



# Television channels required to provide television access services in 2018

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 2018.

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 2018, 84 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, 30 non-domestic channels across seven different member states of the European Union will be required to provide access services in 2018.



## 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 [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/97040/Access-service-code-Jan-2017.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/97040/Access-service-code-Jan-2017.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%<sup>1</sup>.
- 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 was used by Ofcom to assess whether broadcasters can afford to meet their access service obligations by spending no more than 1% of their relevant turnover.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the BBC Charter and Agreement, Ofcom has specific duties relating to access services on BBC television and on demand services. We will publish further information on this separately in the near future.

- 1.6 For channels broadcasting in other Member States of the European Union ('non-domestic channels'), Ofcom collected data from broadcasters in early 2017. 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 2018.

### **Domestic TV services**

- 1.7 The list of domestic channels required to provide access services in 2018 is at Annex 1. In brief:
- a) 84 channels will be required to provide television access services in 2018;
  - b) 80 channels will be required to provide access services at Level One during 2018, four channels will be required to provide access services at Level Two, and none will be required to provide access services at Level Three. Subtitling targets are now the highest required under the Code (80%) for most channels, with audio description at the maximum level of 10% for most; and
  - c) over 50 time shifted 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 sign interpreted programming is 5% from the tenth anniversary of the relevant date. Channels with a smaller audience share (i.e. 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 the requirement to provide sign interpreted programming. 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 channels with smaller audience shares**  
(from 1 January 2016)

	<b>Signing obligations for channels with smaller audience shares</b> (These 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>2</sup></b>
First	30 minutes	£24,672
Second	30 minutes	£24,672
Third	30 minutes	£24,672
Fourth	30 minutes	£24,672
Fifth	45 minutes	£37,058
Sixth	45 minutes	£37,058
Seventh	60 minutes	£49,444
Eighth	60 minutes	£49,444
Ninth	60 minutes	£49,444
Tenth	75 minutes	£61,830

**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</b>	<b>2018<sup>3</sup></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	£37,058	£41,186	£49,444	£53,572	£61,830

<sup>2</sup> Ofcom has adjusted these figures to reflect the Consumer Price Index in 2016 being recorded at 0.7% (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/d7g7>). We will again review and, if necessary, update the minimum contribution levels when we publish the annual list of channels required to provide television access services in 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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

- 1.11 The list of non-domestic channels required to provide access services in 2018 is at Annex 2. In brief:
- a) 30 non-domestic channels will be required to provide television access services in 2018. The channels required to provide access services in 2018 are broadcast in seven Member States of the European Union;
  - b) 27 non-domestic channels will be required to provide access services at Level One, two channels will provide access services at Level Two, and one channel will provide access services at Level Three. Targets for most Level One channels will rise to 60% in 2018 from 35% in 2017; and,
  - c) For the first time, Ofcom assessed whether any channels outside the European Union to which the Audio Visual Media Services Directive applies should be given a requirement to provide access services in 2018. No such channels have been given a requirement as none met the audience share and affordability criteria. We will assess these channels again in 2018 when determining which channels will have a requirement to provide access services in 2019.

## Annex 1

## Domestic channels required to provide television access services in 2018

<b>Level One (full requirements) (80 channels as compared with 80 in 2017)</b>		
BBC One	MTV	Sky Real Lives
BBC Two	MTV Music	Sky Arts
BBC Four	Comedy Central	Challenge
BBC News	Comedy Central Extra	Dave
CBBC	Sky Atlantic	Eden
CBeebies	Sky News	W
ITV (incl. STV services)	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 Cinema Premiere	BT Sport 1
Film 4	Sky Cinema Comedy	BT Sport 2
Channel 5	Sky Cinema Action	BT Sport 3
5*	Sky Cinema Family	Universal
5 USA	Sky Cinema Sci Fi & Horror	4Music
My 5	Sky Cinema Greats	Discovery
Spike	Sky Cinema Drama & Romance	Quest
Nickelodeon	Sky Cinema Hits	Animal Planet
Nicktoons	Sky Cinema Thriller	TLC
Nick Jr.	Sky Cinema Disney	Fox
Nick Jr Too	Sky Living	

<b>Level Two (full requirements for signing and audio description; 66% of subtitling) (Four channels as compared with three in 2017)</b>		
Boomerang	Cartoon Network	S4C
CBS Reality		

<b>Level Three (full requirements for signing and audio description; 33% of subtitling) (Zero channels as compared with one in 2017)</b>		

*Note: Time shifted 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 2018

<b>Level One (full requirements) (27 channels, compared to 34 in 2017)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
Denmark	Kanal 4
	Kanal 5
	6'eren
	3+
	TV3
	TV3 Puls
Republic of Ireland*	BBC One
	BBC Two
	Sky1
	Channel 4
	E4
Netherlands	Discovery Channel
	Investigation Discovery
	TLC
Poland*	Animal Planet HD
	Discovery Channel
	Discovery Science
	Investigation Discovery
	TLC
Sweden	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) (Two channels, compared with five in 2017)</b>	
<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
France	Disney Cinema
Poland*	AXN

**Level Three (full requirements for signing and audio description; 33% of subtitling)** (One channel, compared with zero in 2017)

<b>EU Member State</b>	<b>Channel</b>
Italy	Discovery Channel

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