

# Review of ADR in the telecoms sector

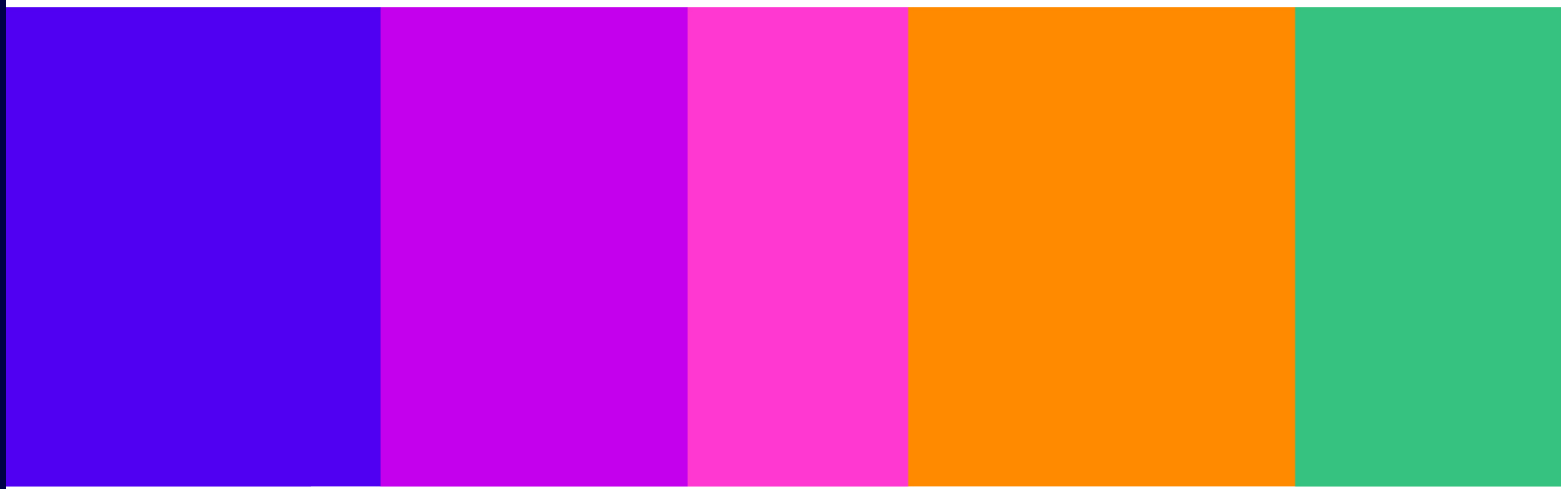
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Call for inputs to inform Ofcom's review of  
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)  
procedures established under the  
Communications Act 2003

## Consultation

Published 29 November 2023

Closing date for responses: 10 January 2024



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# 1. Overview

- 1.1 Alternative Dispute Resolution ('ADR') plays a key role in protecting consumers with complaints about their communications provider ('provider'). Under the Communications Act 2003 ('the Act'), certain providers are required to be members of an Ofcom-approved ADR scheme. These schemes offer an independent, impartial view where complaints are unresolved.
- 1.2 We currently approve two ADR schemes under the Act: Communications Ombudsman ('CO', previously known as Ombudsman Services) and the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme ('CISAS'). We are required to keep our approvals of these schemes under review.
- 1.3 We are launching a formal review of the operation of ADR in the telecoms sector, including our rules on how consumers access ADR and our approvals of the above ADR schemes under the Act. This document is the first step and invites views on the planned scope of the review.

## Issues we are considering – in brief

This review will consider whether consumers and small businesses are receiving accessible, fair and consistent outcomes from the ADR procedures established under the Act. To help assess this, we plan to look comprehensively at the consumer journey through ADR, including how consumers first access ADR and their experience of engaging with the schemes.

## Areas of focus

We plan to focus on three main areas:

### Consumer access to ADR

Under our current rules, consumers and small businesses (both referred to as consumers in this document) can take their complaint to ADR eight weeks after they have complained or, before that, when their complaint has reached deadlock. We plan to look at whether these rules are working effectively for consumers.

### Consumer experience of ADR schemes

Under the Act, we are required to keep our approvals of the two ADR schemes under review. We will consider whether the schemes still satisfy the relevant criteria. As part of this, we will consider whether consumers are receiving an accessible and fair service at different stages of engagement with the schemes, from submitting a case to receiving a decision. This will help us to assess whether or not to keep approving the schemes and/or require changes to their operations.

### Ofcom's oversight of ADR schemes

Ofcom monitors the performance of the ADR schemes on an ongoing basis, including by tracking their performance against Key Performance Indicators ('KPIs') set by Ofcom. We plan to look at whether we should make any changes to our oversight of the schemes, including the KPIs, to incentivise better outcomes for consumers.

## Evidence gathering

To inform our assessment of the above areas, we are planning several pieces of evidence gathering including:

- a qualitative research study looking at the consumer experience of using the two ADR schemes.
- a review of a sample of cases from both schemes to assess the effectiveness, fairness and consistency of decision-making within and between schemes.
- information requests (to providers and the ADR schemes) to further inform our understanding of how providers are currently facilitating access to ADR and how the ADR schemes are operating in practice.

## Next steps

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- 1.4 We invite stakeholder comments on the scope of this review, including any additional issues we should take into account. Responses will help to inform the focus of further evidence gathering.
- 1.5 We are planning to publish an update on our work in this area by Autumn 2024, which will invite further views from interested parties on our findings and any proposals we have for this area.

# 2. Background and regulatory framework

## Background

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- 2.1 Fair and effective complaints handling processes protect consumers and empower them in their relationship with communications providers ('providers'). Alternative Dispute Resolution ('ADR') schemes play an important role in complaints handling. In the event that a consumer or small business cannot resolve an issue with their provider, they can refer their complaint to an ADR scheme. The schemes are independent bodies which examine and make judgements about cases referred to them. The schemes can improve the outcome for consumers whose complaints might otherwise remain unresolved or be unduly delayed.
- 2.1 The Communications Act 2003 ('the Act') places a duty on Ofcom to set general conditions relating to the handling of complaints made to providers by domestic and small business<sup>1</sup> customers. We require specified providers to be a member of an approved ADR scheme. Under our rules, providers must inform consumers of their rights to access ADR if a complaint has not been resolved to their satisfaction after eight weeks or, before then, if the complaint reaches deadlock.<sup>2</sup> We currently approve two ADR schemes under the Act: the Communications Ombudsman ('CO') and the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme ('CISAS'). We are required to keep our approvals of these schemes under review.
- 2.2 We monitor each scheme's performance on an ongoing basis (including against the Key Performance Indicators ('KPIs')<sup>3</sup> set by Ofcom) and periodically undertake a formal review. These formal reviews are important in ensuring that the schemes continue to offer an accessible, fair and efficient service to consumers and therefore can continue to be approved ADR schemes. We last carried out a formal review of both schemes in 2017, which included a Call for Inputs and published statement.<sup>4</sup> Separately, as part of a broader review of the rules providers must follow (our 'General Conditions'), we strengthened our rules around facilitating access to ADR in 2017, including by requiring the provider to issue an ADR letter whenever deadlock is reached rather than only when requested by the customer.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 We also approve CISAS and CO under the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes Regulations 2015 ('ADR Regulations') and are required to review our approvals under these regulations every two years. We last reapproved both schemes in February 2022 under the ADR Regulations, following an internal review based on information the schemes are required to provide us with every two years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This means the business must have less than 10 employees (whether employed or volunteers)

<sup>2</sup> Deadlock is reached if the provider has told the complainant of the outcome of its investigation into the complaint; the complainant has told the provider that they consider the proposed outcome does not resolve the complaint to their satisfaction and the provider does not intend to take additional steps to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction that would produce a different outcome.

<sup>3</sup> The KPIs which we set for CISAS and CO can be found on our [website](#).

<sup>4</sup> See our 2017 [Review of Ofcom's approval of Alternative Dispute Resolution Schemes](#)

<sup>5</sup> See our 2017 [Review of the General Conditions of Entitlement](#)

<sup>6</sup> The requirements we consider under the ADR regulations are similar to the approval criteria under the Act

- 2.4 In July 2023, we approved CO under its new organisational structure under the ADR Regulations and the Act.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.5 In recent years, we have seen increased scrutiny of the availability and quality of ADR across regulated and non-regulated sectors. In April 2023, the Government introduced the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill<sup>8</sup> ('the DMCC Bill') which, among other things, will revoke the ADR Regulations and introduce a new ADR framework relating to the protection of consumer rights.<sup>9</sup> The DMCC Bill will prohibit persons from acting as ADR providers unless they have been accredited, are exempt or are acting under special ADR arrangements.<sup>10</sup> The list of exempt ADR providers in the DMCC Bill includes dispute procedures approved under the Act.<sup>11</sup> We therefore expect that the procedures/schemes we have approved under the Act will not also need to be accredited under the DMCC Bill when it becomes law.
- 2.6 In this review, we are planning to look at our approvals of CISAS and CO under the Act only and not under the ADR regulations. Separately, we plan to conduct an internal review of the approvals under the ADR regulations (based on information the schemes are required to provide) and publish our findings in/around Spring next year.

## Regulatory framework

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- 2.7 We set out below a summary of the statutory framework and our associated regulatory rules on ADR procedures for provider complaints. This summary is not an exhaustive description of the legal regime currently in force; readers should refer to the specific statutory provisions and regulatory conditions found in the General Conditions of Entitlement<sup>12</sup> for greater detail.
- 2.8 Our principal duty in carrying out our functions is to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters and consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition (section 3(1) of the Act).
- 2.9 In performing these duties, we are required to have regard to the principles under which regulatory activities should be transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent, targeted only at cases in which action is needed; and any other principles appearing to Ofcom to represent the best regulatory practice (section 3(3) of the Act).
- 2.10 Section 3(4) of the Act notes that in performing the duties under section 3(1), Ofcom must also have regard, amongst other things, to the desirability of promoting and facilitating the development and use of effective forms of self-regulation; and the opinions of consumers in relevant markets and of members of the public generally.
- 2.11 Under section 3(5) of the Act, in furthering the interests of consumers, Ofcom must have regard, in particular, to the interests of those consumers in respect of choice, price, quality of service and value for money.

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<sup>7</sup> See our [website update](#)

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see the [parliamentary page of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill](#).

<sup>9</sup> See paragraph 4, schedule 25 to the [DMCC Bill \(as amended\) dated 22 November 2023](#)

<sup>10</sup> See chapter 4, part 4 of the [DMCC Bill \(as amended\) dated 22 November 2023](#)

<sup>11</sup> See schedule 23 of the [DMCC Bill \(as amended\) dated 22 November 2023](#)

<sup>12</sup> See Ofcom's [General Conditions of Entitlement, Unofficial Consolidated Version](#)

- 2.12 Section 4 of the Act requires that we act in accordance with the six requirements set out in that section including a requirement to promote the interests of all members of the public in the United Kingdom.
- 2.13 We have a general power under section 45 of the Act to set “General Conditions” (GCs) imposed on providers who provide an electronic communications network and/or electronic communications service in the United Kingdom.
- 2.14 Under section 52 of the Act, we have a duty to set GCs that we think are appropriate for securing that public providers establish and maintain procedures with respect to the resolution of disputes between providers and their domestic and small business<sup>13</sup> customers including the provision of remedies and redress in respect of such disputes. When setting these GCs, we must secure (so far as we consider appropriate) that dispute resolution procedures are easy to use, transparent, non-discriminatory and effective; and that domestic and small business customers can access them free of charge (section 52(3) of the Act).

## Facilitating access to ADR

- 2.15 In line with the requirements in the Act, Ofcom has set GCs which apply to all providers who provide *Public Electronic Communications Services to Consumers, Microenterprise or Small Enterprise Customers or Not-For-Profit* (these terms are all as defined in the [General Conditions of Entitlement](#)). These include requiring providers to be a member of an approved ADR scheme and to abide by any final decisions of the schemes (GC C4.3(a) & (b)). Providers must also provide certain information in bills on the rights of customers to take unresolved complaints to an ADR scheme (GC C4.3(d))
- 2.16 GC C4.2 requires providers to have and comply with procedures for complaints handling that conform with Section One of the [Ofcom approved complaints code \(the Code\)](#). Section One of this Code sets out that providers must immediately issue an ADR letter to the complainant when the complaint reaches deadlock<sup>14</sup> or remains unresolved after 8 weeks.<sup>15</sup> It also sets out requirements in relation to the ADR letter issued (for example, that it must be written in plain English, issued in a durable medium and provide contact details of the ADR scheme).<sup>16</sup>

## Approval of ADR schemes

- 2.17 Section 54 of the Act sets out the criteria that Ofcom needs to take into account when approving ADR schemes. These include being satisfied that the arrangements are administered by a person who is independent of Ofcom and providers and that the procedures are easy to use, transparent, non-discriminatory, and effective. The arrangements must also ensure that disputes are effectively investigated, confer power to make awards of appropriate compensation, and enable these awards to be properly

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<sup>13</sup> This means the business must have less than 10 employees (whether employed or volunteers)

<sup>14</sup> See paragraph 11 of the Code. Deadlock is reached if the provider has told the complainant of the outcome of its investigation into the complaint; the complainant has told the provider that they consider the proposed outcome does not resolve the complaint to their satisfaction and the provider does not intend to take additional steps to resolve the complaint to the complainant’s satisfaction that would produce a different outcome.

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 12 of the Code.

<sup>16</sup> Paragraph 13 of the Code.

enforced. The Act allows Ofcom to approve dispute procedures subject to such conditions (including conditions as to the provision of information to OFCOM) as we may think fit.<sup>17</sup>

- 2.18 The Act requires Ofcom to keep approved ADR schemes under review.<sup>18</sup> It also makes provision for Ofcom to modify or withdraw conditions of approval at any time (section 54(5)). However, in doing so, we must have regard to the need to secure that: customers are able readily to comprehend dispute procedures; there is consistency between the different approved procedures; and the number of approved procedures is kept to a minimum (section 54 (6-7)).
- 2.19 In addition, section 49 of the Act sets out that Ofcom must not modify or withdraw an approval that affects the operation of a general condition without being satisfied that to do so is objectively justified, does not discriminate unduly; and is proportionate and transparent in relation to what it is intended to achieve.
- 2.20 Taking account of section 52(3) and 54(2) of the Act, Ofcom has devised approval criteria to assess whether or not we should re-approve the schemes in our formal reviews.<sup>19</sup> These criteria are: **accessibility, independence, fairness, efficiency, transparency, effectiveness, accountability and non-discriminatory**. In addition to these criteria, we also plan to assess whether there is **consistency** between the two schemes in line with section 54(7)(b) of the Act.

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<sup>17</sup> Section 54(3) of the Act.

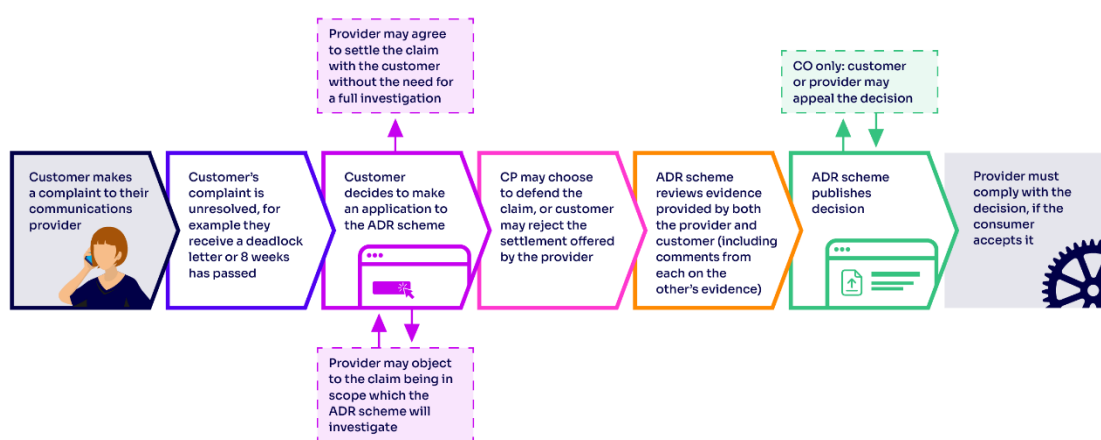
<sup>18</sup> Section 54(4) of the Act.

<sup>19</sup> These criteria were also used in our previous two periodic review of the ADR schemes in 2011 and 2017



# 3. Scope

- 3.1 This section sets out the main themes we are planning to consider as part of this review. In scoping this review, we have considered potential factors which might affect consumer decisions on whether to submit a case to ADR when eligible (for example, the amount of time before being able to access ADR or how they are told about it by their provider). We have also considered the consumer journey through the various stages of the ADR schemes' processes (from first lodging a case to receiving a decision).
- 3.2 The diagram below provides a simplified, high-level summary of the consumer journey through ADR. However, readers should refer to the regulatory framework (see Section 2) and the ADR schemes' rules<sup>20</sup> for further detail.



## Facilitating access to ADR

- 3.3 ADR is an important protection for consumers, empowering them to resolve disputes with their providers without having to go to court. However, its effectiveness relies on complainants being aware of their rights to go to ADR and having prompt access when their complaint cannot be resolved. Our current rules require providers to issue ADR letters which inform customers of their right to submit a case to ADR if it has not been resolved to their satisfaction after 8 weeks or, before then, if a complaint reaches deadlock.
- 3.4 While the period of time before consumers can access ADR is eight weeks in most regulated sectors, consumer bodies argue that this should be shorter in a digital age of immediate payments and instant communications.<sup>21</sup> The UK Government published a consultation in July 2021 which, among other things, looked at whether regulators should aim to set a lower timeframe for access. In its response, the Governments noted that many respondents supported the reduction, but there were some concerns including that this may not be appropriate in some sectors with a large number of cases with complex products and

<sup>20</sup> See CISAS' [Rules](#) and CO's [Terms of Reference](#).

<sup>21</sup> For example, see MoneySavingExpert's reports [Sharper Teeth: The Consumer Need for Ombudsman Reform](#) (2017) and [Justice Delayed: The Case for Shortening the Ombudsman 8-week rule](#) (2019) and Which's 2021 report [Are Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes working for consumers?](#)

services that take time to investigate fully.<sup>22</sup> Government decided not to impose a standardised 4-week time limit, but to continue to engage with regulators to explore the case for reducing the timeframe in individual sectors.<sup>23</sup>

- 3.5 We think it is now appropriate to look again at our rules on facilitating access to ADR in the telecoms sector, including the amount of time a consumer has to wait before submitting a case. In line with the criteria in section 52 of the Act (see Section 2), we will consider whether procedures for facilitating access to ADR are easy to use, transparent, non-discriminatory and effective. We plan to look particularly at:
- the timeframe before consumers can access ADR (which is currently 8 weeks or earlier if the complaint reaches deadlock)
  - the functioning of ADR letters (deadlock and 8-week letters)
- 3.6 We will explore consumer perceptions of the ease of accessing ADR through our qualitative research (see Section 1). We also plan to collect information from providers on relevant complaint handling processes, for example in relation to complaint resolution times and handling of ADR letters.

## Consumer experience of the ADR process

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- 3.7 When complaints become eligible for ADR, consumers should be referred to one of two approved ADR schemes – CISAS or CO - depending on which scheme the provider has chosen to be a member of. While there are some differences in each of the schemes' processes, it is important that consumers receive fair treatment and consistent quality of service regardless of which scheme they are referred to.
- 3.8 We plan to assess whether the schemes are meeting the approval criteria of **accessibility, independence, fairness, efficiency, transparency, effectiveness, accountability and non-discriminatory**. We will also assess whether there is **consistency** between the two schemes.
- 3.9 We are likely to have the following options open to us in relation to our approvals of both schemes under the Act:
- a) continue to approve both schemes with no suggested changes (i.e. the status quo)
  - b) continue to approve both schemes but subject to either, or both, of them making changes to their rules and operations; or
  - c) withdraw approval of one or both scheme(s).
- 3.10 We have included below some key areas which we consider will help us to assess the consumer experience of taking a case to ADR and whether the schemes are continuing to meet the approval criteria. These are not intended as a comprehensive list, but give examples of some of the issues we intend to explore:

## How easy is it for consumers to navigate the ADR schemes?

- 3.11 While providers may be well-versed in handling disputes, some customers will be taking a case to ADR for the first time and need appropriate guidance and support. We plan to look at the ease of using ADR schemes at different stages of the process, including:

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<sup>22</sup> See the UK Government's [Consultation on Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy](#)

<sup>23</sup> See [Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy: Government Response](#)

- whether customers are given sufficient guidance on making a claim and the different stages of the process (e.g. on providing evidence)
  - whether the schemes are sufficiently accessible and vulnerable consumers are given appropriate support (e.g. via reasonable adjustments)
  - how well and clearly decisions are explained to consumers
- 3.12 We aim to explore consumer perceptions of such issues through the qualitative research. We will also look at whether the schemes are following their own published procedures through the case review (see Section 1).

## Are consumers receiving fair and consistent outcomes from both schemes?

- 3.13 We are aware that there are some differences between each of the schemes' procedures for resolving disputes.<sup>24</sup> For example, CO provides an option for consumers and providers to make an appeal against the scheme's decisions if they consider that the decision is factually incorrect or they have acquired new evidence. In contrast, CISAS adjudications are final and not subject to appeal. While we recognise that many of the schemes' processes are commercial decisions, we would have concerns if such differences were impacting on outcomes for consumers.
- 3.14 This review will consider whether case outcomes are broadly consistent, and decision-making processes are fair, both within and between the schemes. This will be a key focus of the case review.

## Are the schemes sufficiently transparent about the cases they handle?

- 3.15 Information received by the schemes can offer insights on complaint trends across industry, helping to inform both Ofcom's oversight of providers and customer choice of provider. The schemes publish quarterly data on complaint trends (including on case outcomes and complaint types by provider) on their respective websites.<sup>25</sup> The schemes also provide Ofcom with more detailed monthly datasets on complaints trends, which include information on some additional areas, such as rates of signposting to ADR by providers.
- 3.16 Information sharing is also important for helping us to monitor the schemes' performance on an ongoing basis. For example, the schemes provide Ofcom with information every month on their performance against a set of KPIs, which we publish on our website on a quarterly basis.<sup>26</sup>
- 3.17 We plan to look at whether there are areas where the schemes could be more transparent to positively improve complaints handling and support our oversight of both providers and the schemes. As part of this, we will review the range and quality of the data provided to Ofcom and data that is published.

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<sup>24</sup> See CISAS' [Rules](#) and CO's [Terms of Reference](#).

<sup>25</sup> See CISAS' [Reports page](#) and CO's [Complaints Data page](#)

<sup>26</sup> The KPIs which we set for CISAS and CO can be found on our [website](#).

## Ofcom's oversight of ADR schemes

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3.18 Ofcom's ongoing oversight should support the ADR schemes in meeting the approval criteria, incentivising fair outcomes for consumers. We plan to review our processes for overseeing CISAS and CO on an ongoing basis and consider whether changes to our approach would be beneficial. As part of this we will look at:

- the KPIs we set for the schemes, including whether they are focused on the right areas and set at appropriate levels
- how the schemes provide information to Ofcom about the cases they handle, for example, whether it is working effectively to receive information from the schemes on an informal basis, rather than requiring information formally, e.g. as a condition of their approval.

3.19 We plan to collect further information as part of this review from both the schemes to help inform our assessment of these areas.

### **Call for input: key questions:**

1: Do you agree with the areas we are planning to cover as part of this review? Are there additional areas we should take into account?

2: Do you have any comments on the issues raised in relation to these areas? Please provide any supporting evidence that you think we should take into account.

3: Do you consider there are additional sources of information we should consider when undertaking our assessment of these areas?

# A1. Responding to this call for inputs

## How to respond

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- A1.1 Ofcom would like to receive views and comments on the issues raised in this document, by 5pm on 10 January 2024.
- A1.2 You can download a response form from <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-2/review-of-adr-in-the-telecoms-sector>. You can return this by email or post to the address provided in the response form.
- A1.3 If your response is a large file, or has supporting charts, tables or other data, please email it to [ADRreview@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:ADRreview@ofcom.org.uk), as an attachment in Microsoft Word format, together with the cover sheet. This email address is for this consultation only and will not be valid after 10 January 2024.
- A1.4 Responses may alternatively be posted to the address below, marked with the title of the consultation:
- ADR Review Team, Network and Communications  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2A Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA
- A1.5 We welcome responses in formats other than print, for example an audio recording or a British Sign Language video. To respond in BSL:
- send us a recording of you signing your response. This should be no longer than 5 minutes. Suitable file formats are DVDs, wmv or QuickTime files; or
  - upload a video of you signing your response directly to YouTube (or another hosting site) and send us the link.
- A1.6 We will publish a transcript of any audio or video responses we receive (unless your response is confidential)
- A1.7 We do not need a paper copy of your response as well as an electronic version. We will acknowledge receipt of a response submitted to us by email.
- A1.8 You do not have to answer all the questions in the consultation if you do not have a view; a short response on just one point is fine. We also welcome joint responses.
- A1.9 It would be helpful if your response could include direct answers to the questions asked in the consultation document. The questions are listed at Annex 4. It would also help if you could explain why you hold your views, and what you think the effect of Ofcom's proposals would be.
- A1.10 If you want to discuss the issues and questions raised in this consultation, please contact [ADRreview@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:ADRreview@ofcom.org.uk)

## Confidentiality

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- A1.11 Consultations are more effective if we publish the responses before the consultation period closes. This can help people and organisations with limited resources or familiarity with the issues to respond in a more informed way. So, in the interests of transparency and good regulatory practice, and because we believe it is important that everyone who is interested in an issue can see other respondents' views, we usually publish responses on the Ofcom website at regular intervals during and after the consultation period.
- A1.12 If you think your response should be kept confidential, please specify which part(s) this applies to and explain why. Please send any confidential sections as a separate annex. If you want your name, address, other contact details or job title to remain confidential, please provide them only in the cover sheet, so that we don't have to edit your response.
- A1.13 If someone asks us to keep part or all of a response confidential, we will treat this request seriously and try to respect it. But sometimes we will need to publish all responses, including those that are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations.
- A1.14 To fulfil our pre-disclosure duty, we may share a copy of your response with the relevant government department before we publish it on our website.
- A1.15 Please also note that copyright and all other intellectual property in responses will be assumed to be licensed to Ofcom to use. Ofcom's intellectual property rights are explained further in our Terms of Use.

## Next steps

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- A1.16 Following this consultation period, Ofcom plans to publish an update on our work in this area by Autumn 2024
- A1.17 If you wish, you can register to receive mail updates alerting you to new Ofcom publications.

## Ofcom's consultation processes

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- A1.18 Ofcom aims to make responding to a consultation as easy as possible. For more information, please see our consultation principles in Annex 2.
- A1.19 If you have any comments or suggestions on how we manage our consultations, please email us at [consult@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:consult@ofcom.org.uk). We particularly welcome ideas on how Ofcom could more effectively seek the views of groups or individuals, such as small businesses and residential consumers, who are less likely to give their opinions through a formal consultation.
- A1.20 If you would like to discuss these issues, or Ofcom's consultation processes more generally, please contact the corporation secretary:
- A1.21 Corporation Secretary  
Ofcom  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA  
Email: [corporationsecretary@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:corporationsecretary@ofcom.org.uk)

# A2. Ofcom's consultation principles

Ofcom has seven principles that it follows for every public written consultation:

## Before the consultation

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A2.1 Wherever possible, we will hold informal talks with people and organisations before announcing a big consultation, to find out whether we are thinking along the right lines. If we do not have enough time to do this, we will hold an open meeting to explain our proposals, shortly after announcing the consultation.

## During the consultation

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A2.2 We will be clear about whom we are consulting, why, on what questions and for how long.

A2.3 We will make the consultation document as short and simple as possible, with an overview of no more than two pages. We will try to make it as easy as possible for people to give us a written response.

A2.4 We will consult for up to ten weeks, depending on the potential impact of our proposals.

A2.5 A person within Ofcom will be in charge of making sure we follow our own guidelines and aim to reach the largest possible number of people and organisations who may be interested in the outcome of our decisions. Ofcom's Consultation Champion is the main person to contact if you have views on the way we run our consultations.

A2.6 If we are not able to follow any of these seven principles, we will explain why.

## After the consultation

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A2.7 We think it is important that everyone who is interested in an issue can see other people's views, so we usually publish the responses on our website at regular intervals during and after the consultation period. After the consultation we will make our decisions and publish a statement explaining what we are going to do, and why, showing how respondents' views helped to shape these decisions.

# A3. Consultation coversheet

## Basic details

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Consultation title:

To (Ofcom contact):

Name of respondent:

Representing (self or organisation/s):

Address (if not received by email):

## Confidentiality

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Please tick below what part of your response you consider is confidential, giving your reasons why

- Nothing
- Name/contact details/job title
- Whole response
- Organisation
- Part of the response

If you selected 'Part of the response', please specify which parts:

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If you want part of your response, your name or your organisation not to be published, can Ofcom still publish a reference to the contents of your response (including, for any confidential parts, a general summary that does not disclose the specific information or enable you to be identified)?

Yes       No

## Declaration

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I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response that Ofcom can publish. However, in supplying this response, I understand that Ofcom may need to publish all responses, including those which are marked as confidential, in order to meet legal obligations. If I have sent my response by email, Ofcom can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Ofcom aims to publish responses at regular intervals during and after the consultation period. If your response is non-confidential (in whole or in part), and you would prefer us to publish your response only once the consultation has ended, please tick here.

Name

Signed (if hard copy)



## A4. Call for inputs: key questions

1: Do you agree with the areas we are planning to cover as part of this review? Are there additional areas we should take into account?

2: Do you have any comments on the issues raised in relation to these areas? Please provide any supporting evidence that you think we should take into account.

3: Do you consider there are additional sources of information we should consider when undertaking our assessment of these areas?