

ACOD response to Ofcom's Local TV Licensing Consultation

1. ACOD welcomes the opportunity to respond to Ofcom's consultation on Local TV Licensing. We note that this new tier of broadcasting is a priority for the Government and Ofcom's role in helping to make it happen.
2. We believe that older and disabled people could be amongst the groups which stand to benefit from the most from Local TV, and we're keen to ensure that this potential is reflected in the service description and licence award process.
3. In particular, we would wish to highlight that older and disabled people are often amongst the highest consumers of local news, across all platforms.

Older people in particular disproportionately consume services such as Regional TV news, BBC Local Radio and local newspapers. They have often lived in a locale for longer than younger demographics and have a greater affinity and interest in the world around them as a result.

We believe that Local TV services which recognise and embrace this could be rewarded with a loyal and passionate local audience.

4. Whilst these demographics may be less attractive to advertisers, and we recognise that Local TV services will need to be commercial operations, we hope that Local TV providers will endeavour to provide services which are aimed at the widest possible audience, including older people and other minority groups.
5. Local TV services offer the potential to reflect to local audiences the world around them. We know that this matters to audiences, not just in terms of content, but also production.

So, we would encourage Ofcom to consider the presentation mix of a channel, as well as its content. Local TV could be a platform for diversity on screen, and behind the camera, and we hope that operators will consider the opportunity to ensure that older and disabled people can play their role as presenters and contributors as well as consumers.

6. Finally, we note that access service requirements are unlikely to be a statutory requirement on most Local TV services, due to their likely audience reach and share.

Despite this ACOD would be encouraged if potential operators considered how they could voluntarily provide access support, around key programming such as news, or around high profile local events such as elections.

ACOD recognises that there is a cost to providing this support, but we believe that it could unlock wider audiences and play a key role in supporting the civic role of Local TV.

As a result, we hope that this is a further area of activity which Local TV providers will give due consideration.

Jo Connell, Chair ACOD

15th February 2012