



# Provision of Access Services

Research Study Conducted for  
Ofcom

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# 1. Foreword

In July 2004, Ofcom published its Code on Television Access Services, extending to some 70 channels obligations to provide subtitles, signing and audio description (television access services) on a gradually increasing proportion of their programmes. In so doing, Ofcom implemented relevant provisions of the Communications Act 2003 which came into force on 29 December 2003 and required the access services obligations to take effect among most broadcasters a year later (i.e. by the end of 2004).

In preparing the Code on Television Access Services Ofcom had to rely on existing estimates of the numbers of people who stood to benefit from access services as well as the numbers actually making use of them. Following discussions with stakeholders involved in this area and because of the varying estimates of market parameters available, Ofcom committed to undertake further research in order to inform the first review of the Code, to be carried out within 18 to 24 months of its publication.

Ofcom began planning the research in early 2004 by commissioning a review of existing literature in this area in order to take stock of all sources of relevant research that had been carried out in recent years. The literature review can be found on Ofcom's website, at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/accessservs/litreview.pdf>. The review confirmed that there were many different estimates, both of the number of people with sensory impairments and those using access services. The significant variations were due to differences in definitions (and severity) of impairments and to the varying quality and reliability of data sources. Thus there was no real consensus on audience or market size.

Before defining the parameters of the bespoke research, Ofcom gathered input from all relevant organisations, including groups representing the interests of sensory impaired people, broadcasters and access service providers. While it was not feasible within the framework of the research to deal with all the issues that were raised, these discussions proved very helpful in scoping the final research brief and Ofcom is grateful to all those organisations that took part.

The outcome was that Ofcom commissioned Ipsos-MORI to conduct bespoke quantitative research to measure the size of the market currently using access services across the UK, and to understand the needs and preferences of users and potential users of these services across the hearing and visually impaired communities.

This report details in full the findings of the research project.

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## 2. Executive Summary

2.1 The objectives of this study were two fold:

1. to measure the size of the market currently using access services across the UK
2. to understand the needs and preferences of users and potential users of these services across the hearing and visually impaired communities.

### Audience Measurement <sup>1</sup>

- **Awareness and usage of subtitling services on TV is far higher than other access services.** Around 7.6 million (ranges from 7 million to 8.1 million) UK adults claim to have used this service; of these 1.4 million (ranges from 1.2 million to 1.6 million) have a hearing impairment. A large part of subtitle usage is occasional and many subtitling users appear motivated to use the service for reasons other than to compensate for a hearing impairment.
- **Usage of signing services is far lower than subtitling, both among the UK population as a whole and its target user group.** Around 1.1 million (ranges from 900,000 to 1.3 million) people claim to have used the service at least once; of these approximately 66,000 (ranges from 36,000 to 130,000) are hearing impaired and are proficient in BSL<sup>2</sup>. Low take-up of signing services appears to be driven by potential users' lack of proficiency in sign language, as well as broad preference for subtitles over signing. **Of those who claim to have used signing on TV, only a small number have the ability to understand sign language and therefore to understand the signer output** (for instance, the audience measurement suggests that the number of people in the UK who have a good knowledge of BSL – understand BSL and use it to communicate - numbers only 154,000 and ranges from 258,000 to 85,000).
- **Awareness and take up of audio description is also low, with around 1 million adults claim to have used the service at least once** (though it should be noted that Audio Description is relative new and only available on specific multi channel platforms). Approximately 220,000 (ranges from 320,000 to 155,000) visually impaired people claim to have used audio description.

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<sup>1</sup> All audience measurement figures have an associated upper and lower confidence interval and these are shown on the brackets alongside the population figure.

<sup>2</sup> A scale of 1-8 was used where 1 is 'use BSL as a first language' and 8 is 'no understanding at all'. This figure comes from those who classify themselves as 1-4 on the scale, so they include those who have some knowledge of BSL but do not use it to communicate.

## Case study

- **The case study research was designed to provide a detailed portrait of the preferences and experiences of access service users**, including those with severe or profound levels of impairment.
- **The results indicate that the hearing and visually impaired tend to be late adopters of new technology** (more so still for those with severe/profound impairment).
- **TV is important to both hearing and visually impaired respondents and their average daily viewing is slightly higher than the UK average.** Most find it easy to access TV services and to understand TV programmes. That said, around a fifth do not find it easy to understand TV programmes.

## Subtitles

- **Claimed usage of subtitles is high** – 30% of hearing impaired respondents say they use them ‘all the time’ (if available) and a further fifth say they use them on at least ‘some’ programmes. **Claimed usage is greater still for those with severe/profound impairment.** In the event of increased availability of subtitling, over half of hearing impaired respondents claim they would make greater use of the service.
- **The ability of subtitling services to improve understanding of all types of programmes appears to be very extensive, particularly for the severe/profoundly hearing impaired.** Consistent with these findings, satisfaction levels with existing subtitling services are fairly high, particularly for the pre recorded versions. However, some respondents did express dissatisfaction with subtitling services, some respondents cited time lags, speed, spelling and lack of synchronisation with the dialogue as issues for them.

## Signing

- **Claimed use of signed services is lower than subtitling services - 4% of hearing impaired respondents claim to view them on all available programmes.** Two thirds say they never use them. However, this is unsurprising given that over three fifths (62%) have no understanding of sign language.
- **Satisfaction with existing signing services is also fairly low.** Less than a third of respondents who claim they are hearing impaired and have used signing are satisfied overall. Findings indicate that many respondents may not be sufficiently proficient in signing to form a firm opinion of the services on offer.
- **Even those individuals who are hearing impaired and claim to have stronger signing skills<sup>3</sup> are less than uniformly enthusiastic about the service on offer**, as only around a fifth feel it improves their understanding of TV programmes ‘a lot’, and a further fifth say ‘a fair amount’.

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<sup>3</sup> 47 respondents in total, so figures should be treated with some caution.

- **Results indicate that, for users of signing services, the main concern is the time when signed programmes are broadcast.** Only a minority say the size of the signer on TV programmes is too small or does not cover everything in the programme. Those with stronger signing skills are less likely to describe signing services as comprehensive.

### Signing versus subtitling

- **Amongst those respondents who are hearing impaired, use both subtitling and signing and claim to have strong BSL knowledge, over two thirds (67%) prefer subtitling,** and 9% would opt for signing. Subtitling is considered easier to follow and less distracting.

### Audio description

- **Claimed usage of audio description is low. Only around a fifth (22%) of visually impaired respondents who have heard of audio description say they use it at least sometimes when it is available.** (And even these low usage figures should be treated with caution; there is some indication that they to are inflated owing to respondents misunderstanding of the terminology used).
- **But despite its low current usage, audio description is of interest to many visually impaired people.** If it was more widely available over half of those not previously aware of the service claim they would be interested in using it.
- **Across the small group of visually impaired respondents who have used audio description<sup>4</sup> satisfaction levels with the service are mixed,** though a clear majority felt it improved their understanding of TV programmes, that it was clear and delivered at the right speed. This suggests the service may hold significant potential for the visually impaired.

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<sup>4</sup> 30 respondents in total, so again caution should be exercised.

# 3. Background

## Background

3.1 Ofcom's draft Code on Television Access Services (published December 2003) details broadcasters' responsibilities to make reasonable endeavours to ensure that the *'subtitling, signing and audio description accompanying the programmes included in their services is made available to the greatest number of viewers in their homes'*<sup>5</sup>.

The code was published at end of July 2004, and required 70 channels to provide access services, most from beginning of 2005. Ofcom is conducting an early review of the Code, with the aim of reaching conclusions by mid 2006, and to bring any changes into force by start 2007. This research is designed to inform the review.

## Objectives

3.2 The objectives of this study were twofold:

1. to measure the size of the market currently using access services across the UK
2. to understand the needs and preferences of users and potential users of these services across the hearing and visually impaired communities.

The research objectives was designed to establish baseline data on the:

- Size of target audience for access services
- Awareness of and attitudes towards access services
- Usage and barriers to use
- Sources of information about programmes with access services
- Satisfaction with current level/quality of access services available

## Methodology

3.3 One of the foremost challenges of the research was to design an appropriate methodology given the relatively low incidence of the hearing and visually impaired within the UK population. A two-phase approach was therefore adopted.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Audience Measurement

Ipsos MORI used six successive waves of the existing Ofcom Communications Residential Tracker to conduct audience measurement research across the whole

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<sup>5</sup> Ofcom Code on Television Access Services Statement (26 July 2004)

<sup>6</sup> For further detail on the methodology employed, please see the accompanying 'Access Services Technical Note' dated March 2006.



UK population. The UK residential tracker is a continuous, nationally representative study involving 700 CAPI interviews per month across the UK. This enabled effective measurement of awareness and current and likely future usage of access services among the UK population as a whole and among the hearing and visually impaired.

Over the course of the 6 waves Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 4,363 adults, aged 15+, in the UK; 4,040 interviews were conducted in Great Britain and 323 interviews were conducted in Northern Ireland. Interviews were carried out across 112 sampling points each month in the UK, face-to-face, in respondents' homes. All interviews were conducted between 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005 and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

The data are weighted by age, gender, social class, working status, region and cable/non-cable to match the known population profile; the Northern Ireland results are down-weighted to their natural proportion of the national UK profile.

## **2. Case Studies**

The second strand of research took a more in-depth case study approach. This involved a bespoke quantitative study amongst the two broad groups of interest: the hearing impaired and the visually impaired. These interviews allowed for detailed investigation into the experience of using access services (e.g. size of signer, types of TV programmes watched etc).

The survey took a mixed methodology approach and involved face-to-face, telephone and postal interviews.

The final sample breakdown was as follows:

- 233 face-to-face
- 148 telephone
- 227 postal

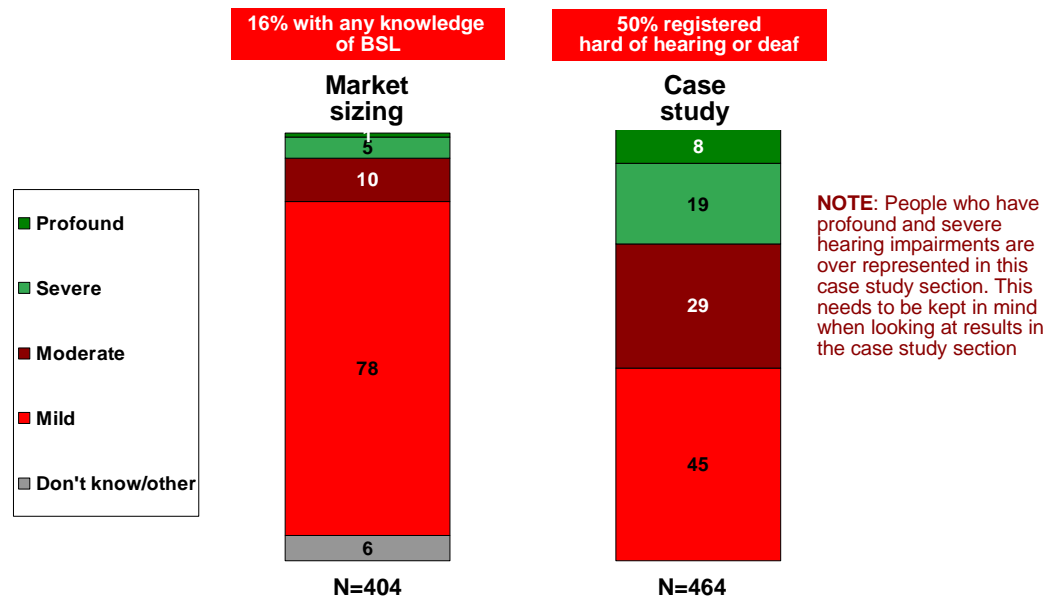
The face-to-face interviews were conducted in various localities across Great Britain with an interviewer present to facilitate completion. If required, a signer was available to help those with severe hearing problems.

The case study phase did not aim to be representative of the hearing or visually impaired universe but to give an insight into the needs and preferences of a broad cross section of users and potential users of access services.

# 4. Audience Measurement

## Incidence of hearing impairment

4.1 The audience measurement exercise involved interviewing over 4,300 respondents in the UK. Of these, 404 respondents stated they had some sort of hearing impairment, representing 8.3% of the UK population.



Hearing impairment was established by respondents self-defining themselves using the following question:

Which of these best describes your hearing with a hearing aid if you normally use one? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY	
Cannot hear sounds at all	Profound
Cannot follow a TV programme with the volume turned up	Severe
Have difficulty hearing someone talking in a loud voice in a quiet room	
Cannot hear a doorbell, alarm clock or telephone bell	Moderate
Cannot follow a TV programme at a volume others find acceptable	
Difficulty hearing someone talking in a normal voice in a quiet room	Mild
Difficulty following a conversation against background noise	
Difficulty hearing the television at a volume other people find acceptable	
Difficulty hearing quiet parts of programmes	
Difficulty hearing quiet voices on TV	

This scale of impairment encompasses the profoundly deaf at one end, to those who have difficulty hearing quiet voices on TV at the other end of the spectrum. Over three quarters (78%) of hearing impaired respondents had a mild impairment and one in ten (10%) a moderate one. Only a relatively small proportion (6%) claimed to be either severely or profoundly deaf.

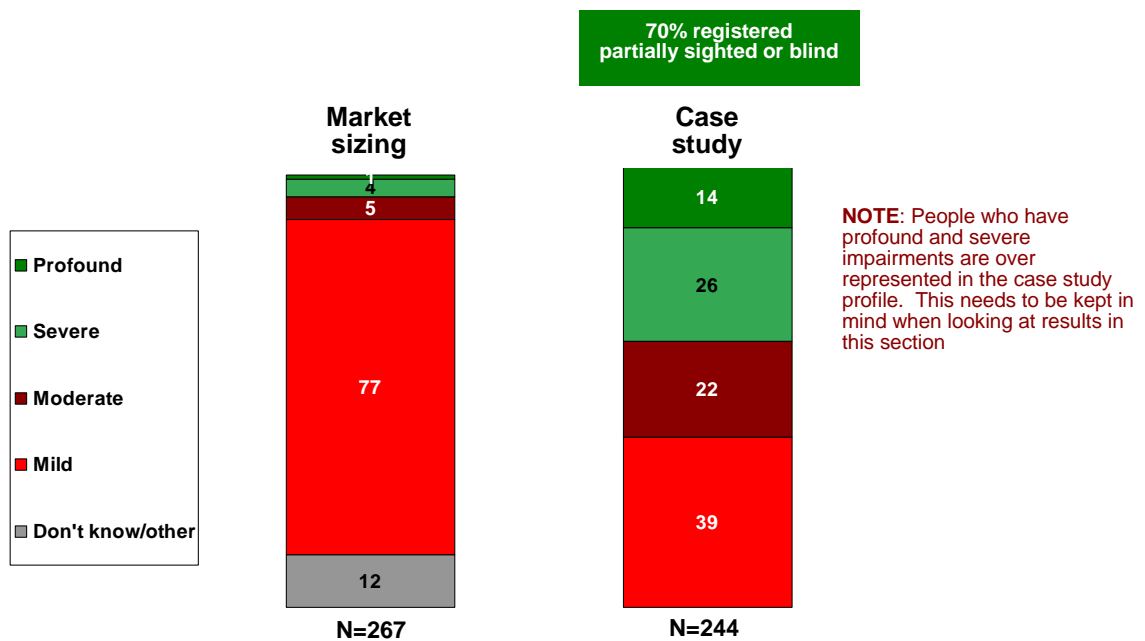
Of the 404 hearing impaired respondents, 186 (or 43%, weighted) went on to also define themselves as having 'poor hearing, partial hearing or deafness' at a subsequent question.

The age profile of hearing impaired users is skewed towards older age groups. Nearly half (47%) of those with a hearing problem were aged over 65 years and only a small number (4%) fell into the 15-24 age group. All of the severe/profoundly deaf respondents were aged over 45 years.

### Incidence of signing

4.2 Around one in six (16%) of hearing impaired respondents claim to have some knowledge of British Sign Language. However, none claim to use sign language as their first language and many have only a very limited knowledge of it. Almost seven tenths of hearing impaired respondents (69%) claim to have no knowledge of BSL at all.

### Incidence of visual impairment



The audience measurement phase gathered responses from 267 respondents who claim to have a visual impairment (out of 4363 respondents interviewed in total, representing 5.6% of the population). The level of visual impairment was established by respondents defining themselves using the following question:

Which of these best describes your sight with glasses or contact lenses if you normally use them? Please imagine you are in a room with good lighting. PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY	
Cannot tell by the light where the windows are	Profound
Cannot see the shapes of furniture in the room	Severe
Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend if close to his or her face	
Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend if he or she is at arms length	Moderate
Cannot see well enough to read a newspaper headline	
Cannot see well enough to read a large print book	
Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend across a room	Mild
Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend across a road	
Have difficulty seeing ordinary newspaper print	
Seeing the buttons on the remote control	

Seeing the picture on the TV screen	
Seeing small details on screen	

The majority (77%) have a self-defined mild impairment, with a further 5% moderate and a further 5% severe or profound. Of these 267 respondents, 125 also define themselves as having 'poor vision, partial sight or blindness' when asked directly in another question in the study.

The age profile of visually impaired respondents is skewed towards older age groups, although this is less pronounced than among those with hearing impairments. One third (34%) are aged over 65 years, while just over another third (38%) are aged 45-64 years. Less than three tenths (28%) are aged 44 years or under.

Almost two fifths (37%) of those with a visual impairment have terrestrial television only in their household. Among the 26 respondents who are either moderate/severely/profoundly visual impaired, over half (17 respondents) have only terrestrial television, indicating that their ability to use audio description services may be limited (although this small base size renders findings indicative only).

**Population estimates – hearing and visually impaired**

4.3 The audience measurement data was used to establish the population of people aware of and using access services. On the basis of this data, the hearing and visually impaired populations are estimated to be:

- 3,990,232 hearing impaired (ranges from 4,383,125 to 3,597,298)
- 2,700,572 visually impaired (ranges from 3,028,560 to 2,372,582)
- 1,069,206 have a dual impairment (ranges from 1,300,090 to 869,458)

The number of people registered as having either hearing or visual impairments are much lower than the figures stated above while, in contrast, some national organisations/charities state incidence of these impairments to be much higher. In particular the RNID claim that around 9 million people in the UK have some form of hearing loss, of which they may or may not be aware. This dramatically higher number is likely to be a product of the RNID using different data collection techniques and different definitions (including an estimation of people who are not aware they have a hearing impairment).

The RNIB reports a figure of two million seriously visually impaired people in the UK, somewhat lower than the 2.7 million stated above (a product of the fact that the RNIB figure is solely representative of those with serious visual impairment whereas the above figures also includes those who have mild visual impairments).

**Population estimates - awareness and usage of access services**

4.4 The research also identified the likely numbers of people who are aware of each access service<sup>7</sup>. Around 43.2 million of the UK population claim they are aware of subtitling on television programmes. Of this group, around 7.6 million have used the

<sup>7</sup> Note that population figures are subject to confidence intervals and these are highlighted in charts in this section.

service at least once and of these around 1.4 million claim to have a hearing impairment. It is worth noting, therefore, that around 6.1 million users of subtitles do not define themselves as having any hearing impairment.

	% among UK population	% among hearing impaired
Aware of subtitles	90	90
Used subtitles	18	39

	Upper	Audience	Lower
Aware of subtitles	43,597,041	<b>43,165,056</b>	42,733,305
Used subtitles	8,068,533	<b>7,550,578</b>	7,032,626
Used subtitles & hearing impaired	1,641,704	<b>1,421,934</b>	1,235,196
Used subtitles & no hearing impairment	6,615,895	<b>6,139,667</b>	5,663,439

Awareness of signing services is similar to that of subtitling with around 41.1m stating they are aware of it. However, take-up of signing is far lower than subtitling, with only 1.1 million having used the service at least once. Moreover, results indicate that the vast majority of those who claim to have used this service have no knowledge of BSL.

	% among UK population	% among hearing impaired
Aware of signing on TV	86	84
Used signing on TV	3	5

	Upper	Audience	Lower
Aware of signing on TV	41,637,509	<b>41,136,871</b>	40,636,229
Used signing on TV	1,339,291	<b>1,124,320</b>	909,347
Used signing on TV, have some knowledge of signing and a hearing impairment	130,365	<b>66,136</b>	36,310
Used signing on TV, have some knowledge of signing (and use it occasionally) and a hearing impairment	100,594	<b>44,091</b>	21,793
Used signing on TV, have any knowledge of signing and a moderate to profound hearing impairment	52,193	<b>11,023</b>	3,921

Indeed, the number who state they have a hearing impairment, at least some knowledge (however small) of BSL and have used signing services on TV stands at around 66,136.

The audience size of signing services reduces still further when isolating those who have some knowledge of BSL, a moderate to profound hearing impairment and have used signing on TV. The resultant figure for this group is 11,023 signing users.

Around 19.2 million claim to be aware of audio description on television. Of this group, around one million have used the service at least once.

	% among UK population	% among visually impaired
Aware of audio description	40	37
Used audio description	5	22

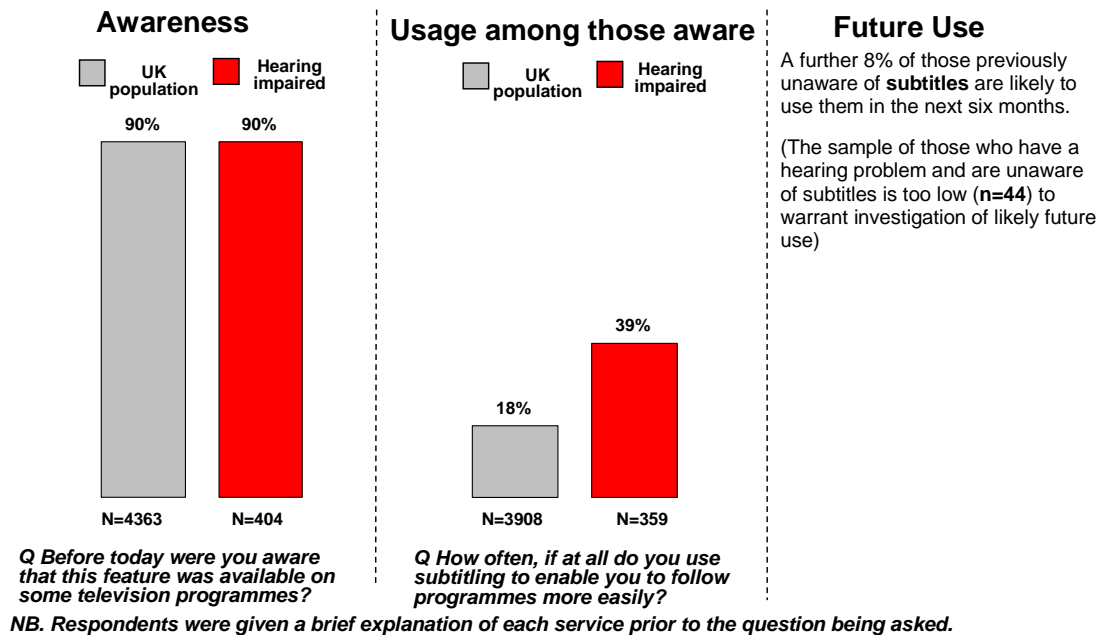
	Upper	Audience	Lower
Aware of audio description	19,921,000	<b>19,223,661</b>	18,526,326
Used audio description	1,191,277	<b>1,003,069</b>	848,108
Used audio description & visually impaired	319,904	<b>220,455</b>	155,345
Aware of audio description	19,921,000	<b>19,223,661</b>	18,526,326

These figures must be taken with caution as we found some respondents misunderstood the term 'audio description service' even with an explanation of what the service was (verbatim comments indicate some mistake it for subtitling or another 'text' based system).

The population estimates for audio description users diminish when we look at further subgroups. Findings indicate that only around 110,227 (ranges from 186,791 to 68,096) people who claim to have used audio description, also have Sky or Freeview in their home and have any visual impairment. During most of the survey period, audio description was not widely available on cable services.

## Subtitles

4.5 The slide below summarises awareness of subtitles as well as current and future usage among both the UK population and the hearing impaired users within it.



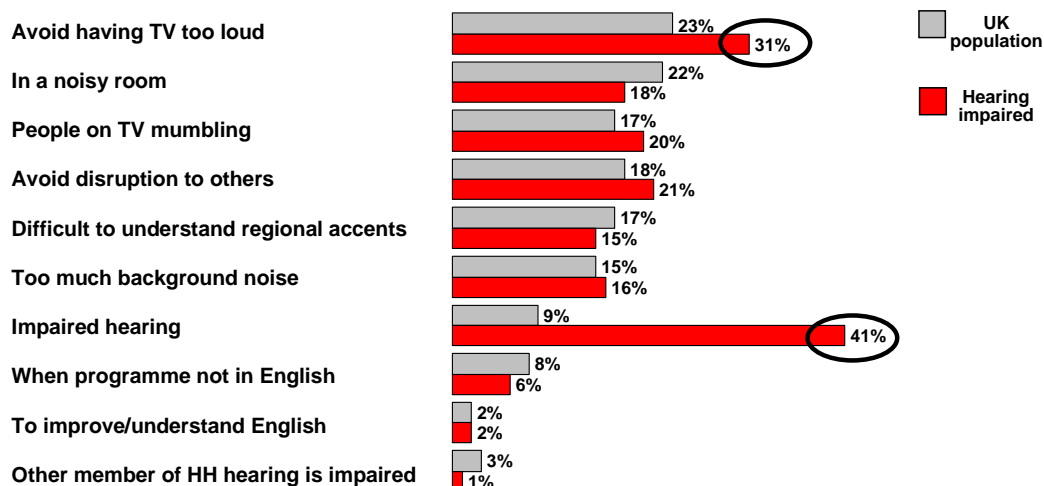
The vast majority (90%) of the UK population are aware of subtitling services on television. Awareness levels are very similar amongst those people with any hearing impairment. Awareness of subtitling among those with a dual impairment is also broadly similar.

Of those people aware of subtitling services among the UK population, 2% use them on 'all' or 'most' programmes', and 15% on 'some programmes' or 'very occasionally'. The main reasons cited for using subtitling on television are to avoid having the TV too loud or being in a noisy room (each flagged up by over a fifth of users).

Over one in three (31%) of hearing impaired users also state that their use of subtitles arises from the need to avoid having the television too loud. Similarly, over a fifth (21%) of hearing impaired respondents also feel that their use of subtitles is driven by the need to avoid disruption to others.

Of those who are aware of subtitles and have both a hearing and visual impairment over two fifths (43%) have ever used subtitling. Of those with a dual impairment, almost one fifth (18%) use subtitling on at least some programmes they watch, if it is available.

## Reasons for use of subtitles



**Q** You said that you have used subtitling at least once, why have you used subtitling?

**Base: 692 All those used subtitles at least once**  
**Base: 145 with hearing problem and used subtitles**

Just under one in ten (9%) of the UK population are not aware of subtitling on television before the study. When asked their likelihood of using the service in the future over three quarters (77%) said they will not use the service, while 8% stated they will use the service at least once in the coming six months. (Please note: only a small number of hearing impaired users were not aware of subtitling so detailed analysis of their responses is not viable).

Hearing impaired respondents who had not used subtitling in the past were asked their reasons for this via an open ended question. Some feel that their current impairment is not severe enough to warrant using the service, but they may consider using it should their impairment become more pronounced. Other reasons for non use included the following themes:

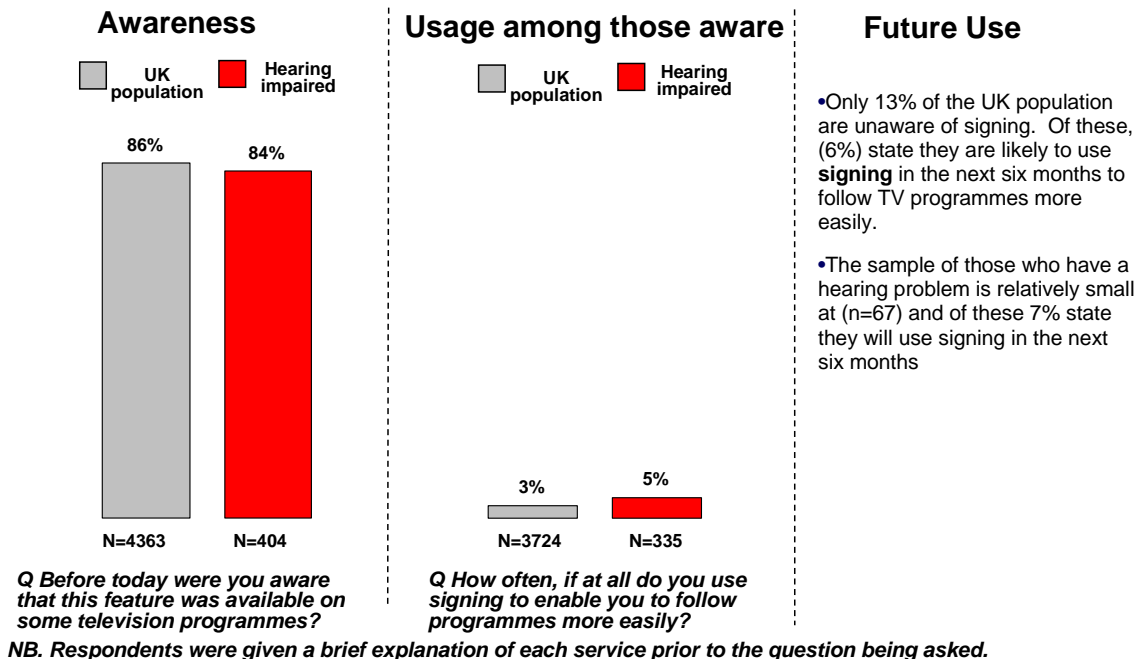
- Visual impairment hinders reading text
- An inability to follow the text
- Text size – too small
- Ability to access them on a sufficient number of programmes
- Not knowing how to access subtitles on programmes

## Signing

4.6 Awareness of signing services among the UK population is broadly in line with that of awareness of subtitling, though usage is far lower. Findings indicate that only



6% of the hearing impaired population have ever used signing to follow programmes more easily. This small take-up is a likely consequence of low levels of BSL knowledge among the hearing impaired community, as well as a broad preference for subtitles which is detailed in the case study section.



Of the signing users, over half (55%) claim to have used it only 'very occasionally'. Around a tenth (10%) state they use signing on 'all' or 'most programmes they watch if it is available'.

As mentioned previously, the number of respondents who claim to be proficient in BSL is low. Indeed, none of those in the audience measurement sample with a hearing impairment use BSL as their first language, while just 1% claim to 'understand sign language and sometimes use it to communicate', 3% have 'some knowledge of sign language and use it occasionally' and a further 1% have 'some knowledge but do not use it to communicate'. Therefore, in total only 5% of hearing impaired respondents in sample have the ability to understand signing on TV to a sufficient degree.

This low level of proficiency was confirmed when hearing impaired respondents were asked their reason for not using signing to follow TV programmes, as many stated that they do not have the required level of proficiency in BSL.

Respondents who have used signing on TV were asked their motivations for accessing the service via an open ended question. The responses suggested that some of those who had actively sought out signed programmes were not hearing impaired. For example, the key themes were:

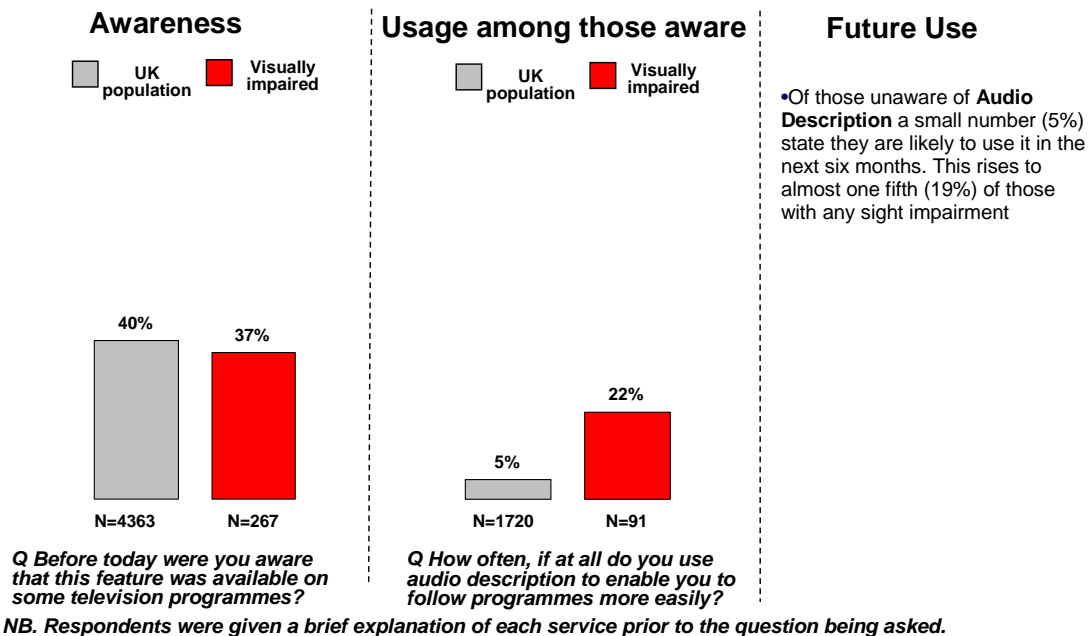
- To learn to communicate with deaf for work/college or to practice BSL skills
- Some mention they have a hearing impairment (or their visitors do)

- Curiosity

Moreover, a frequent response to this question is that 'it is just on' indicating once more that the service is not proactively used to follow the programme, but instead that respondents merely recall seeing a signer on the screen.

## Audio Description

4.7 Awareness and usage of audio description is much lower than other access services.



One in four (40%) of the UK population are aware of audio description. This figure dips slightly (37%) among those who have a visual impairment.

Of those aware of the audio description, only a small proportion (5%) have used it. Of those who are aware of audio description and have Sky or Freeview<sup>8</sup> a similar number (5%) have used audio description. This usage figure rises to 22% of those with a visual impairment. Of those who have a visual impairment and either Sky or Freeview a similar number (21%) claim to have used audio description.

Among those who claim to have used the service, three fifths (58%) have access to Sky or Freeview TV platforms at home. This suggests that claimed usage figures may be inflated, with two-fifths of claimed users lacking the technology required to access audio description in home. (That said, they may have been able to access audio description outside of their home, as the questionnaire did not specifically ask solely about home-use).

<sup>8</sup> Audio description was available only on Sky or some types of Freeview box. Towards the end of fieldwork, there was a 'soft' (unpublicised) roll out of audio description on some cable services, but take-up during this period seems likely to have been very limited.

Note: the results indicate that there is some level of confusion or misunderstanding about what Audio Description is as when respondents were asked their reasons for using audio description, some appeared to confuse it with subtitles and other features or services. When these respondents were 'cleaned out' from the data this reduces the Audio Description usage figures for UK population to 4%, and to 19% of those with any visual impairment. [This process also reduces the base size to 88 rather than 91 with visual impairment].

Respondents who used audio description cite the following reasons for doing so in their verbatim comments:

- Curiosity – about digital services generally as well as the specific service
- Ability to obtain extra information
- An error on TV settings caused it to come up

Those with a visual impairment who have not used audio description had not done so for a variety of reasons.

- A preference for radio
- Desire for more information on accessing the service
- Some feel their visual impairment was not severe enough or could be solved by investing in a larger TV set
- Some express dislike for elements of the service, such as the tone of the voice of the describer

## 5. Case Studies

5.1 A key objective of the case study research was to achieve sufficient interviews with those who have severe/profound hearing or visual impairment to allow analysis of these sub groups. This, in turn enables us to understand their attitudes towards access services. The case studies were therefore not designed to be statistically representative of the GB hearing and visually impaired populations, and those respondents who have severe/profound hearing or visual impairment are purposely over-represented.

In total 608 interviews were achieved, representing a robust sample base. This has enabled the research to deliver a detailed picture of the preferences and experiences of a wide cross section of access service users, which are described in this section.

Of the 608 people who participated in the case study research:

- 464 had with 'poor hearing, partial hearing or deafness' (defined as difficulty hearing the TV at a volume others find acceptable or worse)
- 244 had 'poor vision, partial or blindness' (defined as difficulty seeing ordinary newspaper print or worse)
- 100 respondents had both a hearing and visual impairment

Over a quarter (27%) of hearing impaired respondents had a severe or profound level of impairment. A further 27% were moderately impaired and the remainder (45%) were mildly impaired.

The degree of impairment amongst the visually impaired sample was more pronounced than amongst the hearing impaired; a greater proportion (two-fifths) were rated as profoundly or severely visually impaired, just over a fifth (22%) were moderately so, and the rest (38%) were mildly impaired.

The case studies interviews were gender balanced. Amongst hearing impaired respondents, a slightly greater number of women than men completed the survey (52% and 46% respectively). This pattern was reversed for the visually impaired (52% male and 47% female).

	Hearing impaired	Visually impaired	Both impairments
Male	52%	46%	50%
Female	47%	52%	48%

The age profiles of both categories of respondents were broadly similar, each skewed towards the older end of the age spectrum. For instance, 50% of the visually impaired were 65 or older, as were 48% of hearing impaired respondents. (Across the general population only 15.9%<sup>9</sup> are aged 65 or older). The hearing impaired had the highest proportion of people aged 75 or older, at 28%.

<sup>9</sup> UK Census, 2001 figures

Only relatively small numbers of respondents were aged under 45 (15% of visually impaired, 12% of hearing impaired). Around a third were aged 45 – 64 (35% of visually impaired, 36% of hearing impaired).

	Hearing impaired %	Visually impaired %	Both impairments %
18-24	4	4	1
25-34	2	3	2
35-44	6	8	3
45-54	12	13	11
55-64	24	22	24
65-74	28	20	20
75	22	28	36

Encouragingly, interviews were completed with a regionally dispersed set of respondents, as detailed below.

	Hearing impaired %	Visually impaired %	Both impairments %
North East	12	6	11
Wales	5	6	4
North West	12	19	21
Scotland	9	5	5
South West	14	16	15
London/South East	20	15	15
West Midlands	9	11	11
East Midlands	7	12	8
Yorkshire & the Humber	11	9	9
East Anglia	-	-	-

Only a small minority (14%) of visually impaired respondents were in full or part time work, a figure that rises to 26% of hearing impaired respondents. Over half of both groups were retired. Some 23% of visually impaired respondents said they were not working due to a disability, compared to 8% of the hearing impaired.

A higher proportion of the 100 respondents with both hearing and visual impairment had profound/severe conditions compared to the rest of the sample (23% had severe/profound hearing impairment and 29% had severe/profound visual

impairment). Correspondingly, this group also contains a greater share of older respondents than the rest of the sample – some 56% are over 65.

## 5.2 Technology uptake

### Internet

Internet take-up is lower among the visually and hearing impaired than the UK average. Around 58% of the UK population have internet access at home. This falls to around a third (34%) of visually impaired respondents, reducing to 29% of those with severe or profound visual impairment.

A higher proportion of hearing impaired than visually impaired respondents have access to the internet at home (42%, rising to 50% of those with severe or profound impairment). One third of internet users (33% hearing impaired and 37% visually impaired) use a dial-up connection and around two thirds use broadband (67% and 60%).

By way of comparison, it should be noted that internet take-up amongst the over-55s in the UK is significantly lower than average, at just 39%, so it is likely that the relatively low penetration of the internet (and indeed other technology) among hearing and visually impaired respondents is as much a reflection of their age profile as their disability.

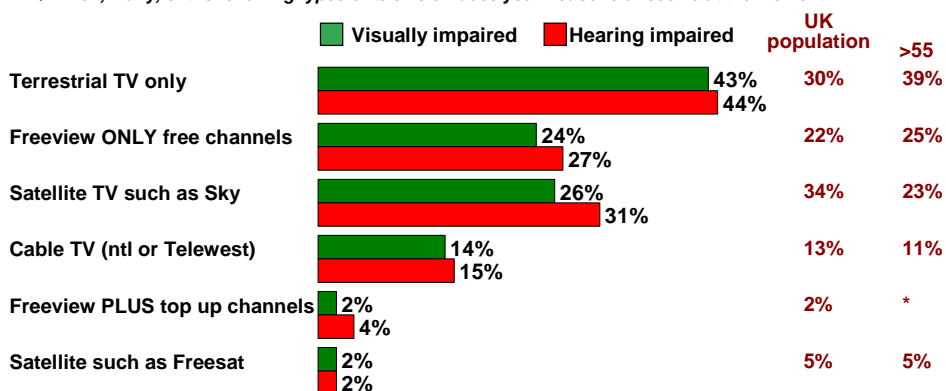
### TV

Case study findings indicate that people with a hearing or visual impairment are significantly more likely than the general population to reside in a terrestrial only household; 43% of visually impaired and 44% of hearing impaired have access to terrestrial TV only, against 30% of the general population. Of those with severe/profound visual or hearing impairment the proportions with terrestrial only TV are higher still at 50% and 51% respectively

Penetration of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) is higher amongst both the hearing and visually impaired than the UK average, though take-up of satellite TV such as Sky is lower.

## Types of TV in household

Q Which, if any, of the following types of television does your household receive at the moment?



Base: 244 All visually impaired respondents, 464 All hearing impaired, UK population figures from Ofcom Residential tracker Q3 2005 : 2,220 respondents Jul-Sept 2005. \* indicates less than 1%

## Other technology

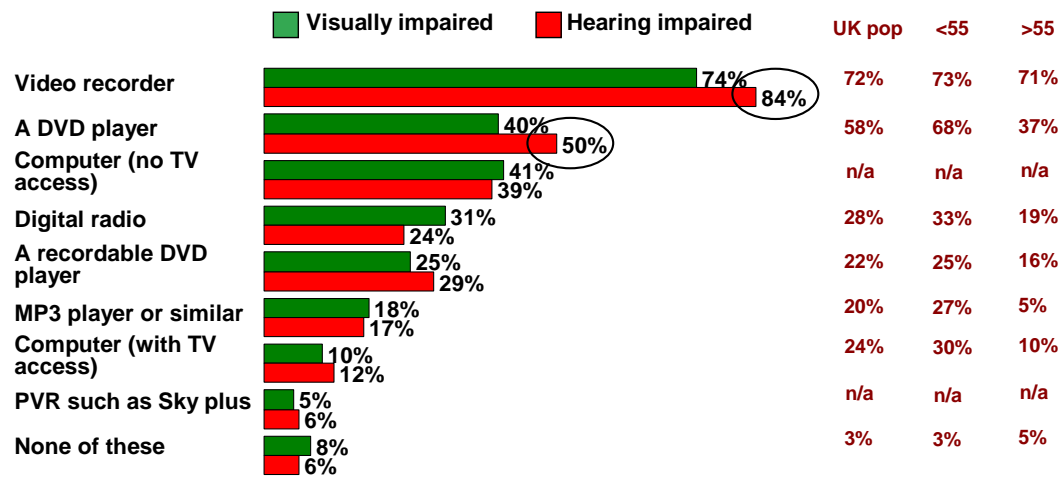
44% of the visually impaired and 50% of hearing impaired respondents have a DVD player compared to 58% of the general population. But, by way of context, amongst the general population, only 37% of those aged 55 or older have a DVD player in their household. Lower DVD take up is therefore likely to be more a product of their age profile than their disability.

A higher proportion of hearing impaired have video recorders in their homes when compared to the UK general population (84% against 72%). Visually impaired respondents are more in line with the average, at 74%.

Turning specifically to those with both visual and hearing impairment, this group is the least likely to have adopted newer media technologies. For instance, 47% reside in a terrestrial TV only household, and they are less likely than average to have a DVD or DAB radio in their household. This is likely to reflect their older age profile as well as their dual impairment.

## Types of TV in household

Q Which, if any, of the following items do you have in your home in working order, and use personally?



Base: 244 All visually impaired respondents, 464 All hearing impaired, UK population figures from Ofcom Residential tracker Q3 2005: 2,220 respondents - bases size for each one is all those with item in household and personally use, Jul-Sept 2005, N/A indicates the data was not gathered for 'personally use'

## TV viewing

5.3 Visually and/or hearing impaired respondents typically watch TV most days (on average 6.67 days per week, slightly above the UK average of 6.33 days). The amount of TV viewing rises with age, as visually and/or hearing impaired over 55s watch, on average, 6.75 days per week, against 6.47 days for under 55s. Older respondents also claim to watch more TV per day compared to younger ones, with over 55s claiming to view it for 4.2 hours a day, against 3.8 hours for under 55s. This trend is also apparent across the UK population as a whole, with, for instance, those aged 65 or older watching on average 3.97 hours of TV per day, while those aged 25 – 44 watch less than 3.2 hours per day<sup>10</sup>.

Patterns of TV consumption of the hearing and visually impaired also appear to be affected by household income and class - higher income respondents and broadsheet readers claim to watch TV on fewer days and for less time than average.

Average daily TV consumption is higher amongst hearing impaired than visually impaired respondents - 4.3 hours versus 3.8 hours per day - although both groups are above the UK average of 3.46 hours. The differences in TV consumption between hearing and visually impaired respondents are particularly pronounced among those with severe/profound impairment – 3.12 hours per day on average for visually impaired, versus 4.41 hours per day for hearing impaired.

Interestingly, the claimed TV viewing of those with both hearing and visual impairment is in line with that of the rest of the sample; they view TV for 6.78 days per week, and 4.16 hours per day.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Television Opinion Monitor, 2,423 interviews conducted by MORI, January – December 2005.



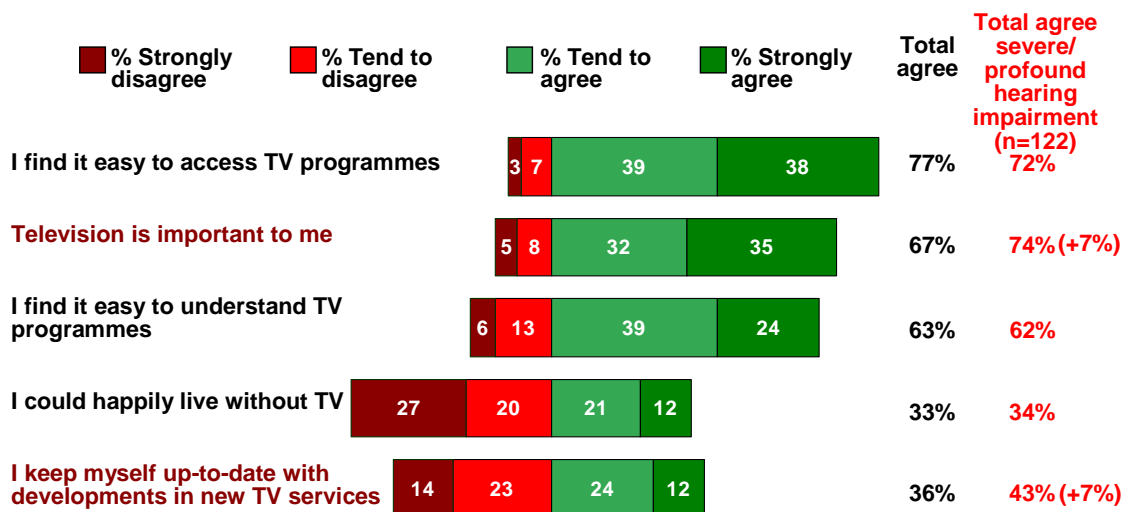
Reflecting their high level of TV consumption, two-thirds of hearing impaired respondents agree with the statement 'Television is important to me'. This figure rises to three-quarters (74%) of those profoundly/severely impaired, indicating that TV has a more pivotal role in the lives of those whose impairment is more pronounced.

Only around an eighth (13%) of hearing impaired respondents do not consider TV to be important to them. And, while a third said they could happily live without TV, greater numbers (47%) deemed this not to be the case.

A majority (77%) of hearing impaired find it easy to access TV services, though this dips slightly (72%) amongst those with profound or severe impairment. Overall a tenth of hearing impaired respondents find access difficult. Just over three fifths of hearing impaired respondents find it easy to understand TV programmes, though a significant minority (19%) do not.

Only a minority of hearing impaired respondents keep themselves up to date with developments in TV services, though findings indicate that the profoundly/severely impaired may be more attuned to these, as 43% say they keep up to date.

**Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**



Base: 464 All hearing impaired,

Television also plays a prominent role in the lives of the visually impaired, though marginally less so than for the hearing impaired. Two thirds of visually impaired respondents (65%) say it is important to them, a figure that remains largely constant among those with severe/profound impairment (63%).

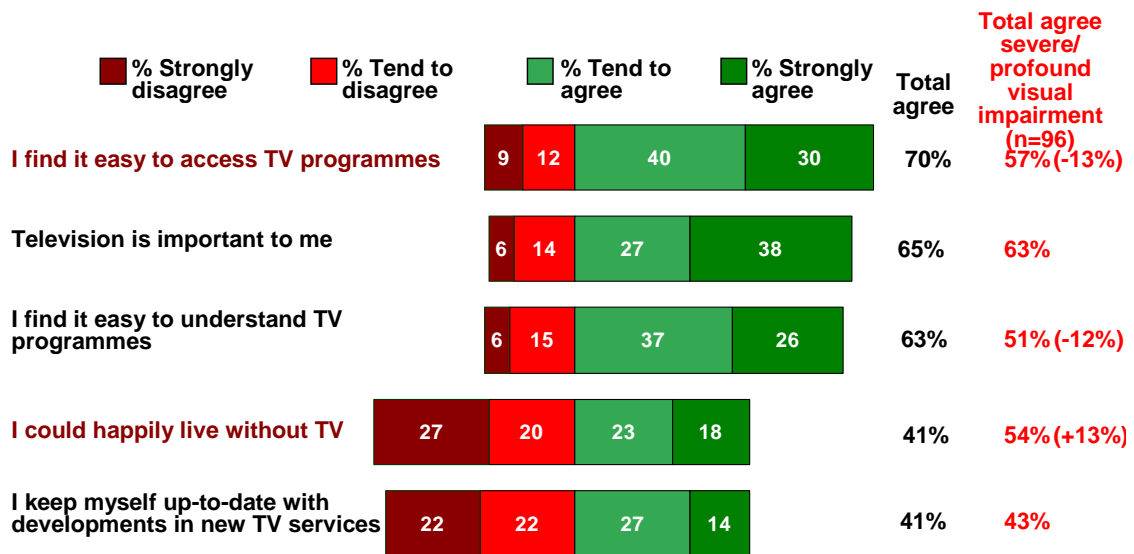
Two fifths do, however, feel they could happily live with out TV (indeed a fifth agree strongly with this statement). This rises to 54% of those with severe/profound hearing impairment. This finding is possibly partly explained by the fact that only 57% with

severe/profound impairment say that they find it easy to access TV programmes, against 70% of all visually impaired respondents.

Likewise, while 63% of visually impaired overall find it easy to understand TV programmes, this falls to only half of those with severe/profound impairment. Over a fifth (21%) of visually impaired do not find it easy to understand TV programmes, and this stands at 30% of those severely/profoundly impaired.

Around two-fifths of visually impaired respondents say they keep themselves up to date with new developments in TV services, though a similar proportion do not keep abreast of advances.

**Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**



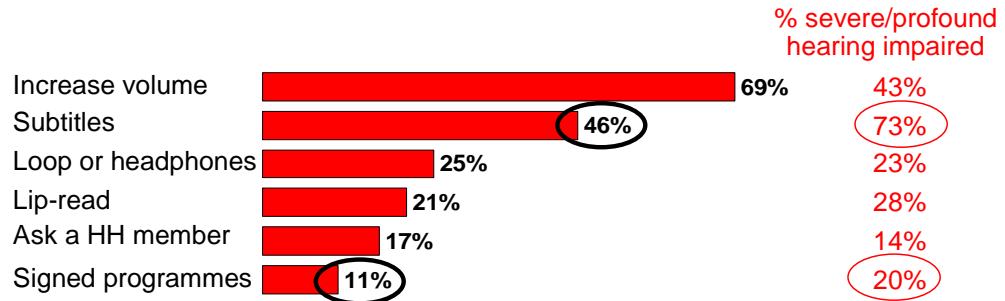
Base: 244 All visually impaired

Respondents with both hearing and visual impairment are more likely than average to say that do not find it easy to understand TV programmes (28%) or access them (20%). That said, the majority of this group say they do not experience difficulties in these areas.

Respondents were asked what they do to better understand TV programmes. Over two thirds of hearing impaired increase the television volume, and just under half (46%) use subtitles. Of those with severe or profound hearing impairment, a higher proportion (nearly three quarters) use subtitles; perhaps as a consequence of this, they are less inclined to increase the volume (only 43% do).

A quarter of hearing impaired respondents use a loop or headphones, while just over a fifth (21%) lip read and 17% ask a household member for help. Only around a tenth of respondents (11%) say they use signing access services, though this rises to a fifth of those with severe/profound hearing impairment.

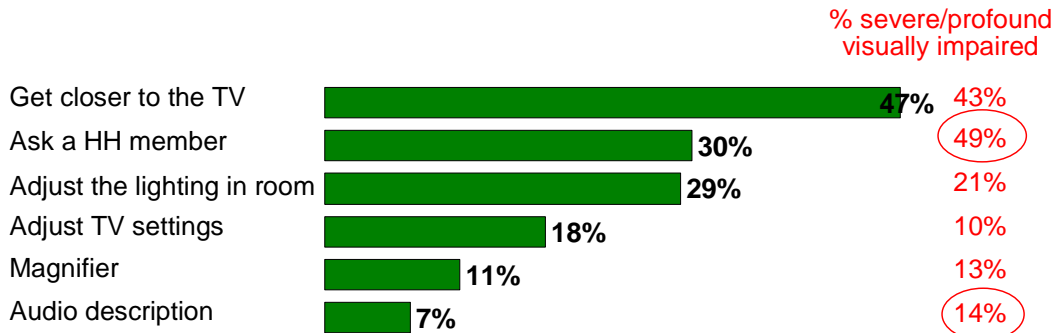
**Q Do you use any of the following to help you understand TV programmes?**



Base: 464 All with hearing impairment, 122 severe/profound hearing impairment

Nearly half (47%) of visually impaired respondents say they get close to the TV in order to better understand programmes on it. Three in ten ask another member of the household for assistance, a figure which rises to nearly half (49%) of those with severe or profound impairment. Others adjust the room lighting (29%) or TV settings (18%). Just 7% say they use audio description, though the proportion of users doubles to 14% among those with severe or profound impairment.

**Q Do you use any of the following to help you understand TV programmes?**



Base: 244 All with visual impairment, 96 severe/profound visually impaired

## Summary

5.4 Respondents with a hearing or visual impairment are significantly more likely than the general population to reside in a terrestrial TV only household; they are also less likely than average to have internet access.

However, TV consumption among these groups is high. Televisions is evidently valued by both the hearing and visually impaired (particularly by the former group).

A majority of both the hearing and visually impaired find it easy to understand and access TV programmes, but this is far from universal. In order to better understand TV programmes hearing impaired tend to increase the television volume, and use subtitles. Of those with severe or profound hearing impairment, a higher proportion (nearly three quarters) use subtitles.

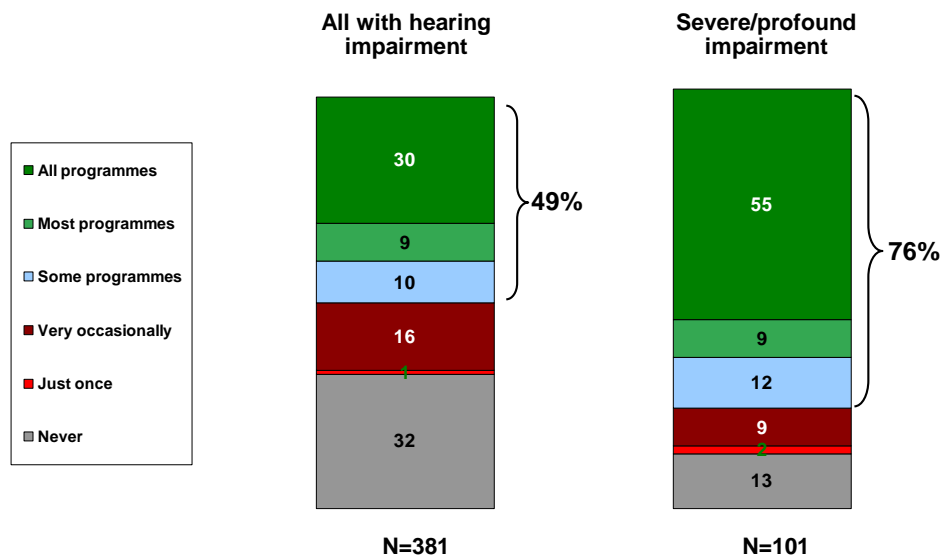
Those with visual impairment tend to get closer to the television or ask a householder member for help. Only a small proportion use access services.

## 6. Subtitles

### Usage of subtitles among the hearing impaired

6.1 Current claimed usage of subtitles is high – three tenths of hearing impaired respondents say they use them all the time and a further fifth (19%) say they use them on at least some programmes. A third (32%) never use them.

Usage of subtitles is higher still among those with profound/severe impairment, of whom over half (55%) use them. A further fifth (21%) use them at least sometimes, and only around an eighth (13%) never use them.

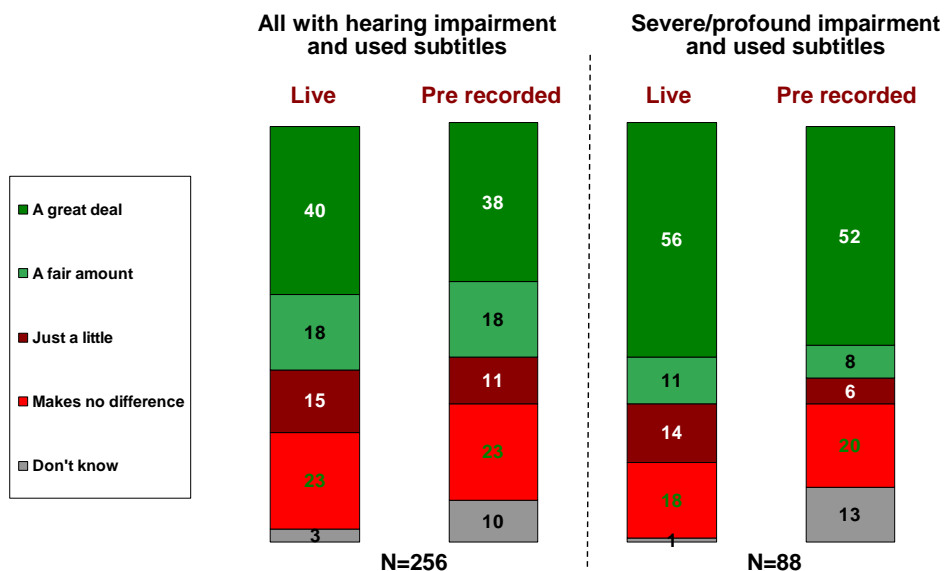


*Q How often, if at all, do you watch TV programmes that have subtitling on the TV programmes themselves to enable you to follow programmes more easily? This could be at home or elsewhere*

### Future use of subtitles

6.2 If there was an increased availability of subtitling, over half of those with a hearing impairment claim they would use them more often. Indeed, around two fifths say they would utilise pre-recorded and live subtitles a lot more (40% and 38% respectively). Less than a quarter (23%) feel this would make no difference to their usage.

Those with severe/profound hearing impairment demonstrate a greater inclination still to take advantage of more widely available subtitling services. Two thirds would increase their use of live subtitles and three fifths say the same of pre-recorded subtitles. Over half of this group would make 'much more' use of these services, indicating considerable appetite for increased provision.



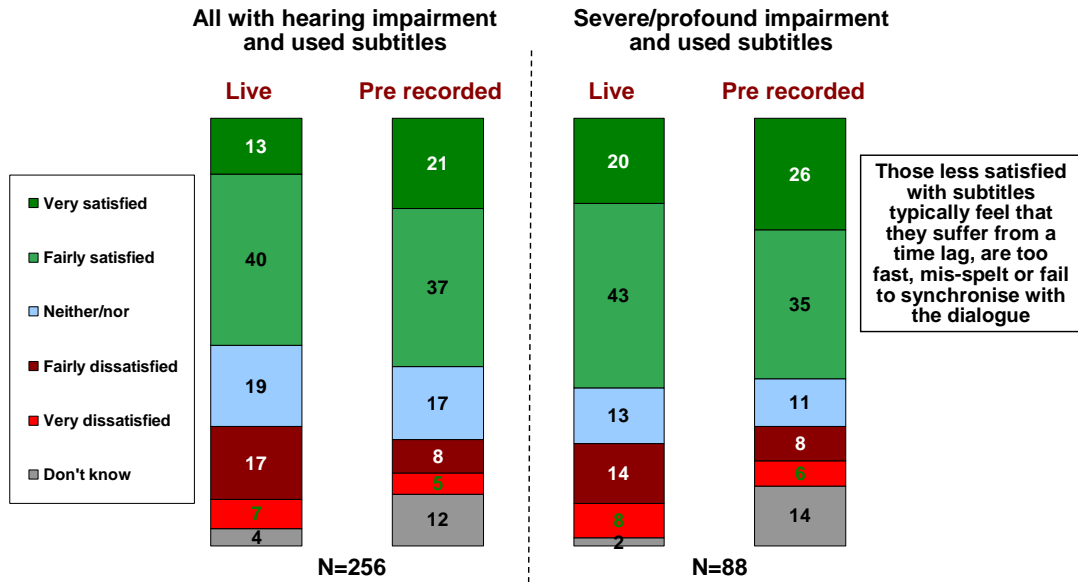
*Q If subtitling was available on more TV programmes, would your use of this service increase a great deal, increase a fair amount, increase a little or would it make no difference at all?*

### Satisfaction with subtitling services

6.3 Satisfaction levels with existing subtitling services are fairly high among users, particularly for the pre recorded versions, where over half (56%) are fairly or very satisfied. Results indicate that respondents with severe/profound impairment are more satisfied still with subtitles.

Around a quarter (24%) are of hearing impaired respondents who have used subtitles are, however, dissatisfied with live subtitles, and 13% are dissatisfied with pre-recorded services. The most commonly cited reasons for dissatisfaction with both types of subtitling services are that they suffer from a time lag, are too fast, mis-spelt or fail to synchronise with the dialogue.

A similar picture is seen among those with a severe/profound hearing impairment.

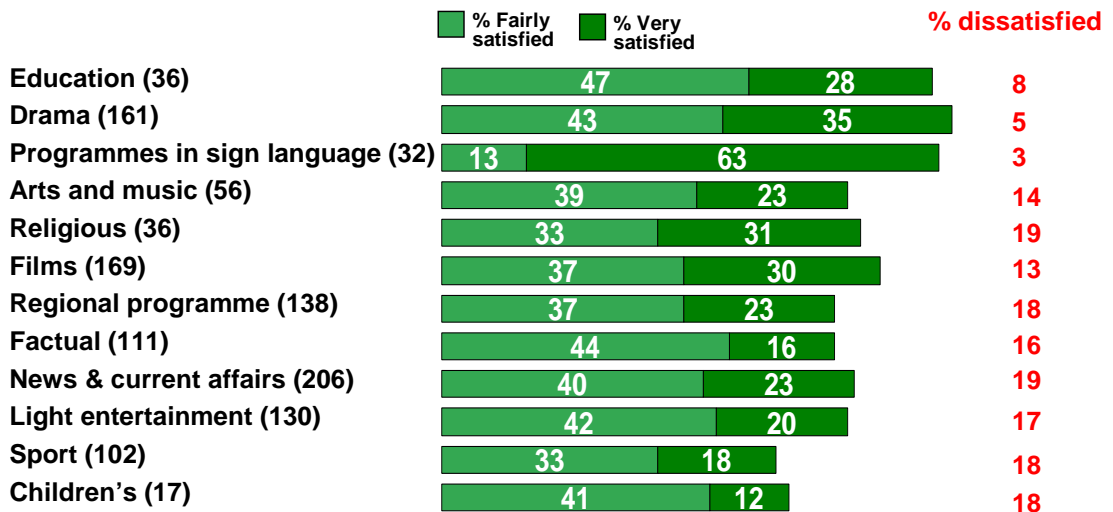


Q Overall to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the current subtitling services available?

### Satisfaction by programme type

6.4 Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall subtitling services on offer across a range of programme genres. Those programme types where pre-recorded subtitling is widely available received the highest levels of satisfaction, in particular drama, where nearly four-fifths were satisfied, and films. Subtitling services in genres more commonly associated with live subtitles tended to attract more active dissatisfaction. That said, even in the lowest performing genre (sport) only 18% were dissatisfied, while around half (51%) expressed satisfaction.

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of subtitling services on the types of programmes you watch most often?

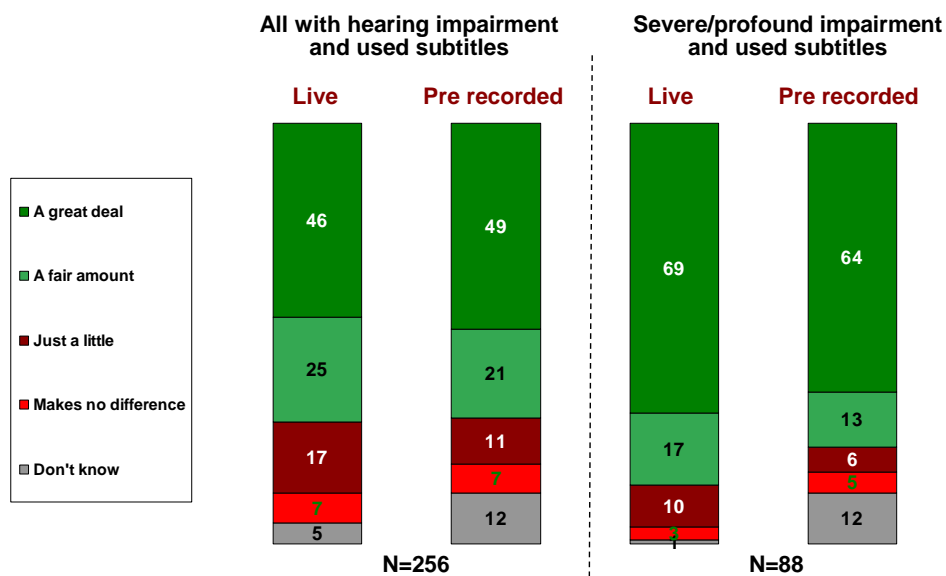


Base: All with hearing impairment and have used signing and watch and watch each type of programme, shown in brackets above

## Effectiveness of subtitles

6.5 The ability of subtitling services to improve respondents' understanding of programmes appears to be very extensive, particularly for the severely/profoundly hearing impaired. Around seven-tenths of those hearing impaired respondents who have used subtitling services judge them to improve their understanding of programmes 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'. Only a small minority say that these services make no difference to them.

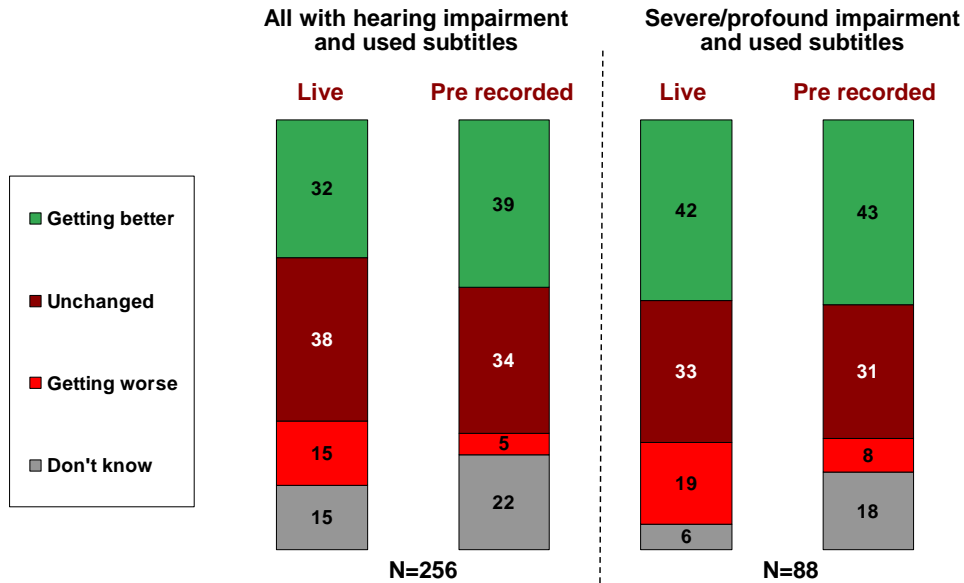
Of those with severe/profound hearing impairment, the overwhelming majority claim that they help improve their understanding – around two thirds say they do so 'a great deal'. Only a small minority (5% for pre recorded and 8% live) say they make no difference to their understanding.



Q To what extent would you say subtitles on TV programmes improve your understanding of them?

Most users feel the quality of live and pre recorded subtitles is getting better (32% and 39% respectively) or has remained unchanged (38% and 34%). However, there is a significant minority (15%) who feel live subtitles are getting worse.





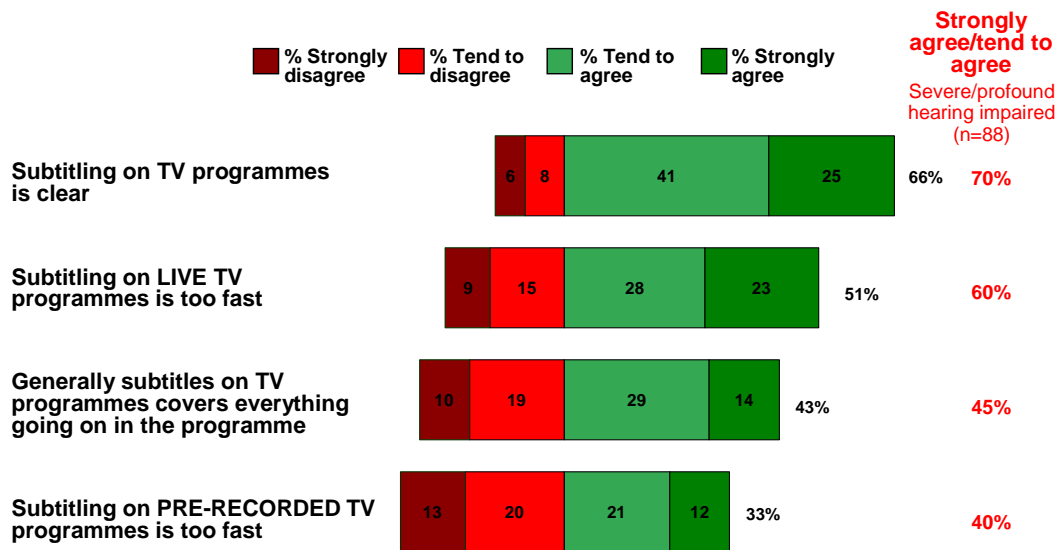
Q Generally, do you feel that the overall standard of subtitles on TV is getting better, getting worse or remain unchanged?

### Evaluation of subtitles

6.6 Two thirds of those hearing impaired respondents who have used subtitles consider them to be clear. Moreover, 43% agree that they are comprehensive, while over a quarter (29%) disagree.

Live subtitles are regarded as too fast by half of respondents (51%), a figure that rises to three fifths of those with severe/profound impairment. Only a quarter (24%) actively disagree that with the statement that live subtitles are too fast.

The speed of pre-recorded subtitles is regarded as less of an issue. That said, a third still find them too fast (rising to two-fifths of those with severe/profound hearing impairment).



Q To what extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

## Summary

6.7 Claimed usage of subtitling is high; in particular three quarters (76%) of respondents with severe/profound hearing impairment say that use them at least some of the time, and findings indicate that there is considerable appetite for increased provision of the service.

Hearing impaired respondents who have used subtitles express broad satisfaction with both the live and pre-recorded services on offer (more so for the former than the latter). This is true for respondents drawn across the spectrum of hearing impairment from mild to profound.

Most find subtitles helpful for all types of programmes. Around seven in ten say subtitles improve their understanding of programmes, a figure that increases further among those with severe or profound hearing impairment. Two thirds deem subtitling to be clear (just 14% say otherwise).

Around a third say subtitling is getting better, similar numbers say it is unchanged, and only a small minority believe the service is deteriorating (5% pre-recorded, 15% live).

That said, some respondents felt:

- actively dissatisfied with subtitling services
- that subtitles do not improve their understanding of programmes

- live subtitles are too fast (over a half say this of live subtitles, and a third for pre-recorded subtitles)
- they are not comprehensive

## 7. Signing

### Usage of signing on TV programmes

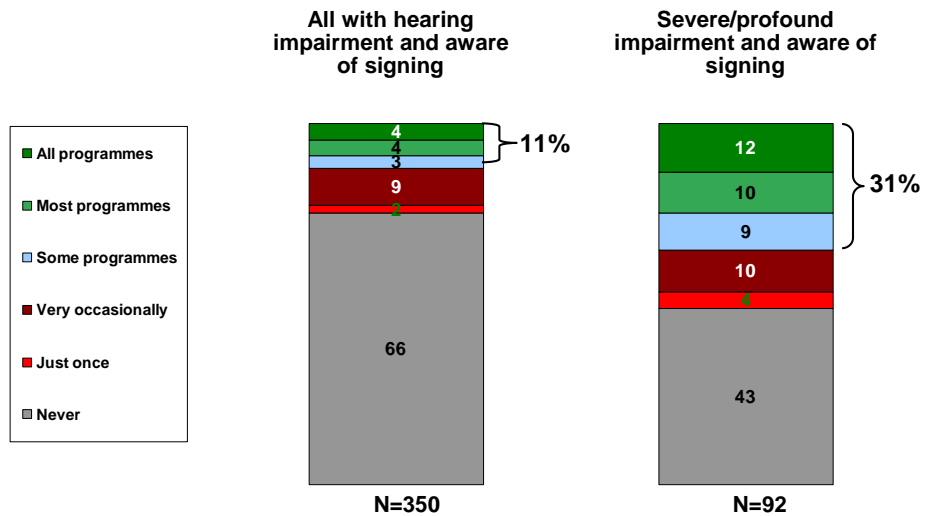
7.1 When evaluating these results, it should be bourn in mind that knowledge of BSL is fairly low among hearing impaired respondents; for instance 12% claim to have at least 'some knowledge of sign language and sometimes use it to communicate' (the top three codes on the question scale below) . Over three fifths (62%) have no understanding of sign language whatsoever, while a tenth say they have a 'small' or 'limited' knowledge.

How well would you say you know and use sign language?	Total
I use sign language as my first language rather than English	5%
I use both sign language and English a lot	4%
I understand sign language and sometimes use it to communicate	3%
I have some knowledge of sign language and use it occasionally	3%
I have some knowledge of sign language but do not use it to communicate	2%
I have a small knowledge of sign language but do not use it to communicate	2%
I have a very limited knowledge of sign language and do not use it to communicate	8%
I have no understanding of sign language at all do not use it to communicate	62%

It is therefore unsurprising that claimed viewing of signed programmes is low. Just over a tenth of hearing impaired respondents (11%) claim to have watched at least some of these, while only 4% claim to view them on all available programmes. A clear majority - two thirds - say they never use signing services.

Of the 52 hearing impaired respondents with the strongest BSL skills – that is, the 12% who claim to 'understand sign language' and use it at least 'sometimes' - a third (33%) watch signing on all available programmes, while a further 48% use it at least occasionally.

As with subtitles, viewing of signed programmes is also higher among the severely/profoundly impaired, just over a third of whom (31%) say they watch signed programmes at least some of the time. However, even amongst this group, over two-fifths (43%) claim to never watch signed programmes.

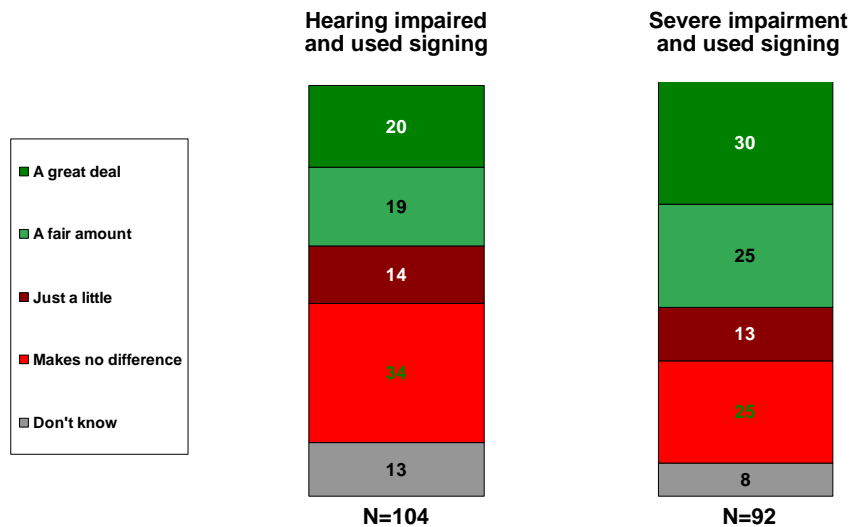


Q How often, if at all, do you watch TV programmes that have signer visible on one side of the screen (e.g. Antiques Road show) on the TV programmes themselves to enable you to follow programmes more easily? This could be at home or elsewhere

### Future use of signing

7.2 If there was an increased availability of signing on TV, four-tenths of hearing impaired respondents who have previously used the service claim they would use it a 'great deal' or a 'fair amount' more. Just under a half answer that it would make no difference or they don't know.

Reflecting their greater signing capability, those people with the greatest signing skills appear more likely to make greater use of signing services should their provision be bolstered.



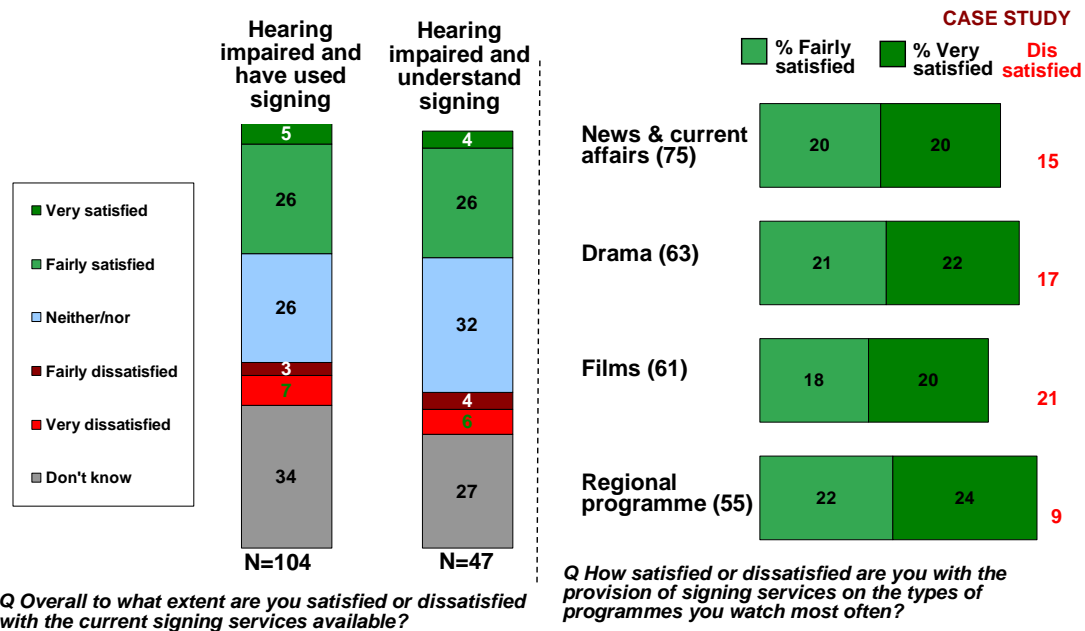
**Q If signing was available on more TV programmes, would your use of this service increase a great deal, increase a fair amount, increase a little or would it make no difference at all?**

### Satisfaction with signing on TV

7.3 Satisfaction with existing signing services is fairly low. Of those respondents who are hearing impaired and have used signing, only 5% profess themselves to be very satisfied with the service on offer. Overall, less than a third (31%) are 'satisfied', while very few are actively dissatisfied and levels of ambivalence are high (three-fifths are in the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' or 'don't know' categories). This suggests that many respondents may not be sufficiently proficient in signing to form an opinion of the services on offer.

Interestingly, the pattern of responses from those who are hearing impaired and claim to understand signing<sup>11</sup> is very similar, with three tenths (30%) satisfied, a tenth dissatisfied and three fifths (59%) 'don't know' or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

<sup>11</sup> 47 respondents in total, so figures should be treated with some caution due to this low base size.



## Satisfaction by programme type

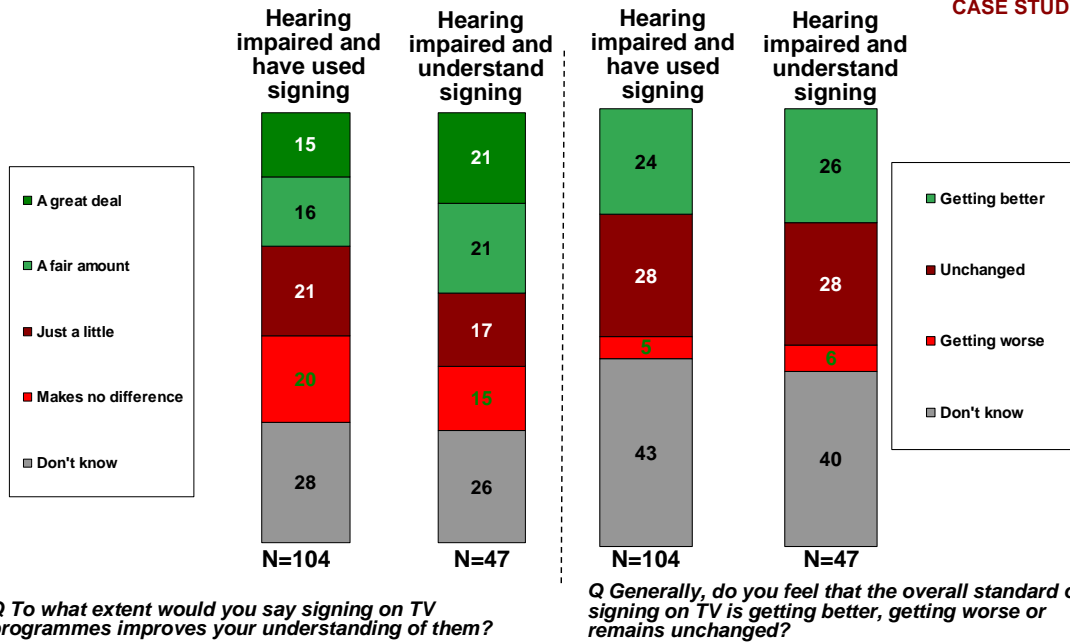
7.4 Many hearing impaired respondents are not actively satisfied or dissatisfied with the signing services available across various types of programme; this may again reflect their relatively low levels of signing ability. However, regional programming attracted the most positive opinion, as 46% said they are satisfied with signing services on offer, and 9% are dissatisfied. Opinion is most mixed with regard to signing services available on films, as only 38% feel satisfied with these and 21% are dissatisfied.

Those dissatisfied tend to feel that signing is not available on enough programmes and that the signer is too small or too far into the screen.

## Effectiveness of signing on TV

7.5 Among those hearing impaired respondents that claim to understand signing (n=47), a fifth (21%) feel it improves their understanding of TV programmes 'a lot', and a further fifth (21%) 'a fair amount', while 17% say it helps only 'a little'. Fifteen percent say it does not help them at all.

One quarter (26%) of hearing impaired respondents who claim to understand signing and use the service at least occasionally say it has improved, while a similar proportion (28%) deem it to be unchanged. However, two fifths don't know – again pointing to a low level of familiarity and usage of the service, even amongst those with relatively strong BSL skills.

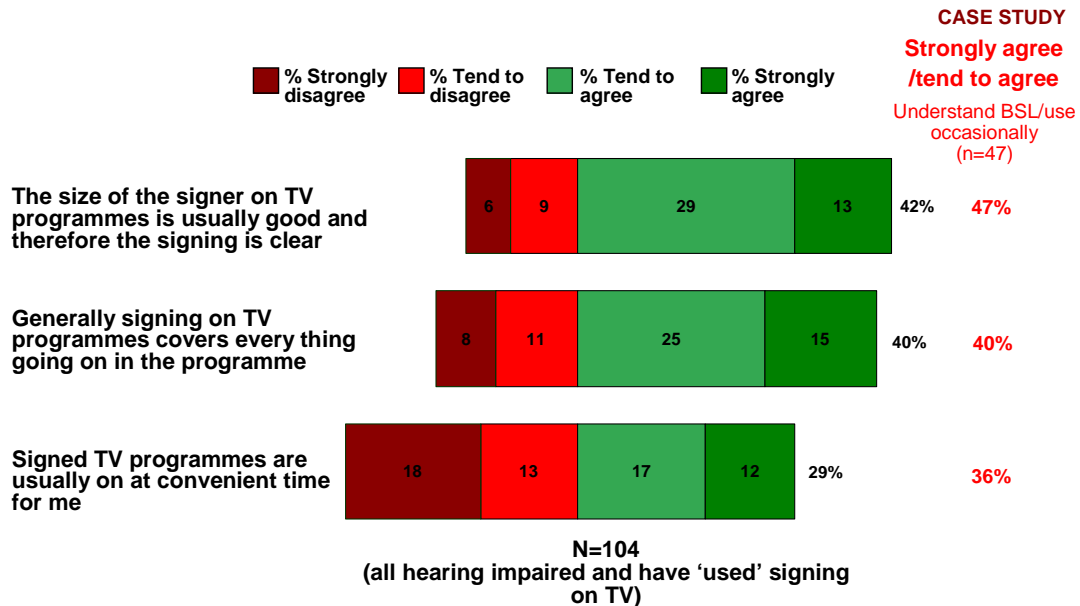


## Evaluation

7.6 When hearing impaired respondents who claim to have used signing and understand BSL were asked to rate the clarity of the service and size of the signer on TV, over two fifths (42%) deem it to be satisfactory; only 15% thought otherwise. The balance of opinion is also positive with regards to the comprehensiveness of the signing services – two fifths agree that it generally covers everything that is going on in the TV programme, while a fifth (19%) think otherwise.

Findings indicate that for users of signing services the main concern is the time when signed programmes are broadcast – a greater proportion (31%, rising to 36% of those with stronger signing skills) feel that they are not on at a convenient time, than think they are (29%).





*Q To what extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?*

## Summary

7.7 Awareness of BSL is relatively low, hence usage of signing services is limited. The majority of respondents with hearing impairment lack the knowledge of BSL to get the most out of these services.

Only a minority of hearing impaired users are satisfied with signing services. Moreover, even amongst those with a strong knowledge of signing - i.e. they understand it and use it at least sometimes - only 30% are satisfied with signer visible signing.

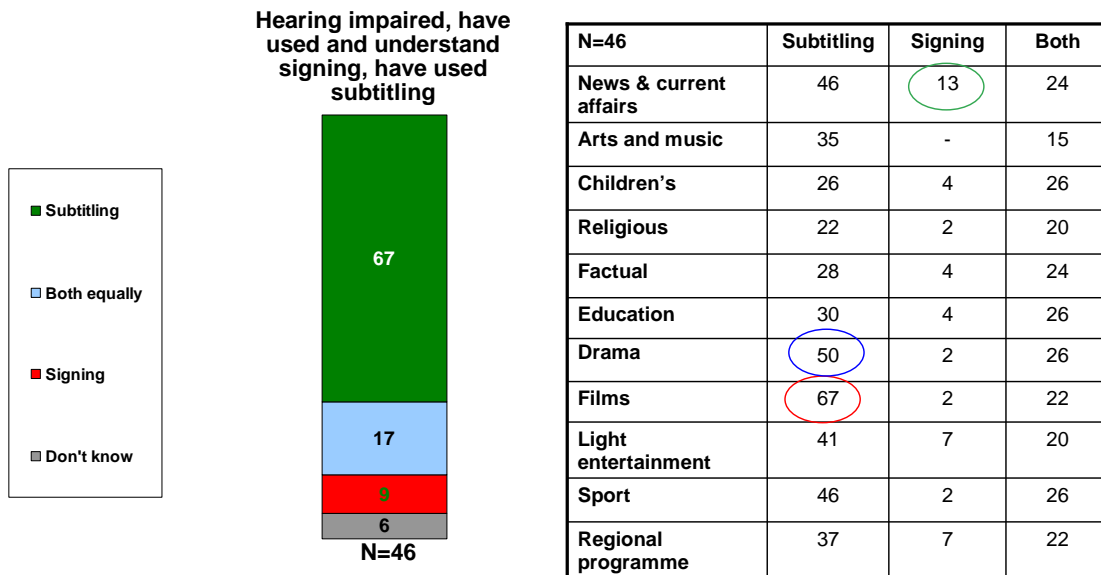
As with subtitling, opinion is split as to whether signing services are improving or not. Only a minority say the size of the signer on TV programmes is too small or does not cover everything in the programme, but a greater proportion find the timeslots for signed programmes inconvenient.

## 8. Signing versus subtitling

8.1 Hearing impaired respondents express a clear preference for subtitling over signing. Among those who claimed to have used both services, and understand BSL, the preference for subtitling is overwhelming – over two thirds (67%) prefer subtitling, and just 9% would opt for signing.

Subtitling is, in essence, considered to be easier to follow and less distracting.

This preference for subtitling is especially marked for films and drama. Conversely, there is most call for signing for news and current affairs, but even here the demand for subtitling outweighs that for signing by a wide margin.

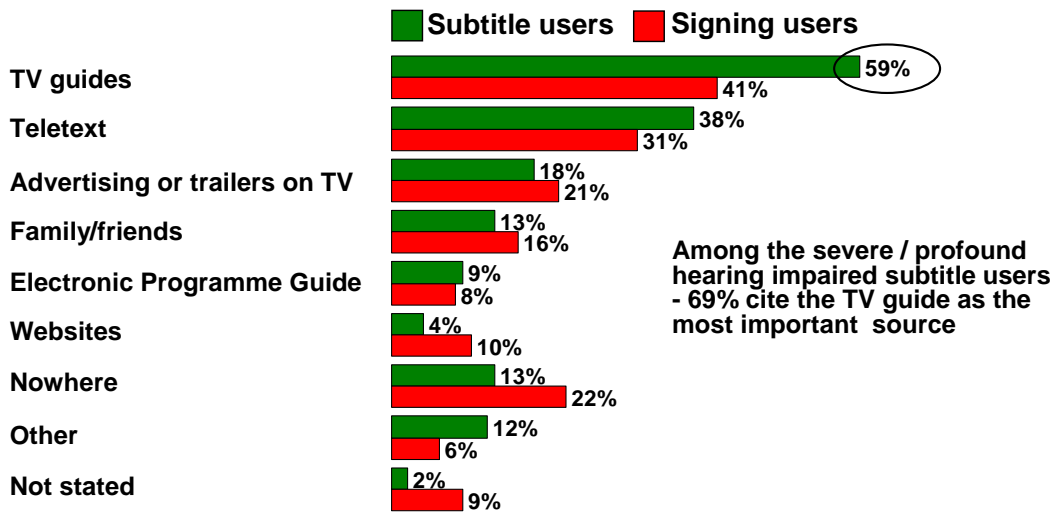


**Q Overall, which one of those methods do you prefer to use?**

**Q Please indicate if you would prefer to use subtitling or signing or if you would prefer them both together.**

TV guides are the principal source of information for both subtitling (cited by 59% of subtitle users) and signing (41%). This is followed by Teletext and advertising / trailers.

**Q From which, if any, of the following sources do you obtain information about television programmes which contain subtitles/signing?**

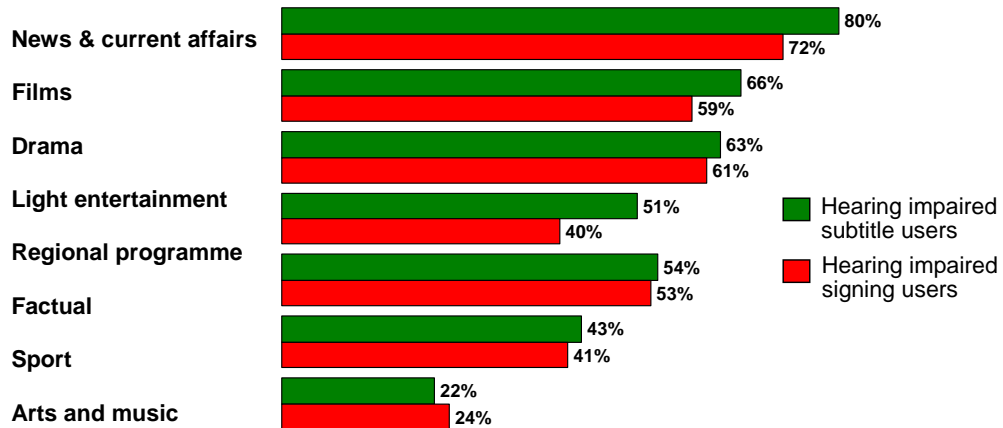


Base: 256 All with hearing impairment and used subtitling, 104 all with hearing impairment and used signing

As one would perhaps expect, the viewing preferences of those who use signing and subtitling services are similar. Both groups say that they watch news and current affairs programmes most often (four fifths of subtitle users and over seven tenths of signing users). There may, however, be an element of over-claim here, with respondents tending to recall 'worthier' programming. Nevertheless, these types of programmes are undoubtedly popular. Films and drama are the two other most popular categories of programme.

### Programme viewing

**Q Which, if any, of the following types of TV programme do you watch most often on TV?**



Base: 256 All with hearing impairment and used subtitling on TV, 104 All with hearing impairment and used signing on TV

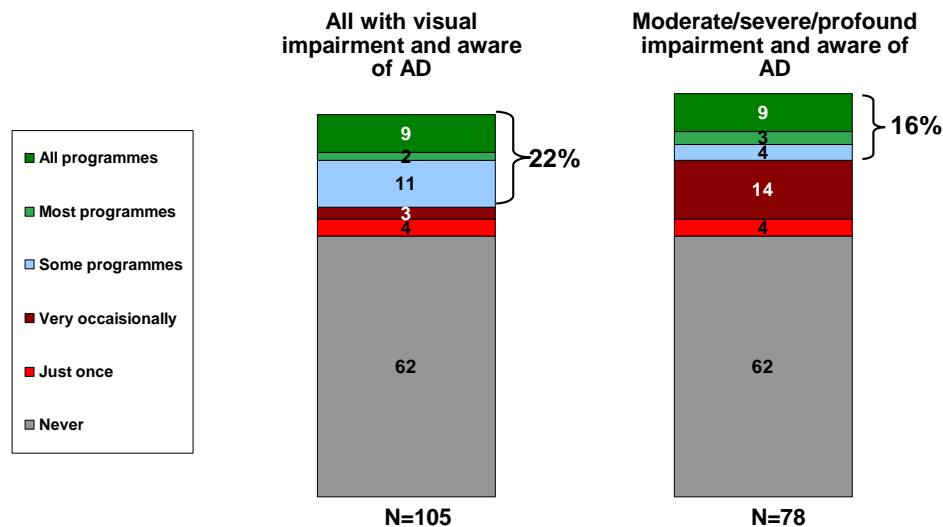
# 9. Audio Description

## Usage of Audio Description

9.1 Claimed usage of audio description is low. Only around a fifth (22%) of visually impaired respondents who have heard of audio description say they use it on at least 'some programmes' when it is available. Over three-fifths (62%) say they never use it.

Audio description has been available to some digital viewers since 2001 and only households with a multichannel service can access it.

These usage figures should be treated with caution as there is some indication that even these low numbers are inflated owing to respondents misunderstanding the term audio description and confusing it with other types of access service.



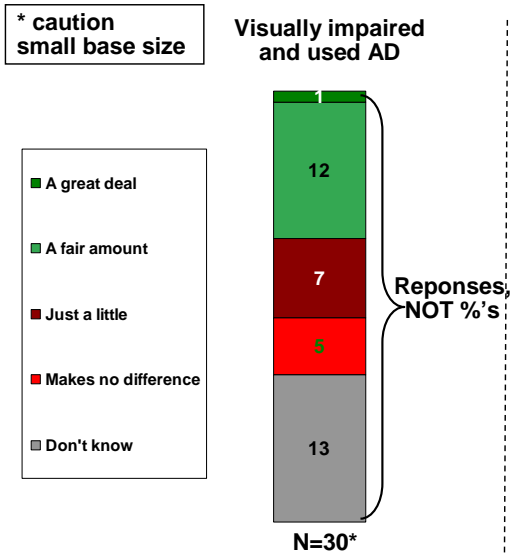
*Q How often, if at all, do you watch TV programmes that have audio description on the TV programmes themselves to enable you to follow programmes more easily? This could be at home or elsewhere*

## Future use of Audio Description

9.2 Despite its low current usage, audio description is of interest to many visually impaired people. If it was more widely available, 53% of those not previously aware of the service claim they would be interested in using it. Amongst those with at least moderate visual impairment who had not previously heard of the service, this figure increases to nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents. Of this latter group only a fifth (19%) would not be interested.

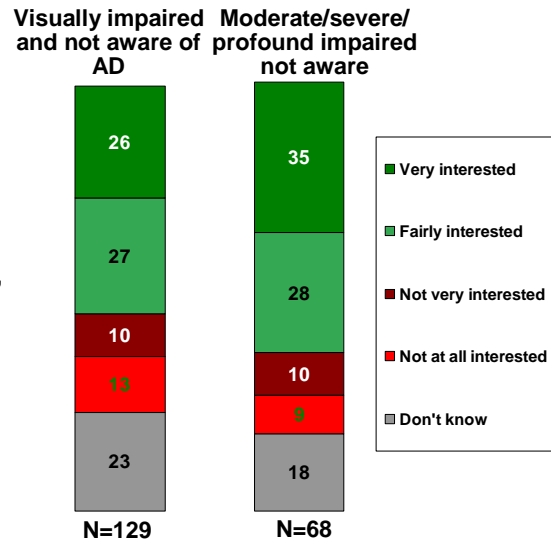
Of the 30 visually impaired respondents who had previously used audio description, 13 claimed they would use it at least 'a fair amount' more if it was more widely available, and seven said usage would increase 'just a little'.

**FUTURE USE - USERS**



Q If AD was available on more TV programmes, would your use of this service increase .....

**FUTURE USE – POTENTIAL USERS CASE STUDY**

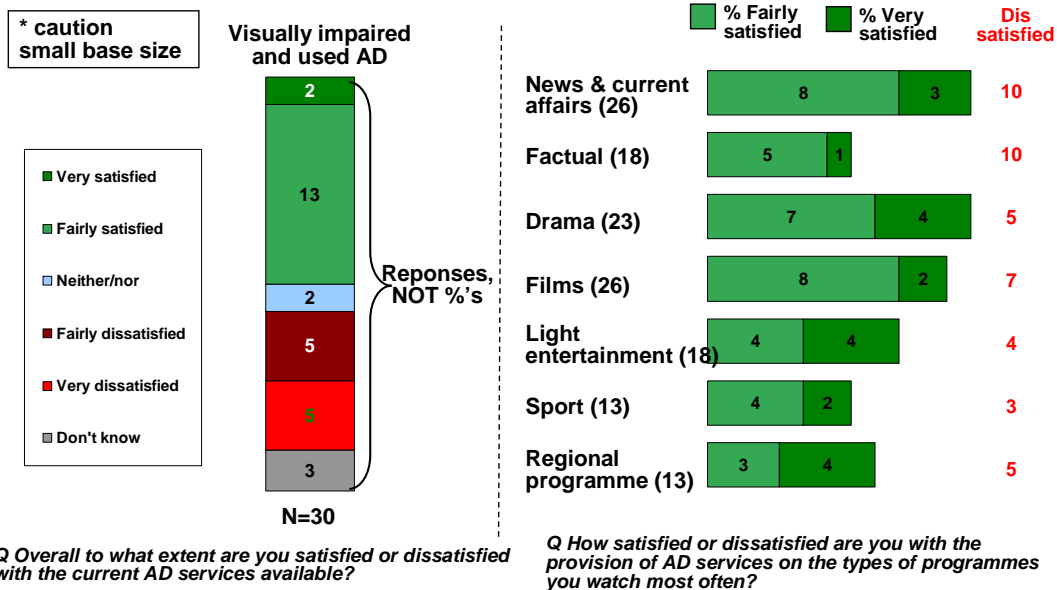


Q If AD was available on the TV programmes that you watch, how interested do you think you would be in using it?

**Satisfaction with Audio Description**

9.3 Satisfaction levels with audio description are mixed. Half of the 30 visually impaired respondents who claimed to have used the service profess themselves to be satisfied with it, while a third describe themselves as dissatisfied.

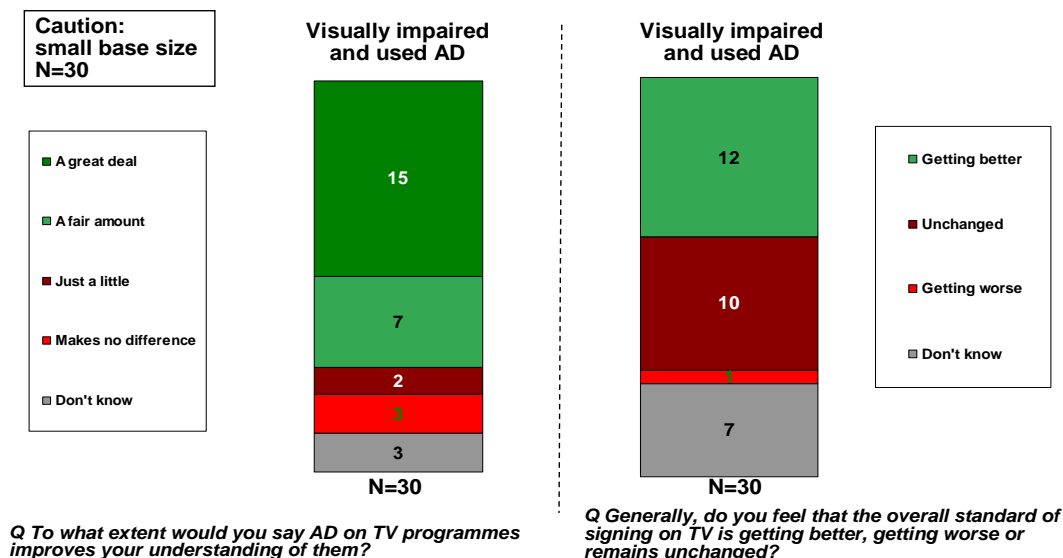
Levels of satisfaction are equally varied with regard to the audio description services available on different programme types, though base sizes here are small so findings should be treated as broadly indicative at best. That said, there is clearly some disappointment with the service provided for certain genres (for instance 10 people out of the 26 who have use audio description and watch news and current affairs, are dissatisfied with it).



## Effectiveness of Audio Description

9.4 Among those who claimed to have used audio description, a clear majority (22 out of 30) feel it improves their understanding of TV programmes, while only 3 say it made no difference to them. This suggests the service has significant potential for the visually impaired.

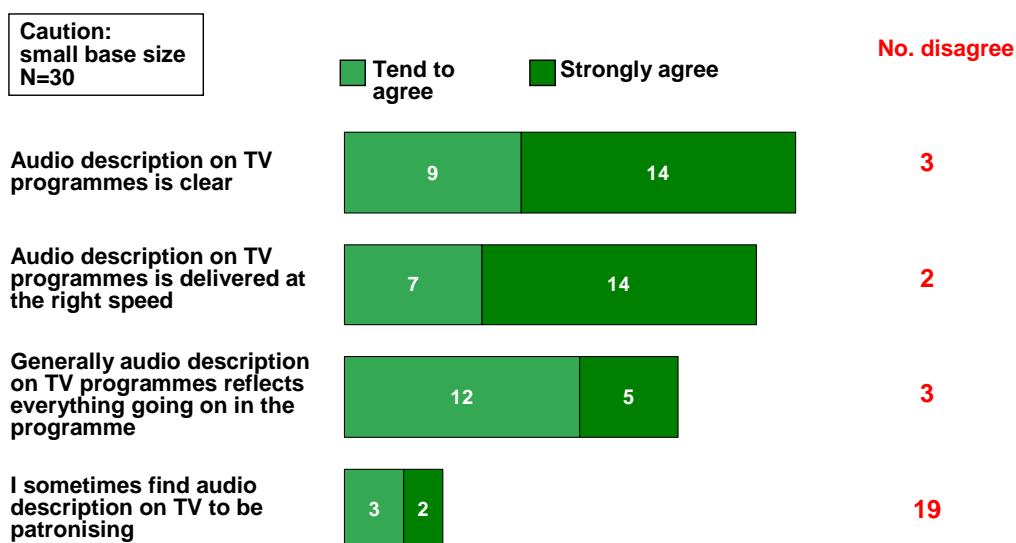
Of the 30 who had used audio description, 12 deemed the service to be improving, while 10 thought it unchanged and one believed it to be deteriorating.



## Evaluation of Audio Description

9.5 The 30 visually impaired respondents who claimed to have used audio description were asked to rate four aspects of it. The vast majority (23 respondents) deem it to be clear only a small number (3) think otherwise. Twenty one of the thirty also regard audio description as being at the right speed.

Respondents are, however, less certain as to whether audio description reflects everything going on in the programme (17 think it does, 3 think not).



Q To what extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

## Summary

9.6 Audio description currently had a low penetration among its potential audience. However, the level of interest expressed in it by respondents suggests that it holds much future potential.

Only a small number of respondents claim to have used the service thus far, so findings in this area are indicative only; but around half express satisfaction with the service overall and a majority feels it helps them to improve their understanding of programmes and is improving as a service.

A third are, however, dissatisfied overall and results indicate some frustration with current provision of audio description services across the various programme types.