



# Television channels required to provide television access services in 2017

Statement

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## About this document

This document explains which TV channels licensed by Ofcom are required to provide access services (subtitles, signing and audio description) on a proportion of their programming in 2017.

Access services are intended to help people with sensory impairments to understand and enjoy TV programmes. The channels required to provide access services include domestic channels broadcast within the UK, and some non-domestic channels broadcast within certain Member States of the European Union.

In 2017, 85 domestic channels will be required to provide access. These channels account for over 90 per cent of television viewing in the United Kingdom.

In addition, 39 non-domestic channels across eight different member states of the European Union will provide access services in 2017.



## Section 1

# Statement

- 1.1 The Communications Act 2003 (“the Act”) required Ofcom to publish a code setting out the obligations of television channels licensed in the UK to provide television access services. Following consultation, Ofcom published the Ofcom Code on Television Access Services (“the Code”) in July 2004, together with an explanatory statement setting out the channels that would be required to provide such services in the following year. A copy of the current version of the Code, incorporating amendments made since the Code was first published, can be found at <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/other-codes/tv-access-services-2015.pdf>.
- 1.2 The Code also provides for a mid-year review of the audience share and revenues of UK-licensed television channels, based on data for the previous year. The purposes of the review are to establish whether, in the next calendar year, channels should be:
  - a) required to provide television access services;
  - b) required to meet a different level of provision; or
  - c) excluded from the requirement to provide television access services.
- 1.3 The statutory targets for broadcasters are expressed as percentages of the service. They rise from a low level to the ten-year targets prescribed by the Act that is 80% for subtitling, 5% for signing and 10% for audio description. In the case of Channel 3 and Channel 4, the relevant target for subtitling is 90% and for BBC channels (excluding BBC Parliament, which is exempted on audience share grounds) it is 100%.
- 1.4 Ofcom has used the cost of providing access services to calculate three levels of provision we apply to relevant channels:
  - d) Level One equates to the full current annual targets for subtitling, signing and audio description, as well as any alternative requirements;
  - e) Level Two equates to 66% of the current annual target for subtitling, as well as 100% of the targets for signing and audio description, and any alternative requirements; and
  - f) Level Three equates to 33% of the current annual target for subtitling, as well as 100% of the targets for signing and audio description and any alternative requirements.
- 1.5 For channels broadcasting within the UK (‘domestic channels’), data collected from broadcasters in early 2016 has been used to update the assessment of costs which Ofcom uses to determine whether broadcasters can afford to meet their access service obligations by spending no more than 1% of their relevant turnover.
- 1.6 For channels broadcasting in other Member States of the European Union (‘non-domestic channels’), Ofcom collected data from broadcasters in early 2015. This data has been used to generate country-specific estimates of the different costs incurred for the provision of access services. Ofcom then used these estimates to

determine which non-domestic channels can afford to provide access services from 2017.

### **Domestic TV services**

- 1.7 The list of domestic channels required to provide access services in 2017 is at Annex 1. In brief:
- a) 85 channels will be required to provide television access services in 2017, as compared to 82 during 2016. Channels providing access services continue to account for over 90% of UK audience share;
  - b) four channels that had no obligation to provide access services in 2016 will be required to provide access services in 2017. These are BT Sport Europe, CBS Reality, Spike, and True Entertainment;
  - c) 80 channels will be required to provide access services at Level One during 2017, as compared with 79 in 2016. Four channels will be required to provide access services at Level Two during 2017, compared with one in 2016. One channel will be required to provide access services at Level Three in 2017, compared to two in 2016. Subtitling targets are now the highest required under the Code (80%) for the majority of channels, with audio description at the maximum level of 10% for most; and
  - d) over 50 timeshifted services (e.g. ITV2 + 1) and simulcast HD services (e.g. ITV HD) are also required to provide access services.
- 1.8 The statutory target for audio description is 10% from the tenth anniversary of the relevant date (normally the date on which a channel started broadcasting). Four broadcasters – the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky – have committed to audio describing at least 20% of their content on most of their channels (excluding sports channels in the case of Sky).
- 1.9 Finally, the statutory target for signing is 5% from the tenth anniversary of the relevant date. Relevant channels – i.e. channels with an audience share between the audience share and signing thresholds set out in Annex 2 to the Code of Television Access Services – are excluded from such targets. Instead they are required to either:
- a) provide a minimum amount of sign-presented programming between 7am and 11pm every month, subject to the targets shown in the first row of Table A below and to transitional arrangements as shown in Table B; or
  - b) pay a minimum annual contribution towards alternative signing arrangements approved by Ofcom as set out in Table A below, and subject to transitional arrangements as shown in Table B.

**Table A: Signing obligations for relevant domestic channels**  
(from 1 January 2016)

	<b>Signing obligation for relevant channels</b> (Relevant channels should show at least the amount of sign-presented content set out below unless Ofcom has approved alternative arrangements)	
<b>Anniversary of relevant date</b>	<b>Sign-presented content (monthly)</b>	<b>Minimum annual contribution towards alternative arrangements<sup>1</sup></b>
First	30 minutes	£24,500
Second	30 minutes	£24,500
Third	30 minutes	£24,500
Fourth	30 minutes	£24,500
Fifth	45 minutes	£36,800
Sixth	45 minutes	£36,800
Seventh	60 minutes	£49,100
Eighth	60 minutes	£49,100
Ninth	60 minutes	£49,100
Tenth	75 minutes	£61,400

**Table B: Transitional arrangements**

(for relevant channels that reached the fourth (or later) anniversary of their relevant date by 1 January 2016)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Minimum monthly sign-presentation obligations</b>	30 minutes	35 minutes	45 minutes	50 minutes	60 minutes	65 minutes	75 minutes
<b>Minimum annual contributions to approved alternative arrangements</b>	£24.5k	£28.6k	£36.8k	£40.9k	£49.1k	£53.2k	£61.4k

<sup>1</sup> As a result of the Consumer Price Index in 2015 being recorded at 0% (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/d7g7>), Ofcom has not adjusted the minimum contribution level for 2017. We will again review and, if necessary, update the minimum contribution levels for the second anniversary of the relevant date when we publish the annual list of channels required to provide television access services in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### **Non-domestic TV services**

1.11 The list of non-domestic channels required to provide access services in 2017 is at Annex 2. In brief:

- a) 39 non-domestic channels will be required to provide television access services in 2017, as compared to 36 during 2016. The channels required to provide access services in 2016 are broadcast in eight Member States of the European Union;
- b) three non-domestic channels that had no obligation to provide access services in 2016 will be required to provide access services in 2017. These are 3+ broadcasting to Denmark, and Animal Planet HD and AXN Black – the last two broadcasting to Poland; and
- c) 34 non-domestic channels will be required to provide access services at Level One and five channels at Level Two during 2017. No channels will provide access services at Level Three. Subtitling targets for Level One channels remain at 35%, but Ofcom expects all channels will continue to provide 5% additional subtitling in lieu of signing. This concession was due to expire at the end of 2016, but Ofcom considers it will be necessary to extend these interim arrangements for a further year until the end of 2017. We will publish a statement confirming Ofcom's decisions regarding signing arrangements for non-domestic channels later in summer 2016.

## Annex 1

## Domestic channels required to provide television access services in 2017

<b>Level One (full requirements) (80 channels as compared with 79 in 2016)</b>		
BBC One	MTV Music	Sky Real Lives
BBC Two	Viva	Sky Arts
BBC Four	Comedy Central	Challenge
BBC News	Comedy Central Extra	Dave
CBBC	Sky Atlantic	Eden
CBeebies	Sky News	W
ITV	Sky1	Yesterday
ITV2	Sky2	Alibi
ITV3	Pick	Good Food
ITV4	Sky Sports 1	Home
ITVBe	Sky Sports 2	Gold
ITV Encore	Sky Sports 3	Really
CITV	Sky Sports 4	Drama
Channel 4	Sky Sports 5	Disney Channel
4seven	Sky Sports F1	Disney Junior
E4	Sky Sports News HQ	Disney XD
More 4	Sky Movies Premiere	BT Sport 1
Film 4	Sky Movies Comedy	BT Sport 2
Channel 5	Sky Movies Action & Adventure	BT Sport Europe
5*	Sky Movies Family	Universal
5 USA	Sky Movies Sci Fi & Horror	4Music
Spike	Sky Movies Greats	Discovery
Nickelodeon	Sky Movies Drama & Romance	Quest
Nicktoons	Sky Movies Showcase	Animal Planet
Nick Jr.	Sky Movies Crime & Thriller	TLC
Nick Jr Too	Sky Movies Disney	Fox
MTV	Sky Living	

<b>Level Two (full requirements for signing and audio description; 66% of subtitling) (Four channels as compared with one in 2016)</b>		
Boomerang	Cartoon Network	S4C
True Entertainment <sup>3</sup>		

<b>Level Three (full requirements for signing and audio description; 33% of subtitling) (One channel as compared with two in 2016)</b>		
CBS Reality <sup>4</sup>		

<sup>3</sup> The Licensee for True Entertainment is CSC Media Group Limited, a subsidiary of Sony Pictures Entertainment. In light of information provided by the Licensee in September 2016, the requirement for the channel to provide access services in 2017 was removed.

<sup>4</sup> The Licensee for CBS Reality is CBS AMC Networks UK Channels Partnership.



Television channels required to provide television access services in 2017

*Note: Timeshifted and simulcast HD versions of the channels listed above are also required to provide access services.*

**Annex 2**

# Non-domestic channels required to provide television access services in 2017

<b>Level One (full requirements) (34 channels, compared to 31 in 2016, covering seven EU Member States)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
Denmark	Kanal 4 <sup>5</sup>
	Kanal 5
	6'eren
	3+ <sup>6</sup>
	TV3
	TV3 Puls
	The Discovery Channel
	TLC
France	Disney Cinema
Republic of Ireland*	BBC One
	BBC Two
	Sky1
	Channel 4
	E4
Italy	AXN <sup>7</sup>
	The Discovery Channel
	Discovery Science

<sup>5</sup> The licensee for the Kanal channels and 6'eren is Discovery Corporate Services Ltd.

<sup>6</sup> The licensee for 3+, TV3 and TV3 Puls is Modern Times Group.

<sup>7</sup> The licensee for the AXN channels is AXN Europe, a subsidiary of Sony Pictures Entertainment.

<b>Level One continued (full requirements)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
Netherlands	Discovery Channel
	Investigation Discovery
	TLC
Poland*	Animal Planet HD
	The Discovery Channel
	Discovery Science
	Investigation Discovery
	TLC
	13 Ulica <sup>8</sup>
Sweden	The Discovery Channel
	Kanal 5
	Kanal 9
	Kanal 11
	TV3
	TV6
	TV8
	TV10

<b>Level Two (full requirements for signing and audio description; 66% of subtitling) (Five channels, compared with two in 2016)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
Hungary*	AXN
Poland*	AXN
	AXN Black
	AXN White
	Cartoon Network

<b>Level Three (full requirements for signing and audio description; 33% of subtitling) (Zero channels, compared with four in 2016)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
N/A	N/A

\* Indicates countries where TV platforms do not generally support the provision of audio description and channels are typically exempt from the relevant requirement.

<sup>8</sup> The licensee for 13 Ulica is Sparrowhawk International Channels, a subsidiary of NBC Universal