

77th Meeting of the Advisory Committee for Scotland, 27 February 2020, held at the Ofcom Scotland office, 125 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4AD

Present:

Liz Leonard	Chair
David Connolly	Member
Laura Anderson	Member
Carmel Teusner	Member
Stephen Speirs	Member
Amanda Britain	Consumer Panel Member for Scotland
Bob Downes	Ofcom Board Member for Scotland (from Agenda Item 7)

Ofcom

Glenn Preston	Ofcom Scotland Director
Jonathan Ruff	Ofcom Scotland
Lauren Galloway	Ofcom Scotland
Debbie Hughes	Ofcom Scotland
Emma McFadyen	Ofcom (via Teams)
Molly Kearney	Ofcom (Agenda Item 7 only)

Company:

Helen Jay	Channel 4 (Agenda Item 8 only)
Deborah Dunnett	Channel 4 (Agenda Item 8 only)
Kevin Blacoe	Channel 4 (Agenda Item 8 only)

Apologies

Maggie Cunningham	Content Board Member for Scotland
Katie Pettifer	Ofcom, Public Policy Director
Stefan Webster	Ofcom Scotland

Agenda items
Introduction
1. LL noted apologies from Maggie Cunningham, Katie Pettifer and Stefan Webster.
Declaration of Members' Interests – oral
2. No interests were declared by Members or attendees.
Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2019 and matters arising
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to Amanda Britain providing her comments/amendments to the CCP/ACOD update.
Members' update – Agenda Item 5

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<p>4. SS noted the importance of discussing infrastructure resilience in addition to considering coverage.</p> <p>5. GP advised the Committee that Ofcom, as part of its Plan of Work, has a programme of security and resilience related activity and that this included looking at guidance to operators regarding single points of failure.</p> <p>6. AB noted that island communities are particularly vulnerable in the event of an outage. GP acknowledged that solutions for improving resilience might be different for rural communities as compared to urban areas.</p> <p>7. It was suggested that it would be helpful for John Trower (Infrastructure Commission and ex ACS member) to be invited to attend the June meeting and discuss connectivity and resilience. The Committee agreed and suggested that an item on PSTN switch over would also be beneficial.</p> <p>8. Following discussion there was a general agreement from the Committee that the next meeting should focus on network resilience.</p>
<p>Director's Report, Glenn Preston - Agenda Item 6</p> <p>9. GP highlighted a new review of Gaelic broadcasting instigated by the Scottish Government, which was to be led by Peter Peacock. Ofcom would provide factual input to that over the coming months.</p> <p>10. GP advised the committee that he had attended a Scottish Government meeting focusing on the impact of Brexit on connectivity.</p> <p>11. GP updated members on the Cabinet reshuffle in the Scottish Government, highlighting changes in Fiona Hyslop's portfolio to include the economy.</p> <p>12. GP highlighted that the draft Scottish budget had been published. This was largely unchanged from the last financial year but funds had been allocated to R100 rollout in Central and South lots.</p> <p>13. GP informed the Committee that the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland had also published their interim report. The plan was for Ofcom to write a letter in response to the report (ahead of the final version, due for publication in the summer), drawing attention to work such as the Access Review.</p> <p>14. The Scottish Government had also put out a National Islands Plan and GP noted the call on Ofcom to ensure that the interests of island communities are considered when designing telecoms regulation.</p> <p>15. GP flagged to the Committee that Ofcom published its backwards looking review into public service broadcasting on 27 February. The Small Screen: Big Debate website was also launched in addition to a school's outreach competition. LL asked the Committee to share the website with their contacts, in addition to family and friends.</p> <p>16. GP noted that Donalda MacKinnon (BBC Scotland Director) had announced her retirement and would step down later in 2020.</p>

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<p>17. GP highlighted Ofcom’s ongoing engagement with MG ALBA. Ofcom was currently in the process of reviewing MG ALBA’s Operational Plan with helpful input from Maggie Cunningham.</p> <p>18. GP noted that there had been 68 applicants for the Advisory Committee positions thus far. ACS members were asked to share job advert among their networks.</p>
<p>General policy/political update, Molly Kearney - Agenda Item 7</p> <p>19. MK updated members on the progress on the Shared Rural Network. This included an overview of the latest coverage targets (at UK and Scotland level) and Ofcom’s planned enforcement role.</p> <p>20. SS highlighted the importance of providing mobile coverage where people ‘work, live and travel’ instead of focusing solely on where they live.</p> <p>21. MK emphasised that the SRN is an agreement between the Government and MNOS and therefore Ofcom’s capacity to influence coverage targets was limited.</p>
<p>Channel 4 Presentation, Helen Jay, Kevin Blacoe & Deborah Dunnett - Agenda Item 8</p> <p>22. Helen Jay, Kevin Blacoe and Deborah Dunnett of Channel 4 provided members with an update, focusing particularly on their work in the Nations and Regions.</p> <p>23. They provided an overview of their 4 all UK strategy, including their plans to increase engagement with young people.</p> <p>24. There was then a discussion about spend in the Nations and job creation facilitated by C4’s out of London strategy. This included an update on progress with the new C4 Creative Hub in Glasgow and upcoming commissions.</p> <p>25. The committee went on to talk about prominence issues and C4 colleagues emphasised the need for government to act to bring forward new legislation regarding prominence otherwise audiences will default to watching VOD platforms.</p>
<p>Small Screen: Big Debate update, Lauren Galloway – Agenda Item 9</p> <p>26. LG delivered an update on the progress of the Small Screen: Big Debate project, discussing the various workstreams including an overview of the initial results of stakeholder engagement and market research.</p> <p>27. LG flagged upcoming events at UWS and a planned stakeholder engagement event in Salford with representatives from across the UK.</p> <p>28. LG noted that it has been challenging to elicit concrete proposals from stakeholders regarding the future of public service broadcasting.</p> <p>29. BD suggested that, if the PSBs aren’t coming up with solutions, then perhaps there isn’t a commercial problem. CT acknowledged that this might be true currently but the PSBs might face a sustainability crisis in the future.</p> <p>30. DC noted that the UK has more PSB channels than other countries. LG confirmed this, noting that other countries such as Finland, have fewer PSB channels than the UK.</p>

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31. LL expressed concern that there was a lack of genuine, wider public debate on the future of public service broadcasting. There was a discussion about how to involve the public in this debate.

32. LG referred to the school's outreach competition and asked the Committee to suggest potential points of contact to publicise the project further. It was suggested that LG contact the Culture Cross Party Group at the Scottish Parliament.

33. BD noted that the emotional components of the debate should not be side-lined as they form an integral part of the debate on public service broadcasting.

34. CT asked if Ofcom's questions were specific enough to elicit responses from stakeholders and suggested asking more focused questions at future events. GP and LG to consider this before the next event.

35. LL reminded the members that they were due to produce an ACS positioning paper on SSBD. LL to organise conference call to facilitate this.

36. LG to share details of the upcoming Ayr and Salford events with ACS as they become available.

Telecoms update (Fixed and mobile telecoms developments), Jonathan Ruff - Agenda Item 10

37. JR updated members on the Access Review and gave a brief overview of how the UK has been split up into 3 types of geographic market. It was noted that the Scottish Government planned to respond to this consultation.

38. JR noted that the USO is scheduled to go live in March and discussed the risk of confusion for Scottish consumers due to the R100 rollout scheme. JR informed members that a portal for Scottish consumers with information about when R100 was coming to their area would be going live over the summer.

39. JR advised that Ofcom is focusing on the consumer journey and ensuring that consumers are clear about what their choices are.

40. JR updated members on the progress of R100, informing them that the Central and South lots have been awarded to Openreach. However, a legal challenge from Gigaclear has delayed progress with the North lot. It was noted that most of the R100 build in Central and South lots will be full fibre.

41. There was discussion of the rollout of gigabit broadband to Scotland; it was possible that administration of the UK Government's proposed scheme would be devolved to the Scottish Government.

42. Members were informed that Ofcom would soon be auctioning the 700 MHz and 3.6-3.8 GHz spectrum. However, the announcement was contingent on the SRN being confirmed in the UK budget on the 11th.

43. JR noted that the Scottish Government had agreed to in principle support for the SRN and were trying to align the SRN with their own 4G infill programme.

44. JR said that PSTN switch off + move to VOIP was another priority work area for Ofcom.

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<p>5G Health implications, Reuben Braddock & Konnor Lindsay - Agenda Item 11</p> <p>45. RB gave an overview of the results of Ofcom’s 5G testing, reporting that the results showed that 5G did not pose a threat to public health. RB advised that Ofcom’s testing showed that EMF levels from 5G-enabled mobile phone base stations are at small fractions of the levels identified in the ICNIRP Guidelines.</p> <p>46. KL explained where measurements were taken, and the processes involved.</p> <p>47. LA questioned how best to communicate these results to the wider public. Ofcom need to consider the best way to inform the public that we’ve done this testing and found it to be at safe levels. There was a suggestion of placing stickers on physical infrastructure, putting notices up around the community and promoting on social media.</p> <p>48. LL agreed that raising public awareness of these results was important, particularly in a Scottish context where fake news regarding 5G has been spreading fast, in addition to general negative publicity. There was discussion on the technicality of Ofcom’s published document and how to communicate this in a way people might understand.</p> <p>49. RB said that a video has been produced for social media. Ofcom was also working with DCMS to provide a guide to EMF for elected representatives which they can use to assuage constituent concerns.</p> <p>50. AB asked what kind of queries people are making. RB advised that queries have focused on the legitimacy of the measures identified in the ICNIRP guidelines.</p>
<p>Consumer Round-up, Jonathan Ruff - Agenda Item 12</p> <p>51. JR flagged the imminent publication of the UK Government’s Consumer Competition and Command Paper, giving an overview of the themes that the paper will likely cover, including personalised pricing and net zero challenges.</p> <p>52. JR informed the committee of the key priorities in Ofcom’s Fairness for Consumer’s program.</p> <p>53. JR concluded with an update on the progress of the Consumer Scotland Bill and provided an outline of its potential implications for Ofcom.</p>
<p>Content Board update - Agenda Item 13</p> <p>54. Maggie Cunningham had provided a written paper and the committee noted its content.</p>
<p>Consumer Panel/ACOD update – Amanda Britain – Agenda Item 14</p> <p>55. AB flagged that the next Communications Consumer Hub event will take place in March in Glasgow. This will focus on the UK communications consumer customers who are financially vulnerable.</p> <p>56. AB informed the group that the Panel had published its latest research entitled ‘Don’t cut me off’.</p> <p>57. AB emphasised that, with regards to telecare and telehealth, Scotland is far more advanced than other countries. However, most telehealth equipment still relies on 2G</p>

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technology. There's concern that these services will eventually become unavailable as technology progresses.
58. SS advised that 3G services will cease before 2G as there is industry awareness that cessation in service will negatively affect older and vulnerable consumers.
59. AB also noted that consumer awareness of migration to VOIP is poor and the technical language makes it challenging for the average consumer to understand.
Any Other Business – Agenda Item 16
60. There was no other business.
For Information Item – Agenda Item 17
61. Ofcom Contact Centre Information – Alistair Cox
Date of the Next Meeting
62. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, 9 June 2020.