

9 July 2021

Robert Specterman-Green  
Director, Media and the Creative Industries  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London  
SW1A 2BQ

Dear Robert,

### Proposed accessibility requirements for on-demand service providers

As you are aware, the Digital Economy Act 2017 amended the Communications Act 2003 to give the Secretary of State the power to introduce new accessibility requirements for on-demand service providers. In December 2018 Ofcom published recommendations in relation to such accessibility requirements, following a public consultation.

In November 2019 you wrote to Ofcom requesting that we conduct a further targeted consultation on how such regulations should operate in practice. Specifically, you required confirmation as to Ofcom's recommendation on the thresholds for: a) which services will be in scope of the legislation; b) exempting services entirely from the scheme due to low audience share; and c) establishing alternative arrangements to fulfil the signing quota.

I am pleased to enclose [our recommendations](#) which we are also publishing today on our website. As our viewing shifts from traditional broadcast services to online and on-demand content, disabled consumers are being left behind because they can't rely on accessible on-demand programming. We share your stated aim of ensuring that any legislation introduced is proportionate in its demands on businesses while ensuring that content can be used and enjoyed by the widest possible audience, regardless of disability.

On-demand services present unique challenges in regulation which are not reflected in the existing broadcast accessibility requirements. For example, there are (as yet) few standardised metrics for aspects such as audience reach or service-specific revenue. We continue to believe that any regulations should be flexible wherever possible to allow maximum scope for the regulatory regime to adapt as necessary. However, in our report and recommendations we aim to provide a comprehensive picture of how we think the on-demand accessibility regulations could work in practice. It is of course Government's role to determine what is included in any legislation.

As we have done to date, we will work closely with officials to ensure this work delivers a positive impact for audiences as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vikki Cook', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Vikki Cook**