

COMMENT: RESOLVED FOR 2017



Dave Dadds

RING out, ye bells! A New Year is upon us! Ofcom promises a new customer-centric Openreach. The Universal Service Obligation extends to broadband. Government itself commits to a full-fibre 5G-enabled future. Even the mobile networks are pressing on to meet their not-spot commitments. What can possibly go wrong?

It's been a long time coming. In fact, it took a referendum to accomplish it. But our industry is now, finally, getting to where it belongs in Government thinking, no longer just lumped in with the media luvvies at DCMS because someone thought telephones and mobiles naturally sit with broadcast TV and radio – but a vibrant, vital means of empowering trade, especially international trade. The kind of trade the UK is going to need as it makes its way into the post-Brexit world.

For the first time, too, Government is looking over the shoulders of the big boys and the corporate lobbyists, anxious to catch a glimpse of us agile, flexible, competitive CPs and SME sector suppliers. Suddenly, we're all being taken seriously. How do we begin to respond to that? December's FCS Board meeting spent a lot of time on this. As the voice of the channel, we're already building strong coalitions with other industry voices and feeding into three All-Party Parliamentary Groups. At the same time, we're delivering operational results on everything from Ethernet lead times to dial-through fraud.

To make sure nothing gets overlooked, why not make the time for a quarterly conference call with a proper agenda about what's going on and what we need to do about it? It could be anything from IPX to wholesale mobile, from wayleaves to fraud – the big issues that'll drive the policy work with Ofcom and the task-and-finish groups. *Drop us a note to fcs@fcs.org.uk.*

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