

Emailed to: consult@ofcom.org.uk

17 February 2023

Ofcom's proposed plan of work 2023/24.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ofcom proposed Plan 2023/24. In this response we have provided:

1. Comments on Ofcom proposed plan of work 203/4
2. Background to Ombudsman Services - the Trust Alliance Group

1. Comments on Ofcom proposed plan of work 2023/24

We support the proposed plan of work set out and the three consumer outcomes to be built upon in the forthcoming year: internet we can rely upon, media we can trust and value and to live a safer life online.

We support the programmes of work associated with the Video Sharing Platform regulation and preparation for the forthcoming Online Safety Bill, as people and businesses increasingly rely on online services for a growing range of activities such as financial services, video-on-demand and public services, we know it will be even more important for consumers to be protected from online harms. Regulation will need to keep pace with emerging business models, digital convergence and disruption. We look forward to engaging with you further as you develop your understanding of converged consumers and consult on the Online Safety Bill regulatory approach.

We also agree with Ofcom's programmes of work that are focussed on ensuring positive outcomes for consumers. Tackling nuisance scams and calls and ensuring that One-Touch Switch is implemented by April 2023 will play a role in improving consumer outcomes. With the cost-of-living crisis, reviewing the affordability communication services and understanding the take-up of social tariffs and helping to raise awareness of these with eligible consumers will be important as well as monitoring consumer outcomes for those who need additional support. We also think it is right to have a focus on minimising the disruption and harms experienced by consumers who may rely on analogue services in light of the migration to Voice-over-IP (VOIP) services or be impacted by the 2G/3G switch-off.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further information regarding our response. Our response is not confidential.



For more information regarding this consultation please contact:

2. Background to Ombudsman Services – the Trust Alliance Group

As you know, Ombudsman Services is in the process of moving to the Trust Alliance Group, which comprises a number of businesses that are part of Ombudsman Services. As part of our purpose of building, maintaining and restoring trust between consumers and businesses, we want to develop new capabilities to help tackle consumer detriment. We also want to explore new opportunities for consumer protection in the digital landscape. One of our key aims is to develop diverse capabilities with a connected purpose focussed on trust. This will include developing greater technological and data capabilities that will help us better support the consumer journey.

The businesses that make up the Trust Alliance Group include:

- The Energy Ombudsman, which has been handling disputes in the energy sector for over 15 years. It uses its years of experience to deliver fair and balanced resolutions to a variety of disputes. It also works with suppliers to help them improve the consumer experience they provide. It supports around 90,000 consumers a year resolve a dispute with their energy supplier.
- The Communications Ombudsman has handled disputes in the communications sector for over 15 years. It provides independent dispute resolution services, aiming to put consumers back into the position they were in before the issue occurred, whilst helping suppliers to understand their consumers and improve their experience. The Communications Ombudsman helps over 20,000 consumers each year to resolve their disputes.
- Flexible Resolution Services has provided dispute resolution support for a number of sectors including energy, telecommunications and parking. Focussing on the need for flexibility and for providing products and services that meet the needs of different sectors.
- Lumin delivers technology solutions to help build trust and provide improved dispute resolutions.
- The Internet Commission promotes ethical business practice to counter hate speech, abuse, fraud, algorithmic bias, and misinformation, whilst protecting privacy and freedom of expression.

For more information regarding this consultation please contact:

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