

Response to Ofcom's Review of the list of "larger" parties for elections on 5 May 2016

This is a joint response from the commercial public service broadcasters to Ofcom's consultation. Most of us submitted a joint response to Ofcom's previous consultations about the list of major parties, and we believe it is beneficial to us and to Ofcom to again submit a single response.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on Ofcom's review concerning its list of what were hitherto described as the "major" parties in relation to party election broadcasts and election coverage, and its proposals for the amendment of that list for the forthcoming elections in May 2016.

Like last year's similar exercise, the current consultation stems from Ofcom's decision to maintain a central list of "major" (now "larger" parties) that in our view necessarily requires regular (indeed annual) reviews of this kind. We therefore welcome the announcement that after the May 2016 elections Ofcom will review the continuing suitability of this list for setting minimum allocations of party election broadcasts. We suggest that such a review should necessarily also extend to the current provisions of Section 6 of the Broadcasting Code relating to editorial election coverage, at least insofar as it currently sets out differing rules for coverage depending on the type of party concerned.

We welcome the change of nomenclature from "major" to "larger" parties. We also are grateful for Ofcom's helpful collation of data regarding past electoral support and current support (as evidenced by recent polling).

Having considered all of this data in detail, we confirm that we agree with all of Ofcom's conclusions about which parties should now be classified as "larger" parties for the purposes of the forthcoming elections in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the London Assembly & Mayoral elections.

ITV plc
UTV Media plc
STV Group plc
Channel 4 Television Corporation
Channel 5 Broadcasting Ltd

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