OTA BTS
Office of the Adjudicator
Broadcast Transmission Services

Office of the Adjudicator – Broadcast Transmission Services

Report for the period:

1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026

Web Version

An explanation of the background to the Undertakings, the Office of the Adjudicator Broadcast Transmission Services (OTA-BTS) and the role of Transmission Adjudicator can be found in Appendix A at the end of this report.

1 Key Events in the Quarter & Stakeholder Meetings

1.1 DCMS Green Paper

On 23 June, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published a green paper for consultation. Chapter 3 considers options for switching off DTT either at the end of 2034 or the end of 2044 as television viewing migrates to streaming platforms.

The green paper highlights there are consequential issues for radio transmission.

The consultation closes at the end of August. Given the significance of the issues the Government is considering, it is expected that stakeholders will submit responses to help inform Government decisions.

1.2 Work by Economic Consultants NERA

The last report provided an update on NERA's work as an appendix.

It is regarded as good practice for drafts of this type of report to be shared with the regulated company for fact-checking in advance of publication. During the quarter, the Adjudicator started to share some of NERA's drafting with Arqiva. This is taking time.

The Adjudicator is having further discussions with Arqiva and NERA about the profitability section. It may be that the report is published in stages (e.g. with the sections on the Cost and Pricing Models and the Radio Rate Card being published first, followed separately by the section on profitability).

Some sections of NERA's report may need to be redacted due to commercial confidentiality. The Adjudicator will consider any redactions within the framework of the Undertakings. This will seek to balance the obligations regarding confidentiality alongside those to promote transparency.

When NERA's work is published, we will consult with all stakeholders before deciding whether any new guidance is needed.

1.3 Review of WACC and Inflationary Mechanism

During the quarter, a brief for the project was sent to five economic consultancies. Four submitted proposals.

The Adjudicator carefully considered the proposals against defined criteria and, outside the period covered by this report, has selected the preferred firm.

The target is to publish the firm's report in a consultation at the start of 2027. Subject to inputs to that process a new WACC would be set in the late spring.

1.4 Arqiva Efficiency Plans

As previously reported, in parallel with communications with Arqiva's employees and customers, on 18 March the Adjudicator was provided with initial information about Arqiva's plans for changes to its business. These include reducing people-costs and third-party costs.

Arqiva has underlined that its aim is to deliver efficiencies, while maintaining service delivery.

In late April and early May, Arqiva's regulatory team provided face-to-face briefings with the Adjudicator. These meetings focused on the two areas described in the last report. Answers to questions were provided either at the meetings or shortly after. The briefings were informative and helped explain the processes Arqiva has undertaken to plan the changes and track any subsequent impact on service levels.

The Adjudicator has asked Arqiva to provide details of the Key Performance Indicators it already generates, either to meet contractual obligations or to inform management or its boards.

The Adjudicator continues to discuss with Arqiva the best way for its customers to raise any concerns or questions (a discussion which is not limited to the recent business changes). The primary contact should, almost always, be a stakeholder's account manager. Where stakeholders feel there are matters related to the Undertakings, it remains open for them to contact the Adjudicator.

1.5 Reviews of Sample Reference Offers

It is now one year since Simon Mason started working in the Adjudicator's team as a part-time consultant. A key part of his role has been to review a sample of offers made by Arqiva for contract renewals.

As outlined in the last report, the Adjudicator has reviewed the process with Arqiva and made some changes. The introduction of the new system is taking longer than expected.

1.6 Meetings with Stakeholders

During this period the Transmission Adjudicator, Glyn Jones, and his team held meetings either face-to-face or via video conference using Teams with:

Arqiva	Bauer	BBC
CMA	Comux	Global
News UK	Ofcom	

1.7 The Adjudicator's Team

Glyn Jones has been Transmission Adjudicator since March 2024. Megan Donald is the Executive Assistant and Office Manager. Jeff Astle works with the Adjudicator on consultations and other projects. All three work part time.

In addition, Alice Wallace-Wright of Hogan Lovells International LLP provides legal advice, Professor Geoffrey Myers provides ad-hoc advice on economics and regulation, and Simon Mason provides ad-hoc technical expertise and advice.

During the quarter, Drew Hosie started to do part-time consultancy work with the Adjudicator.

Megan Donald is based at Ofcom's offices at Riverside House. The rest of the team have access to desks and meeting rooms in Ofcom's building when needed.

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2 2026/27 Budget

Expenditure from 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026 (end of Q1 of the OTA-BTS financial year) was £130,300 against an annual budget of £991,028. This is broadly in line with expected expenditure and reflects the phasing of the budget (including for legal advice and external consultancy). In addition, a contingency of £470,000 is available if needed.

The Undertakings require Arqiva to fund the Office of the Adjudicator

3 Routine Reporting Items

3.1 Arqiva's Performance

Paragraph 35 of Appendix 1 requires the Adjudicator to comment on the performance of Arqiva over this period, in relation to the Undertakings.

The performance of Arqiva continues to be generally satisfactory.

3.2 Disputes

In this period there have been no disputes requiring the use of the formal Dispute procedure described in Appendix 2 of the Undertakings.

In 2025, the Transmission Adjudicator published some additional information about the Dispute process set out in Appendix 2. This information can be found at:

https://ota-bts.org.uk/dispute-process-non-binding-advice-and-information/

3.3 Guidance

During this period, no new Guidance has been issued. The Transmission Adjudicator has previously issued Guidance covering Paragraphs 6 and 9-12 of the Undertakings and is of the opinion that no Guidance is required in relation to Paragraph 3.

The Transmission Adjudicator will continue to monitor compliance with the Undertakings and existing Guidance and will consider whether any further Guidance is required.

Documents related to Guidance previously issued by Ofcom and the Office of the Adjudicator can be found on the website at www.ota-bts.org.uk.

3.4 Publication of Reference Offers

Just outside the period covered by this report, Arqiva updated the "Radio Rate Card for Network Access" which is used to generate pricing proposals. The RPI figure used was 3.03% for the year to April 2026.

The updated rate card can be found at:

https://www.arqiva.com/documentation/reference-offers/broadcast-radio/Arqiva_Radio_Rate_Card_for_Network_Access__2026-27.pdf

and other reference offers are available at:

https://www.arqiva.com/documentation/

Adjudicator guidance issued in 2009 endorsed the rate card approach for calculating Network Access prices for radio.

3.5 Compliance Report

Paragraph 18.1 of the Undertakings requires Arqiva to deliver an annual report to the Office of Fair Trading (now the Competition and Markets Authority), setting out steps taken to comply with the Undertakings plus details of any breaches or potential breaches and the steps taken to remedy them.

The report for the year from 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025 was delivered to the CMA, Ofcom, and the Adjudicator in September 2025. Arqiva reported no instances of non-compliance.

3.6 The Undertakings

The Adjudicator believes that the Undertakings, the Adjudication Scheme and Adjudication Rules are satisfactory at the present time and that no changes are needed. As required by the Undertakings, this will continue to be kept under review.

3.7 Information Security Strategy

Paragraph 16.2 of the Undertakings requires Arqiva to produce an Information Security Strategy which defines the measures to be taken to ensure that confidential information held in one part of the company cannot be used by another for commercial advantage.

In June 2025, Arqiva published an updated version of its Information Security Strategy with minor changes. This can be found under the "Corporate" tab at https://www.arqiva.com/documentation.

4 Feedback

The Undertakings require certain things to be included in each quarterly report and for the reports to be sent to the Competition and Markets Authority and Ofcom. In addition, the reports are published on the website of the Office of the Adjudicator at www.ota-bts.org.uk.

Any stakeholder comments about this report, its contents, or suggestions for how it could be improved would be welcome and should be emailed to the Transmission Adjudicator glyn.jones@ota-bts.org.uk.

Appendix A - Background

The aim of this appendix is to explain why OTA-BTS exists, what its job is, and what the Transmission Adjudicator is here for.

Back in 2008, Arqiva took over the only other major company providing transmission services to radio and TV broadcasters (i.e. National Grid Wireless).

At the time, the Competition Commission judged the deal "...may be expected to result in a substantial lessening of competition...and...may be expected to result in...adverse effects...". After consulting with broadcasters and other stakeholders, the deal was allowed to go ahead on the basis of a detailed set of promises made by Arqiva. These are known as the Undertakings.

One requirement of the Undertakings was the setting up of the Office of the Adjudicator and the appointment of a Transmission Adjudicator. While that appointment is made by Ofcom, the Adjudicator takes decisions independently of Ofcom, Arqiva and UK broadcasters.

The Office of the Adjudicator exists to ensure the promises in the Undertakings are being kept and followed, to issue guidance and directions to Arqiva and to adjudicate in certain disputes between Arqiva and its customers.

The goal of the Undertakings is to ensure any substantial lessening of competition does not result in adverse effects and help replicate the outcomes that would be expected in a competitive market.

The Undertakings can be found at:

https://ota-bts.org.uk/the-undertakings/

Although the Adjudicator has independence when carrying out their functions, the Undertakings give Ofcom certain roles (e.g. setting the budget each year, appointing Adjudicators and in some circumstances terminating their contracts).

Finally, alongside the Adjudicator, overarching responsibility for compliance with the Undertakings sits with the Competition and Markets Authority.