

Office of Communications Bill [HL]

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory notes to the Bill, prepared by the Department of Trade and Industry, are published separately as Bill 73 – EN.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms Secretary Hewitt has made the following statement under section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998:

In my view the provisions of the Office of Communications Bill [HL] are compatible with the Convention rights.

Office of Communications Bill [HL]

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Schedule – Further provision about OFCOM

[NOTE: The words marked in bold type were inserted by the Lords to avoid questions of privilege.]

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B I L L

TO

Establish a body corporate to be known as the Office of Communications; and to confer functions in relation to proposals about the regulation of communications on that body, on certain existing regulators and on the Secretary of State.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows: –

1 The Office of Communications

- (1) There shall be a body corporate to be known as the Office of Communications (in this Act referred to as “OFCOM”).
- (2) OFCOM shall consist of such number of members as the Secretary of State may determine; but he shall not determine a membership for OFCOM of less than three or more than six. 5
- (3) The membership of OFCOM shall comprise –
 - (a) a chairman appointed by the Secretary of State;
 - (b) such number of other members appointed by the Secretary of State as he may determine; and 10
 - (c) the executive members.
- (4) The executive members of OFCOM shall comprise –
 - (a) the chief executive of OFCOM; and
 - (b) such other persons (if any) as may be appointed to membership of OFCOM from amongst their employees. 15
- (5) It shall be for the members of OFCOM mentioned in subsection (3)(a) and (b), after consulting the chief executive of OFCOM –
 - (a) to determine whether there should be any executive members falling within subsection (4)(b) and (subject to subsections (2) and (6)(a)) how many; and 20
 - (b) to make any appointments of executive members required for the purposes of any such determination.

- (6) The Secretary of State –
- (a) may, by a direction to OFCOM, set a maximum and a minimum number for the executive members of OFCOM; and
 - (b) shall exercise his powers under this section to secure that the number of executive members of OFCOM is, so far as practicable, at all times less than the number of other members. 5
- (7) The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument modify the numbers for the time being specified in subsection (2) as the maximum and minimum membership for OFCOM.
- (8) A statutory instrument containing an order under subsection (7) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament; and the power to make such an order shall include power to make such incidental, supplemental, consequential and transitional provision as the Secretary of State thinks fit. 10
- (9) OFCOM shall not be treated for any purposes as a body exercising functions on behalf of the Crown; and, accordingly, no person shall be treated as a servant of the Crown by reason only of his membership of, or employment by, OFCOM. 15
- (10) The Schedule (which makes provision in relation to OFCOM) shall have effect.
- 2 Initial function of OFCOM 20**
- (1) It shall be the function of OFCOM (subject to subsection (5)) to do such things as they consider appropriate for facilitating the implementation of, or for securing the modification of, any relevant proposals about the regulation of communications.
- (2) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to carry out their function under subsection (1) in such manner as – 25
- (a) appears to them to ensure, so far as they are facilitating the implementation of any such proposals, that there is effective co-operation in relation to the implementation of the proposals between themselves and both the existing regulators and the Secretary of State; and 30
 - (b) does not interfere –
 - (i) with the effective carrying out by the existing regulators of the functions conferred on them otherwise than by this Act; or
 - (ii) with the effective carrying out by the Secretary of State of his functions relating to wireless telegraphy. 35
- (3) In this Act references to relevant proposals about the regulation of communications are references to the following proposals (whether or not Parliament has given any approval on which the implementation of the proposals depends) – 40
- (a) any proposals by the Secretary of State for the conferring on OFCOM (whether by transfers from the existing regulators or otherwise) of any functions relating to telecommunications, wireless telegraphy, broadcasting, radio and television services or other activities connected with the communications industry; and 45
 - (b) any other proposals by the Secretary of State made in association with any proposals falling within paragraph (a) and relating to the subject-matter of those proposals, to any matters that are incidental or

supplemental to those proposals or to any consequential or transitional matters.

- (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), OFCOM shall have power, for the purpose of carrying out their function under subsection (1), to do such things as appear to them to be incidental or conducive to the carrying out of that function. 5
- (5) Nothing in this section shall be taken, in relation to proposals that have not yet been approved by Parliament –
- (a) as dispensing with the need for any Parliamentary approval otherwise required for the implementation of the proposals; or
 - (b) as authorising OFCOM, before any such approval is given, to engage in any activities other than activities which are connected with, or consist in, either –
 - (i) the formulation of the proposals; or
 - (ii) the taking of preparatory steps towards their implementation when approved. 15
- (6) OFCOM shall not have any power, for the purposes of or in connection with their function under this section, to borrow money from any person other than the Secretary of State.

3 Management of OFCOM

- OFCOM shall, in managing their affairs, have regard – 20
- (a) to such general guidance concerning the management of the affairs of public bodies as OFCOM consider appropriate; and
 - (b) subject to any such guidance and only to the extent that they may reasonably be regarded as applicable in relation to a statutory corporation, to generally accepted principles of good corporate governance. 25

4 Functions of existing regulators

- (1) The functions of each of the existing regulators shall (subject to subsection (4)) include –
- (a) a duty to do everything that is necessary for facilitating the implementation of any relevant proposals about the regulation of communications; 30
 - (b) a duty to carry out all that regulator's functions in such manner as appears to that regulator best to secure that OFCOM –
 - (i) is able effectively to carry out their function under section 2(1); and 35
 - (ii) will be able effectively to carry out any functions which will become functions of OFCOM in consequence of the implementation of any such proposals;
 - (c) a power to do all such other things as that regulator considers appropriate for facilitating the implementation of, or for securing the modification of, any relevant proposals about the regulation of communications; 40
 - (d) a power to carry out the functions of that regulator in a manner that promotes the interests of OFCOM. 45

- (2) It shall be the duty of each of the existing regulators to comply with any direction by the Secretary of State, in relation to the carrying out of that regulator's functions under this Act, that requires that regulator –
- (a) to prepare a draft scheme setting out, in the manner required by the Secretary of State, the regulator's proposals for any such transfers of property, rights and liabilities from that regulator to OFCOM as may be specified or described in the direction; 5
 - (b) to consult with OFCOM about those proposals; and
 - (c) to submit that draft scheme, in such form as he may require, to the Secretary of State. 10
- (3) Subject to subsection (4), each of the existing regulators shall have power, for the purpose of carrying out that regulator's functions under this section, to do such things as appear to that regulator to be incidental or conducive to the carrying out of those functions, including (without prejudice to the generality of that power) power to make payments to OFCOM, to second staff to OFCOM and to provide OFCOM with any information that they may request. 15
- (4) Nothing in this section or in any direction under this section shall be taken, in relation to proposals that have not yet been approved by Parliament –
- (a) as dispensing with the need for any Parliamentary approval otherwise required for the implementation of the proposals; or 20
 - (b) as requiring or authorising an existing regulator, before any such approval is given, to engage in any activities other than activities which are connected with, or consist in, either –
 - (i) the formulation of the proposals; or
 - (ii) the taking of preparatory steps towards their implementation when approved. 25
- (5) The functions of the existing regulators by virtue of this section are in addition to, and without prejudice to the extent of, any of their powers apart from this Act.
- 5 Winding up of OFCOM on abandonment etc. of proposals 30**
- (1) If, in consequence of the abandonment or modification of any relevant proposals about the regulation of communications it appears to the Secretary of State that it is no longer necessary for OFCOM to continue to exist, he may by order provide for the winding up and dissolution of OFCOM.
- (2) If, in consequence of the abandonment or modification of any relevant proposals about the regulation of communications, it appears to the Secretary of State at any time after the end of 2003 that it is no longer necessary for OFCOM to continue to exist, it shall be the Secretary of State's duty to lay before Parliament a draft of an order under subsection (1) providing for OFCOM to be wound up and dissolved as soon as reasonably practicable. 35 40
- (3) The power to make an order under this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument, and no such order shall be made unless a draft of the order has been laid before Parliament and has been approved by a resolution of each House.
- (4) If – 45
- (a) in performance of the duty imposed by subsection (2), the Secretary of State lays a draft of an order under this section before Parliament, and

- (b) a motion for the approval of the draft order is defeated in either House, that subsection shall not be taken to oblige the Secretary of State to lay any further draft of such an order before Parliament.
- (5) The power to make an order under this section shall include—
- (a) power to make different provision for different cases; 5
 - (b) power to make such incidental, supplemental, consequential and transitional provision as the Secretary of State thinks fit.
- (6) Without prejudice to the generality of the preceding provisions of this section, the power to provide for the winding up of OFCOM shall include—
- (a) power to provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of OFCOM to the Secretary of State, to any of the existing regulators or to any such other person as may be specified in the order; 10
 - (b) power to provide for the property, rights and liabilities of OFCOM to be divided between different persons;
 - (c) power, in connection with any provision made by virtue of paragraph (a) or (b)— 15
 - (i) for the creation of interests in property transferred or divided;
 - (ii) for the creation of rights and liabilities in relation to any such property; and
 - (iii) for the extinguishment of interests, right and liabilities; 20
 - (d) power to provide for the payment by the Secretary of State or OFCOM of compensation to persons suffering loss or damage in consequence of the provision made for the winding up of OFCOM.
- (7) An order providing for the dissolution of OFCOM may also contain provision repealing any of the provisions of section 1, 2 or 3 of this Act or of the Schedule. 25

6 Interpretation

- (1) In this Act—
- “existing regulator” means any of the following—
- (a) the Broadcasting Standards Commission;
 - (b) the Director General of Telecommunications; 30
 - (c) the Independent Television Commission;
 - (d) the Radio Authority;
- “enactment” includes an enactment passed after the passing of this Act;
- “modification” includes omissions, alterations and additions, and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly; 35
- “relevant proposals about the regulation of communications” shall be construed in accordance with section 2(3); and
- “subordinate legislation” has the same meaning as in the Interpretation Act 1978 (c. 30).
- (2) In this Act— 40
- (a) references to functions of an existing regulator or of the Secretary of State include references to functions conferred by any enactment or subordinate legislation at any time after the passing of this Act; and
 - (b) references to functions relating to wireless telegraphy include references to functions under any enactment contained in, or subordinate legislation made under, any of the following— 45
 - (i) the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 (c. 54);

- (ii) the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1967 (c. 72);
- (iii) the Marine, &c., Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 (c. 41);
- (iv) the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1998 (c. 6);
- (v) Part 6 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 (c. 12).

- 7 **Short title, commencement and extent** 5
- (1) This Act may be cited as the Office of Communications Act 2001.
- (2) Sections 1, 2 and 3 and the Schedule shall come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument appoint; and different days may be appointed under this subsection for different purposes.
- (3) This Act extends to Northern Ireland. 10
- (4) Her Majesty may by Order in Council extend the provisions of this Act, with such modifications as appear to Her Majesty in Council to be appropriate, to any of the Channel Islands or to the Isle of Man.
- (5) **Nothing in this Act shall impose any charge on the people or on public funds, or vary the amount or incidence of or otherwise alter any such charge in any manner, or affect the assessment, levying, administration or application of any money raised by any such charge.** 15

SCHEDULE

Section 1

FURTHER PROVISION ABOUT OFCOM

Qualification for membership of non-executive members

- 1 (1) Before appointing a person to be the chairman or another non-executive member of OFCOM, the Secretary of State shall satisfy himself that that person will have no such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially the carrying out by him of his functions as a member of OFCOM. 5
- (2) The Secretary of State shall also satisfy himself from time to time with respect to the chairman and every other non-executive member of OFCOM that that member has no such interest. 10
- (3) Every person who—
 - (a) is a person whom the Secretary of State proposes to appoint to be the chairman or another non-executive member of OFCOM, or
 - (b) is the chairman or another non-executive member of OFCOM, 15shall, whenever requested by the Secretary of State to do so, furnish him with such information as the Secretary of State considers necessary for the performance by him of his duties under sub-paragraphs (1) and (2).
- (4) For the purposes of this paragraph and paragraph 2 a person shall not be taken to have an interest that is likely to affect prejudicially the carrying out by him of his functions as a member of OFCOM by reason only that he is or has been— 20
 - (a) the Director General of Telecommunications;
 - (b) a member of another existing regulator;
 - (c) a member of the staff of any of the existing regulators; or 25
 - (d) a person engaged on the Secretary of State's behalf in any activities connected with the carrying out of the Secretary of State's functions relating to wireless telegraphy.

Tenure of office

- 2 (1) Subject to the following provisions of this paragraph, the chairman and every other non-executive member of OFCOM shall each hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of his appointment. 30
- (2) A person's appointment to be the chairman or another non-executive member of OFCOM must state the period for which the appointment is made; but a person shall be eligible for re-appointment at the end of any such period. 35
- (3) The chairman and every other non-executive member of OFCOM may at any time resign his office by notice in writing to the Secretary of State.
- (4) If the Secretary of State is satisfied that the chairman or another non-executive member of OFCOM— 40

- (a) is an undischarged bankrupt or has had his estate sequestrated without being discharged,
 - (b) has made an arrangement with his creditors, or has entered into a trust deed for creditors, or has made a composition contract with his creditors, 5
 - (c) has such a financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially the carrying out by him of his functions as a member of OFCOM,
 - (d) has been guilty of misbehaviour, or
 - (e) is otherwise incapable of carrying out, or unfit to carry out, the functions of his office, 10
- the Secretary of State may by notice in writing remove him from office.

Remuneration and pensions of non-executive members

- 3 (1) OFCOM may pay to the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM such remuneration and allowances as the Secretary of State may determine. 15
- (2) OFCOM may pay, or make provision for paying, to or in respect of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM, such sums by way of pensions, allowances or gratuities as the Secretary of State may determine.
- (3) Where –
- (a) a person ceases, otherwise than on the expiry of his term of office, to be the chairman or to be a non-executive member other than the chairman, and 20
 - (b) it appears to the Secretary of State that there are special circumstances which make it right for him to receive compensation, OFCOM may make a payment to him of such amount as the Secretary of State may determine. 25
- (4) If any non-executive member of OFCOM –
- (a) is a participant in any pension scheme applicable to his membership of OFCOM, and
 - (b) on ceasing to be a non-executive member of OFCOM, becomes an employee of OFCOM or both such an employee and an executive member, 30
- he may, if the Secretary of State so determines, be treated for the purposes of the pension scheme as if his service (after ceasing to be a non-executive member of OFCOM) as an employee or executive member of OFCOM were service as a non-executive member of OFCOM. 35

Deputy chairman

- 4 (1) The Secretary of State may appoint any member of OFCOM who is a non-executive member to be the deputy chairman of OFCOM.
- (2) A person appointed to be the deputy chairman – 40
- (a) shall cease to be the deputy chairman if he ceases to be a member of OFCOM; but
 - (b) shall otherwise hold and vacate that office in accordance with the terms of his appointment.
- (3) The deputy chairman of OFCOM shall be entitled to carry out the functions of the chairman, in such cases and in such manner as may be determined by 45

or in accordance with any directions given by the chairman or the Secretary of State.

Chief executive and other employees of OFCOM

- 5 (1) There shall be a chief executive of OFCOM.
- (2) The chief executive shall be appointed by the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM with the approval of the Secretary of State. 5
- (3) OFCOM may appoint such other employees as they may determine and make such other arrangements for the staffing of OFCOM as they think fit.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) shall not apply in relation to any time before such date as the Secretary of State may notify to OFCOM as the date from which they are required to have a chief executive; and the membership of OFCOM shall not be required at any time before that date to include any executive member. 10

Terms and conditions of executive members of OFCOM

- 6 (1) The chief executive shall be appointed to hold his office, and the other executive members of OFCOM shall be appointed as executive members and employed by OFCOM, on such terms and conditions, including terms and conditions as to remuneration, as the chairman and other non-executive members may determine. 15
- (2) If the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM so determine in the case of any of the employees of OFCOM who are executive members, OFCOM shall – 20
- (a) pay, to or in respect of those employees, such pensions, allowances or gratuities, or
- (b) provide and maintain for them such pension schemes (whether contributory or not), 25
- as the chairman and the other non-executive members may determine.
- (3) If any employee of OFCOM who is an executive member –
- (a) is a participant in any pension scheme applicable to his employment, and
- (b) becomes a non-executive member of OFCOM, 30
- he may, if the Secretary of State so determines, be treated for the purposes of the pension scheme as if his service as a non-executive member were service as an employee of OFCOM.
- (4) If any employee of OFCOM who is an executive member – 35
- (a) is a participant in any pension scheme applicable to his membership of OFCOM, and
- (b) ceases to be an executive member without ceasing to be an employee of OFCOM, 40
- he may, if the Secretary of State so determines, be treated for the purposes of the pension scheme as if his service (after ceasing to be an executive member) as an employee of OFCOM were service as an executive member of OFCOM.

Other employees of OFCOM

- 7 (1) The employees of OFCOM who are not executive members shall be appointed to and hold their employments on such terms and conditions, including terms and conditions as to remuneration, as OFCOM may determine. 5
- (2) If OFCOM so determine in the case of any of the employees of OFCOM who are not executive members, OFCOM shall—
- (a) pay to or in respect of those employees such pensions, allowances or gratuities, or
- (b) provide and maintain for them such pension schemes (whether contributory or not), 10
- as OFCOM may determine.
- (3) If any employee of OFCOM—
- (a) is a participant in any pension scheme applicable to his employment, and 15
- (b) becomes an executive member or a non-executive member of OFCOM,
- he may, if the Secretary of State so determines, be treated for the purposes of the pension scheme as if his service as a member of OFCOM were service as an employee of OFCOM. 20

Finances of OFCOM

- 8 (1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM (subject to any restriction imposed by or under any enactment on the charges they may make) so to conduct their affairs as to secure that their revenues become at the earliest possible date, and continue at all times after that to be, at least sufficient to enable them to meet their obligations and to carry out their functions. 25
- (2) Any excess of OFCOM's revenues for any financial year over the sums required by them for that year for meeting their obligations and carrying out their functions shall be applied by OFCOM in such manner as the Secretary of State, after consultation with OFCOM, may direct. 30
- (3) A direction under sub-paragraph (2) may require the whole or any part of any such excess to be paid to the Secretary of State.
- (4) The Secretary of State shall pay any sums received by him under sub-paragraph (3) into the Consolidated Fund.
- (5) In this paragraph references to the revenues of OFCOM include references to any penalty that is paid to OFCOM in pursuance of any provision made by or under any enactment. 35

Grants to OFCOM

- 9 (1) The Secretary of State may, with the consent of the Treasury, make grants to OFCOM of such sums as he may think fit for the purpose of enabling OFCOM to incur or meet liabilities in respect of capital and revenue expenditure. 40
- (2) Grants under this paragraph shall be paid out of money provided by Parliament.

Advances to OFCOM

- 10 (1) The Secretary of State may make advances to OFCOM out of money provided by Parliament.
- (2) Any sums advanced under this paragraph shall be repaid to the Secretary of State at such times and by such methods, and interest on those sums shall be paid to him at such times and at such rates, as he may from time to time direct. 5

Accounts and audit

- 11 (1) OFCOM shall –
- (a) keep proper accounts and proper records in relation to the accounts, and 10
- (b) prepare in respect of each financial year a statement of accounts in such form as the Secretary of State may direct.
- (2) OFCOM shall, within such period after the end of the financial year to which it relates as the Secretary of State may direct, send copies of every statement prepared under sub-paragraph (1)(b) to – 15
- (a) the Secretary of State; and
- (b) the Comptroller and Auditor General.
- (3) The Comptroller and Auditor General shall –
- (a) examine, certify and report on every statement sent to him under sub-paragraph (2); and 20
- (b) lay a copy of the statement and of his report before each House of Parliament.

Annual report

- 12 (1) As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, OFCOM shall prepare and send to the Secretary of State a report of the carrying out of their functions during that financial year. 25
- (2) Every report under this paragraph shall incorporate –
- (a) a report of OFCOM’s proceedings during that year; and
- (b) such information relating to the financial position of OFCOM, and to any other matters that he considers appropriate, as the Secretary of State may direct. 30
- (3) The Secretary of State shall lay a copy of every report sent to him under this paragraph before each House of Parliament.

Authentication of OFCOM’s seal

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- 13 (1) The application of OFCOM’s seal shall be authenticated by the signature of –
- (a) the chairman or another member of OFCOM; or
- (b) any other person authorised by OFCOM (whether generally or specially) for the purpose. 40
- (2) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), a document purporting to be duly executed under the seal of OFCOM or to be signed on behalf of OFCOM, shall be

received in evidence and, except to the extent that the contrary is shown, taken to be duly so executed or signed.

- (3) This paragraph shall not extend to Scotland.

Committees of OFCOM and advisory committees

- 14 (1) OFCOM may make such arrangements as they think fit— 5
- (a) for the carrying out of any of their functions by committees established by them; and
 - (b) for committees established by OFCOM to give advice to them about matters relating to the carrying out of OFCOM’s functions.
- (2) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), the committees established by OFCOM may include committees the membership of which comprises or includes persons (including persons constituting a majority of the committee) who are neither members nor employees of OFCOM. 10
- (3) Except where—
- (a) the committee is established for the sole purpose of advising OFCOM on matters relating to the carrying out of their functions, and 15
 - (b) is not authorised under paragraph 18 to carry out functions on behalf of OFCOM,
- the membership of every committee established by OFCOM must contain at least one person who is either a member or an employee of OFCOM, or who is both. 20
- (4) Where a person who is neither a member nor an employee of OFCOM is a member of any committee established by OFCOM, OFCOM may pay to that person such remuneration and expenses as they may determine. 25

Proceedings of OFCOM and their committees etc.

- 15 (1) OFCOM may make such other arrangements for regulating their own procedure, and such arrangements for regulating the procedure of the committees established by them, as they think fit.
- (2) The procedure for the carrying out of the separate functions which under this Schedule are conferred on the chairman and non-executive members of OFCOM shall be in accordance with such arrangements as may be determined by a majority of the non-executive members. 30
- (3) Arrangements under this paragraph may include arrangements as to quorums and as to the making of decisions by a majority. 35
- (4) OFCOM shall publish, in such manner as they consider appropriate, any arrangements which they make under this paragraph.
- (5) This paragraph has effect subject to paragraph 17.
- 16 OFCOM shall make arrangements for the keeping of proper records—
- (a) of their proceedings; 40
 - (b) of the proceedings of any committee established by them;
 - (c) of the proceedings at any meeting of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM; and
 - (d) of anything done by an employee or member of OFCOM under paragraph 18(a). 45

Disqualification for acting in relation to certain matters

- 17 (1) This paragraph applies if at any meeting of—
- (a) OFCOM,
 - (b) the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM, or
 - (c) any committee established by OFCOM,
- any member of OFCOM or, as the case may be, of the committee has any form of direct or indirect interest in any matter falling to be considered at that meeting. 5
- (2) The person with the interest shall declare it and the declaration shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. 10
- (3) The person with the interest shall not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the matter in which he has an interest, unless—
- (a) in the case of a meeting of OFCOM or of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM, the other members of OFCOM who are present when the discussion or decision falls to take place or is made have resolved unanimously that the interest is to be disregarded; or 15
 - (b) in any other case, the other members of the committee who are present when the discussion or decision falls to take place or is made have so resolved in the manner authorised by OFCOM. 20
- (4) It shall be the duty of OFCOM, in granting authorisations for the purposes of sub-paragraph (3)(b), to secure that a resolution for those purposes does not allow a person to take part in a discussion or decision at a meeting of a committee established by virtue of paragraph 14(1)(a) unless at least the following requirements are met— 25
- (a) the number of other members of the committee in favour of the resolution is not less than two thirds of those who are both present and entitled to vote on the resolution; and
 - (b) the number of other members of the committee in favour of the resolution is not less than its quorum. 30
- (5) For the purposes of this paragraph a general notification given at or sent to a meeting of OFCOM, of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM or of a committee established by OFCOM that—
- (a) a person is a member of a company or firm, and
 - (b) is to be regarded as interested in any matter involving that company or firm,
- shall be regarded (subject to sub-paragraph (6)(b)), as compliance in relation to any such matter with sub-paragraph (2) for the purposes of that meeting and any subsequent meeting of OFCOM, of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM or of the committee established by OFCOM which is held while the notification is in force. 40
- (6) A notification for the purposes of sub-paragraph (5)—
- (a) shall remain in force until it is withdrawn, and
 - (b) if given at or sent to a meeting of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM or to a committee shall have effect in relation only to meetings of the chairman and other non-executive members or, as the case may be, to meetings of that committee. 45

- (7) A person required to make a declaration for the purposes of this paragraph in relation to any meeting –
- (a) shall not be required to attend the meeting; but
 - (b) shall be taken to have complied with the requirements of this paragraph if he takes reasonable steps to secure that notice of his interest is read out at, and taken into consideration at, the meeting in question. 5
- (8) For the purposes of this paragraph a person shall not be taken to have an interest in any matter specified in sub-paragraph (9) by reason only that he is or has been – 10
- (a) the Director General of Telecommunications;
 - (b) a member of another existing regulator;
 - (c) a member of the staff of any of the existing regulators; or
 - (d) a person engaged on the Secretary of State’s behalf in any activities connected with the carrying out of functions relating to wireless telegraphy. 15
- (9) Those matters are –
- (a) any matter relating to, or connected with, an existing regulator; and
 - (b) any matter relating to, or connected with, the carrying out of any functions relating to wireless telegraphy. 20

Delegation of functions

- 18 Anything that is authorised or required by or under any enactment to be done by OFCOM may be done on their behalf by –
- (a) any employee or member of OFCOM who has been authorised by OFCOM (whether generally or specially) for the purpose; 25
 - (b) any committee established by OFCOM which has been so authorised.

Validity of proceedings

- 19 (1) The validity of any proceedings of OFCOM, of the chairman and other non-executive members of OFCOM or of any committee established by OFCOM shall not be affected by – 30
- (a) any vacancy in the membership of OFCOM or of such a committee;
 - (b) any defect in the appointment of the chairman, deputy chairman or any other member of OFCOM;
 - (c) any failure of the Secretary of State to comply with the requirements of section 1(6)(b); or 35
 - (d) any failure to comply with any arrangements under paragraph 15 or with any of the requirements of paragraph 17.
- (2) Nothing in sub-paragraph (1)(d) shall validate any proceedings of a meeting which (apart from any matter falling within sub-paragraph (1)(b) or (c)) is inquorate. 40

Membership of OFCOM not a disqualification for membership of an existing regulator etc.

- 20 Nothing in any enactment or rule of law, or in the terms of any person’s appointment, shall be taken as preventing any of the members of OFCOM

(including the chairman or deputy chairman), by reason only of his membership of OFCOM—

- (a) from being appointed to or holding office as the Director General of Telecommunications or as a member (including the chairman or deputy chairman) of any other existing regulator; 5
- (b) from taking part in any decision or discussion relating to OFCOM at any meeting of an existing regulator or of any committee established by an existing regulator; or
- (c) from being engaged in any activities connected with the carrying out of the Secretary of State’s functions relating to wireless telegraphy. 10

Disqualification for House of Commons and Northern Ireland Assembly

- 21 In Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 (c. 24) (bodies of which all members are disqualified), there shall be inserted, at the appropriate place—
“The Office of Communications.”; 15
and a corresponding amendment shall be made in Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975 (c. 25).

Freedom of information

- 22 In Part 6 of Schedule 1 to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (c. 36) (public authorities for the purposes of that Act), there shall be inserted, at the appropriate place— 20
“The Office of Communications.”

Public records

- 23 In paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Public Records Act 1958 (c. 51) (administrative and departmental records of certain bodies to be public records), in the Table, in Part 2, at the appropriate place there shall be inserted— 25
“Office of Communications.”

Interpretation

- 24 (1) In this Schedule— 30
“employee”, in relation to OFCOM, includes the chief executive;
“financial year” means—
(a) the period of not more than twelve months beginning with the date on which OFCOM are established under this Act and ending with 31st March; and 35
(b) every subsequent period of twelve months ending with 31st March;
and
“non-executive member”, in relation to OFCOM, means a member of OFCOM who is not an executive member. 40
- (2) In this Schedule—
(a) references to pensions, allowances or gratuities include references to any similar benefits provided on death or retirement; and

- (b) references to the payment of pensions, allowances or gratuities to or in respect of any persons includes a reference to the making of payments towards the provision of the payment of pensions, allowances or gratuities to or in respect of those persons.
- (3) In this Schedule references to functions of OFCOM include references to functions conferred by any enactment or subordinate legislation at any time after the passing of this Act.