

5 October 09.

To Sara Winter,

Ofcom  
Riverside House,

2a, Southwark Bridge Road,

London SE1 9HA.

Re 2009 Access Services Review -

I understand that Ofcom have given 3 options for the future of AD on television, and I would strongly support option 2 to increase audio description to 20 per cent for all channels.

I am registered blind, in my seventies, and have been unable to see television for over 40 years. I would dearly like to be able to enjoy television with my husband, not just as a pleasurable leisure activity, but be able to participate in conversations about programmes. It is obviously not possible to fully appreciate television without sight, but AD does make it possible to follow programmes sufficiently well to want to watch many more programmes than is at present possible. So often, I try very hard to follow many programmes that interest me, but invariably give up and do something else and feel very excluded. My husband then often feels guilty, and although I never want him to, will often turn off something he is enjoying.

When programmes are audio described, it would be a great help if the names of the characters are repeated often near the beginning to help identify the different voices particularly in a film. It is also important that sound effects never override the Ad. The quality of AD does seem to vary considerably, and even at its best, does require much concentration. Clear diction is essential, and it should be realised that television can be a lifeline for older folk living alone, many of whom are also hard of hearing.

I shall await the outcome of this review with anticipation.