*Making mobiles easier to use* is available on the Communications Consumer Panel website [www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk](http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk)