

## PRESS RELEASE

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# New working group launches to promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across UK telecoms

**London, 12 December 2024:** Yesterday, the 11 December, the Digital Connectivity Forum held the formal launch of its new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group. The launch was held at the House of Commons, kindly hosted by Chi Onwurah MP (Chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee).

The working group's formation follows a 2023 Opinion report, which was commissioned by the Digital Connectivity Forum at the request of the then Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It presented interesting findings in its assessment of diversity across UK telecoms. While the report showcased the progress that has been made by the sector across recent years, it also highlighted areas where further progress needs to be made including a continued lack of gender diversity across senior technical roles.

In order to address the gaps identified in the report, the new Working Group will focus on diversity, equity and inclusion across all protected characteristics and other important areas, such as socio-economic background and social mobility. It will begin work in 2025 and will champion the delivery of action orientated plans to drive progress for industry and individuals.

The Group will focus on four pillars of delivery and engagement:

- **Focus** on broad diversity and inclusion, including all protected characteristics and other important areas including socioeconomic background;
- **Collaboration** with existing industry organisations and groups;
- **Delivery of pragmatic** action orientated plans to drive progress for industry and individuals;
- **Listening** to understand challenges and plan solutions.

The Working Group has already received significant interest from senior leadership across the industry, including support from Ofcom with Dame Melanie Dawes as Patron and its joint chairs Belinda Fawcett, Director of Property & Estates and General Counsel, Cornerstone and Michael Salter-Church MBE, Director of External Affairs, Policy and Sustainability, Openreach.

The group will work with existing groups, including the Ofcom Women in Tech pledge, and will be actively measuring and reporting success to ensure their work is impactful and driving results. Further updates will be released throughout 2025.

The launch event was attended by senior leadership from across industry, as well as senior figures from Ofcom and Government. It featured a keynote address from Chi Onwurah MP, and from Dame Melanie Dawes, CEO of Ofcom and Patron of the Digital Connectivity Forum Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group.

**Stephanie Liston, Chair of the Digital Connectivity Forum said:**

“I am delighted that the Digital Connectivity Forum is launching a working group to focus on this vitally important area. The digital ecosystem is a fundamental underpinning to economic growth across the UK and beyond. The sector is rich in opportunities for a wide range of people and skills. Inclusive practices, collaboration and the fundamental fairness of a sector is an important metric of overall business success, and the Working Group looks forward to driving through a pragmatic and action orientated work plan in 2025. I look forward to seeing the progress we make and thank everyone involved so far for their dedication and enthusiasm.”

**ENDS**

### **Notes for Editors**

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### **About the Digital Connectivity Forum (DCF)**

The Digital Connectivity Forum (DCF) is the UK Government’s advisory group on digital connectivity issues. Its members collaborate, source evidence, provide expertise and make recommendations to Government, regulators and industry, with the aim of developing policies which deliver seamless digital connectivity across the UK. The Digital Connectivity Forum’s sponsors are: All Points Fibre, BBC, BT, Cellnex CityFibre, Cornerstone, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited, Ericsson, Fibrus, Gigaclear, Hyperoptic, Nexfibre, Openreach, Sky, TalkTalk, techUK, Three, Virgin Media O2, Vodafone, Vorboss, Wireless Infrastructure Group. It works closely with the Consumer Communications Panel, INCA, the Local Government Association and Ofcom.