



Television access services report 2016

Statement

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About this document

Under the Communications Act 2003, certain television broadcasters licensed by Ofcom are required to provide a proportion of their programming with access services (subtitling, signing and audio description). This statement reports on the level of provision achieved by these channels in 2016.

Section 1

Television access services report 2016

Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Communications Act 2003 (“the Act”), television broadcasters are required to deliver a certain proportion of their programmes with subtitles, signing and audio description to ensure those with hearing and/or visual impairments can understand and enjoy television programmes.
- 1.2 Ofcom has a duty to ensure that these requirements are met and consequently reports on this twice a year. The first bi-annual report for 2016 on the provision of access services, published in October 2016, presented the cumulative position from January to June 2016.
- 1.3 This final report for 2016 on the provision of television access services by broadcasters shows the cumulative position from January to December 2016.

Statutory requirements

- 1.4 Under Sections 303 to 305 of the Act, Ofcom is required to draw up and maintain a code that sets specific targets for the provision of access services by commercial services from the tenth anniversary of their relevant date. Broadly speaking, this means the date the Act entered into force for channels in existence at the time, and for newer channels, the date they began broadcasting.
- 1.5 There are parallel obligations on BBC channels to comply with this Code in the 2006 Agreement between the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, and the BBC. Under the transitional arrangements of the 2016 Agreement, these obligations will continue until Ofcom issues a new Access Services Code that applies to BBC services.
- 1.6 The legislation allows Ofcom to set interim targets and, in the case of subtitling, requires those channels required to provide access services to subtitle a minimum of 60% of their programming after five years.

Ofcom’s Code on Television Access Services

- 1.7 Ofcom’s Code on Television Access Services¹ sets out the criteria for determining which channels should provide access services, and what targets they should meet.
- 1.8 Channels are selected on the basis of the benefits they would deliver to the audience, subject to being able to afford to provide access services. For those purposes, domestic channels with an audience share (all UK households, all times) of 0.05% are required to provide access services, unless there are technical reasons why this would not be practicable, and subject to their ability to afford the assessed cost by paying up to 1% of their relevant turnover.
- 1.9 Since 2014, certain non-domestic channels licensed by Ofcom have been required to provide access services. For non-domestic channels, the audience share threshold is

¹ <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/other-codes/tv-access-services-2015.pdf>

the average audience share in the relevant EU Member State or States where the service is received over a 12-month period as indicated in Annex 2 of Ofcom's Code on Television Access Services.

- 1.10 The targets that most domestic channels must meet are set out in the table below. They date from the anniversary of the 'relevant date' for each channel, which in most cases is the date the legislation entered into force at the end of 2003. If a channel is required to provide access services, the targets they must meet are expressed as a percentage of their services. These targets rise from a low level to the ten-year targets prescribed by the Act which are 80% for subtitling, 5% for signing and 10% for audio description. In setting targets for audio description, Ofcom used its powers to accelerate implementation of the maximum statutory target (10%) so that it was reached on the fifth anniversary or the relevant date, rather than the tenth anniversary.
- 1.11 Some public service channels are required to meet higher targets for subtitling – 90% in the case of Channel 3 (ITV and STV) and Channel 4. The targets for the BBC are to subtitle 100% of their programme content, audio describe 10% of their programme content (except in the case of BBC News), and sign 5% of their content. Because of its low audience share, BBC Parliament is exempted from the requirements although some access services are provided on a voluntary basis.
- 1.12 The following table sets out the targets in full for non-public service channels.

Figure 1: Targets applicable to non-public service channels

Anniversary of relevant date	Subtitling	Audio description	Signing
First	10%	2%	1%
Second	10%	4%	1%
Third	35%	6%	2%
Fourth	60%	8%	2%
Fifth	60%	10%	3%
Sixth	70%	10%	3%
Seventh	70%	10%	4%
Eighth	70%	10%	4%
Ninth	70%	10%	4%
Tenth	80%	10%	5%

- 1.13 If the assessed cost of compliance for a channel with all the targets (Level One) would be more than 1% of the relevant turnover, its subtitling obligations (but not those for signing and audio description) are reduced by one third (Level Two). If that fails to bring estimated expenditure below 1% of relevant turnover, the channel's subtitling obligations may be reduced by two thirds (Level Three). If, despite this, Ofcom's assessment shows that it could not afford the reduced obligations by spending no more than 1% of relevant turnover, the channel will be exempted from providing access services altogether.

Television access services 2016 – domestic channels

- 1.14 Channels with an audience share between 0.05% and 1% have the option either to broadcast 30 minutes of sign-presented programming each month or to participate in Ofcom-approved alternative arrangements that contribute to the availability of sign-presented programming. Where 'Alt' (alternative arrangement) is shown against a channel, this indicates that the broadcaster is contributing to the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust (BSLBT), which commissions sign-presented programming which is broadcast on the Community Channel and Film 4.
- 1.15 All domestic channels required to provide access services in 2016 met or exceeded their targets and the majority did so comfortably. The table below sets out the results for 2016.
- 1.16 The BBC channels that missed their 100% subtitling target by less than 0.1% did so due to technical and/or operational outages which meant that some subtitling was not successfully transmitted. These channels were BBC One and BBC Two.

Provision of access services by domestic channels in 2016

Channel	Subtitling		Audio Description		Signing	
	Annual Quota	Achieved (2016 Q1-4)	Annual Quota	Achieved (2016 Q1-4)	Annual Quota	Achieved (2016 Q1-4)
Level One						
BBC One	100.0%	99.9%	10.0%	21.7%	5.0%	5.2%
BBC Two	100.0%	99.9%	10.0%	27.0%	5.0%	5.2%
BBC Four	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%	34.4%	5.0%	5.3%
BBC News	100.0%	100.0%	Exempt		5.0%	5.8%
CBBC	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%	33.5%	5.0%	5.3%
CBeebies	100.0%	100.0%	10.0%	29.3%	5.0%	5.2%
Channel 3 services (ITV and STV) ²	90.0%	98.1%	10.0%	23.7%	5.0%	6.6%
ITV2	80.0%	98.6%	10.0%	35.1%	5.0%	5.9%
ITV3	80.0%	95.4%	10.0%	53.3%	5.0%	7.2%
ITV4	80.0%	83.7%	10.0%	28.1%	5.0%	6.0%
CITV	80.0%	99.9%	10.0%	36.4%	35 Mins Sign Presented per Month	78 Mins Sign Presented per Month
ITVBe	16.3%	76.9%	2.5%	3.4%	Alt	
ITV Encore	24.6%	70.0%	5.1%	41.1%	Alt	
Channel 4	90.0%	100.0%	10.0%	31.1%	5.0%	6.3%
E4	80.0%	100.0%	10.0%	54.3%	5.0%	6.5%
Film4	75.0%	100.0%	10.0%	26.8%	Alt	
More 4	80.0%	100.0%	10.0%	29.0%	Alt	
4Seven	35.0%	99.9%	7.7%	32.5%	Alt	
Channel 5	80.0%	87.1%	10.0%	15.9%	5.0%	9.3%

² Although these figures are based on ITV network output, access services are also provided on STV services.

5*	72.5%	73.5%	10.0%	14.7%	Alt
5 USA	72.5%	82.6%	10.0%	39.8%	Alt
Sky News	80.0%	81.8%	Exempt		Alt
Sky 1	80.0%	91.4%	10.0%	35.8%	Alt
Sky 2	80.0%	88.8%	10.0%	39.1%	Alt
Pick TV	80.0%	84.7%	10.0%	27.7%	Alt
Sky Sports 1	80.0%	82.2%	10.0%	17.7%	Alt
Sky Sports 2	80.0%	83.5%	10.0%	26.7%	Alt
Sky Sports 3	80.0%	82.2%	10.0%	26.7%	Alt
Sky Sports 4	80.0%	82.2%	10.0%	20.5%	Alt
Sky Sports 5	10.0%	61.5%	2.8%	26.5%	Alt
Sky Sports F1	35.0%	70.3%	7.7%	13.7%	Alt
Sky Sports News HQ	80.0%	80.3%	Exempt		Alt
Sky Cinema Premiere	80.0%	83.6%	10.0%	29.4%	Alt
Sky Cinema Comedy	80.0%	85.5%	10.0%	31.0%	Alt
Sky Cinema Action & Adventure	80.0%	88.6%	10.0%	40.3%	Alt
Sky Cinema Family	80.0%	89.4%	10.0%	30.9%	Alt
Sky Cinema SciFi & Horror	80.0%	87.0%	10.0%	35.3%	Alt
Sky Cinema Hits	80.0%	94.1%	10.0%	54.3%	Alt
Sky Cinema Drama & Romance	80.0%	85.4%	10.0%	31.8%	Alt
Sky Cinema Greats	70.0%	85.1%	10.0%	34.2%	Alt
Sky Cinema Crime & Thriller	70.0%	85.9%	10.0%	23.0%	Alt
Sky Cinema Disney	28.8%	90.7%	5.5%	28.6%	Alt
Sky Living	80.0%	92.9%	10.0%	32.3%	Alt
Real Lives	80.0%	92.9%	10.0%	32.3%	Alt
Challenge	80.0%	82.0%	10.0%	25.7%	Alt
Sky Atlantic	57.9%	96.2%	9.8%	34.8%	Alt
Sky Arts	80.0%	80.2%	10.0%	16.2%	Alt
MTV	80.0%	89.7%	10.0%	19.0%	Alt
MTV Music	57.9%	66.5%	Exempt		Alt
Viva	80.0%	80.4%	Exempt		Alt
Comedy Central	80.0%	88.5%	10.0%	20.7%	Alt
Comedy Central Extra	80.0%	85.1%	10.0%	10.3%	Alt
Nick Jr	80.0%	96.7%	10.0%	11.9%	Alt
Nickelodeon	80.0%	93.6%	10.0%	10.5%	Alt
Nick Jr Too	77.5%	97.0%	10.0%	36.8%	Alt
Nicktoons	80.0%	95.3%	10.0%	10.6%	Alt
Fox	80.0%	94.8%	10.0%	25.6%	Alt
Disney Channel	80.0%	84.2%	10.0%	16.9%	Alt
Disney Junior	80.0%	90.2%	10.0%	20.7%	Alt
Disney XD	80.0%	80.2%	10.0%	24.0%	Alt
4Music	80.0%	92.9%	10.0%	17.8%	Alt

Dave	80.0%	86.3%	10.0%	23.0%	Alt	
Watch	70.0%	71.8%	10.0%	23.1%	Alt	
Yesterday	80.0%	86.2%	10.0%	29.7%	Alt	
Alibi	80.0%	93.9%	10.0%	43.2%	Alt	
Good Food	80.0%	81.5%	10.0%	23.0%	Alt	
Home	80.0%	91.3%	10.0%	36.1%	Alt	
Gold	80.0%	85.7%	10.0%	36.8%	Alt	
Eden	80.0%	83.0%	10.0%	36.7%	Alt	
Really	67.5%	80.3%	10.0%	24.5%	Alt	
Drama	22.5%	80.2%	5.0%	20.1%	Alt	
Discovery	80.0%	81.3%	10.0%	14.2%	Alt	
Animal Planet	80.0%	81.1%	10.0%	10.7%	Alt	
Quest	62.5%	63.5%	10.0%	14.1%	Alt	
TLC	28.8%	79.0%	5.5%	6.5%	Alt	
Universal	80.0%	83.1%	10.0%	16.3%	Alt	
BT Sport 1	20.4%	27.2%	4.8%	6.5%	Alt	
BT Sport 2	20.4%	25.1%	4.8%	9.2%	Alt	
Level Two						
S4C	52.8%	80.5%	10.0%	10.3%	5.0%	5.2%
Level Three						
Boomerang	26.6%	33.1%	10.0%	38.2%	30 mins sign-presented a month	30 mins sign-presented a month
Cartoon Network	26.6%	29.0%	10.0%	32.7%	30 mins sign-presented a month	30 mins sign-presented a month

Source: Ofcom – data provided by broadcasters

Television access services 2016 – non-domestic channels

- 1.17 2016 was the third year in which certain non-domestic channels licensed by Ofcom have been required to provide access services. All but one of these broadcasters met or exceeded their requirements.
- 1.18 AXN Europe Limited under-provided against its 28% subtitling target on the AXN service in Hungary by 11%. We are currently investigating this under-provision of access services in line with the relevant procedures³.
- 1.19 In lieu of the signing arrangements set out in the Code, all non-domestic broadcasters required to provide access services provided an additional 5% of content with subtitles in lieu of their signing requirement.
- 1.20 In December 2016, Ofcom published its decision⁴ to bring signing arrangements for non-domestic channels in line with the requirements for domestic channels. Ofcom is

³ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-1/general-procedures>

⁴ <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-2/nom-dom>

engaging with affected broadcasters to confirm how their signing obligations will be met from 2018 onwards.

Provision of access services by non-domestic channels in 2016

Member State	Channel	Subtitling		Audio Description		Signing	
		Annual Quota	Achieved (2016)	Annual Quota	Achieved (2016)	Annual Quota	Achieved (2016)
LEVEL 1							
Denmark	Kanal 4	40.0%	67.9%	6.0%	7.4%	Alt	
	Kanal 5	40.0%	98.0%	6.0%	7.1%	Alt	
	6'eren	40.0%	68.7%	6.0%	15.4%	Alt	
	TV3	40.0%	80.3%	6.0%	13.7%	Alt	
	TV3 Plus	40.0%	86.5%	6.0%	18.9%	Alt	
	Discovery	40.0%	74.4%	6.0%	7.7%	Alt	
	TLC	40.0%	79.0%	6.0%	6.5%	Alt	
France	Disney Cinema	40.0%	40.9%	6.0%	7.4%	Alt	
Netherlands	Discovery	40.0%	100%	6.0%	6.4%	Alt	
	Investigation Discovery	40.0%	100%	6.0%	6.1%	Alt	
	TLC	40.0%	100%	6.0%	6.2%	Alt	
Republic of Ireland	BBC 1	40.0%	99.9%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	BBC 2	40.0%	99.9%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Sky Living	80.0%	92.9%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Sky 1	40.0%	91.4%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Channel 4	40.0%	100.0%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	E4	40.0%	100.0%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
Italy	AXN	40.0%	46.6%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Discovery	40.0%	44.0%	6.0%	7.8%	Alt	
	Discovery Science	40.0%	44.0%	6.0%	7.8%	Alt	
Poland*	Discovery	40.0%	40.7%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Discovery Science	40.0%	41.0%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	TLC	40.0%	44.3%	Technical Exemption		Alt	
	Investigation Discovery	40.0%	48.0%	6.0%	8.1%	Alt	
Sweden	Discovery	40.0%	74.4%	6.0%	6.2%	Alt	
	Kanal 5	40.0%	98.0%	6.0%	7.1%	Alt	
	Kanal 9	40.0%	98.6%	6.0%	32.0%	Alt	
	Kanal 11	40.0%	99.0%	6.0%	6.0%	Alt	
	TV3	40.0%	90.6%	6.0%	11.9%	Alt	
	TV6	40.0%	99.0%	6.0%	15.2%	Alt	
	TV8	40.0%	96.9%	6.0%	12.2%	Alt	
TV10	40.0%	90.7%	6.0%	10.3%	Alt		
LEVEL 2							
Hungary	AXN	28.0%	17.0%	Technical Exemption		Alt	

LEVEL 3						
Poland	13 Ulica	16.6%	25.1%	Technical Exemption		Alt
	AXN	16.6%	73.5%	Technical Exemption		Alt
	AXN White	16.6%	72.0%	Technical Exemption		Alt
	Cartoon Network	16.6%	29.0%	6.0%	14.3%	Alt

Source: Ofcom – data provided by broadcasters

* Ofcom has granted technical exemptions for the provision of audio description in those cases where the networks and/or consumer receivers are such that audio description cannot be delivered.