

Note of the Ofcom Board held on 11 December 2024

Members were welcomed to the 320th meeting of the Ofcom Board. In addition to Board members, Martin Ballantyne (General Counsel), Veronica Branton (Corporation Secretary), Francesca Carter (Head of Governance) and Sharon Malley (Governance Manager) attended throughout.

Declaration of members' interests

1. No new interests were declared.

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024

2. The minutes of the Ofcom Board meeting held on 13 November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Chair's report

3. The Chair updated the Board on his activity, including meetings with the Chairs of BBC and Openreach.
4. The Board noted the report.

Risk and Audit Committee update

5. Angela Dean updated the Board on the Risk and Audit Committee meeting of 4 December 2024. The Committee had discussed internal audit reports on payroll and the governance of the Telecoms Access Review and the half-year internal audit plan had been approved.
6. The Committee had reviewed the Strategic Risk Register. No changes had been proposed but the Committee had noted PMB's discussion of the Trusted Regulator risk. The Committee had also carried out a deep dive on the People and Culture risk.
7. The Committee had discussed corporate security and had reviewed the financial position.
8. The Board noted the paper.

Future of the post USO

9. The Board discussed a paper on the future of the universal service obligation (USO) for post. The Board discussed the proposals in the context of the proposed takeover of Royal Mail and the financial sustainability of the USO and noted the risks.
10. The Board noted the paper.

Age Assurance and Children’s Access Statement

11. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s Age Assurance and Children’s Access Statement, which was due to be published in January and would form the basis of Ofcom’s protection of children work. The Board noted the approach taken in the statement and discussed measurement and evaluation of the new regime.
12. It was noted that the introduction of age assurance regulation should lead to the improvement of age assurance technology. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Board to receive a briefing on this. It was noted that Ofcom had a statutory duty to report in July 2026 on the progress of the introduction of HEAA measures.
13. The Board noted the paper.

Annual enforcement update

14. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s enforcement programme. The Board noted the different sectors in which the team had enforced and where it anticipated the future work would come. It discussed planned approaches to securing compliance and agreed that a short briefing note would be prepared for Board members on Ofcom’s activity in relation to fraud.
15. The Board noted the paper.

Ofcom’s Three-Year Media Literacy Strategy

16. The Board discussed a paper on Ofcom’s Three-Year Media Literacy Strategy. The Board noted the importance of people being able to navigate online material safely and that Ofcom’s media literacy work complemented Ofcom’s regulatory powers in broadcasting and online safety. However, media literacy was not the responsibility solely of Ofcom, with the broader community needing to take action alongside.
17. The Board noted the paper.

Cyber Security & Resilience Bill and data centres

18. The Board discussed a paper on the Cyber Security & Resilience Bill and noted that the Bill would bring data centres within scope of the Network and Information Systems Regulation.
19. The Board noted the paper.

Board evaluation review proposals for 2024-25

20. The Board approved proposals for the annual Board evaluation review.

Content Board appointments

21. The Board approved various appointments to the Content Board.

National Advisory Committee for Scotland appointment

22. The Board approved the appointment of the Chair of the National Advisory Committee for Scotland.

Annual report – section 128 of the Online Safety Act

23. The Board noted the paper.

Standing items

24. The Board noted the following standing items:

- Non-executive member updates
- Monthly performance report
- Board work programme and publications schedule
- Minutes of the Communications Consumer Panel on 17 October 2024.

Any other business

25. The Chair updated the Board on appointments to the Board of Channel 4.

Date of the next meeting

26. The next Board meeting would be held on 5 February 2025.