



News Release

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Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley calls for more interactive public services online to get more people online and promote digital inclusion

Speaking today at the Westminster eForum on the future of broadband in the UK, Communications Consumer Panel Chair Anna Bradley identified one big gap in the online world – truly interactive public services.

She said that online services would play a central role in stimulating demand for current and next-generation broadband, but highlighted the concern that the people who are very heavy users of public services – older people and people on low incomes – are mostly not online.

“Better, more interactive public services online could give more people a reason to get online. By showing people how to claim benefits, get health advice or study for a qualification, we can increase people’s skills and understanding and increase broadband penetration. We can also make savings for taxpayer,” she added.

But, she told the eForum that this would only happen if online services are designed around the needs of consumers “rather than to achieve the biggest cost savings. So, in thinking about what will drive NGA take-up and promote digital inclusion, I urge you to think about the role of public services,” Anna Bradley said.

She said that there was another significant reason why next-generation access (NGA) is important to consumers: “Broadband is becoming more and more central to people’s lives and households are carrying out multiple activities at the same time. Consumers are demanding faster, more reliable connections and before too long will need next-generation broadband.”

She said that the Panel supported the ‘Final Third’ Fund as a way of stimulating the deployment of NGA where the business case for commercial rollout does not stack up.

To read the speech visit our website:

<http://www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk/091126%20Westminster%20eForum%20BB%20seminar.pdf>

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NOTES FOR EDITORS AND CSEs

Anna Bradley's speech to the Westminster eForum can be downloaded from the website www.communicationsconsumerpanel.org.uk

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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