

REVIEW OF SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOW-AUDIENCE TV CHANNELS

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Additional comments:

- There have been quite a few times where I try to watch programmes on television with an interpreter, but the interpretation is often very poor. It feels like BSL has been squashed to one corner of the screen so I don't feel relaxed watching these programmes.
- Television is really important to me because information is visual and so is BSL. I watch lots of drama on the BBC as well as documentaries on Channel 4 with subtitles, but I enjoy watching sign-presented programmes because they reflect my culture and identity.
- I don't watch the news because the invision interpreter often signs too quickly or not clear enough.

Question 1:

Do you agree that it would be appropriate to increase the minimum contributions to alternative signing arrangements to bring them back to the 2007 level in real terms, and to make annual adjustments for inflation thereafter? If not, why not?

- Yes, I agree and think that the minimum contributions should be increased immediately so that they reflect the current value, rather than that back in 2007 (7 years ago).
- From my understanding, the contribution of £20,000 that was agreed back in 2007 is now worth £24,000 after adding up all the inflations from the past 7 years. There should have been increases for inflation every year between 2007 and now. So for this reason, I believe that the broadcasters have 'saved' quite a lot of money over the last seven years, and should therefore be paying at the current level as soon as possible.
- Because the monthly contribution has not been increasing with inflations, the number of new programmes for the Deaf has been reduced over the years, which seems to be a bit unfair considering there has been more subtitling and audio description.

QUESTION 2:

Do you agree that it would not be appropriate to base adjustments to the minimum level of contributions to alternative arrangements on comparisons with the costs of existing sign-presented programmes, or with general TV production costs? If not, why not?

- I understand that it is difficult to compare TV production costs for Deaf programmes. However, I believe that producing sign-presented programming is comparable to producing 'mainstream' programming, and that therefore a good basis for the contribution level would be an assessment of the average production cost, factoring in the additional costs related to the use of BSL.

QUESTION 3:

Do you agree that it would be appropriate to make annual adjustments to the minimum contributions in line with the Consumer Price Index, and to make consequential change to the Guidance, as set out in Annex 4? If not, why not?

- Yes, although I am not a finance expert!

QUESTION 4:

Do you consider that minimum signing requirements for relevant channels should remain fixed at 30 minutes a month or should they rise progressively over a ten year period to 75 minutes a month? If the latter, do you agree that consequential changes should be made to the Code, as set out in Annex 4? Please explain the reasons for your preference.

- Yes, the current minimum signing requirements of 30 minutes a month is much too low. This works out to be roughly 7 minutes a week, which is far too low.
- Signing-presented programmes are SO valuable for the Deaf community including those in the Healthy Deaf Minds group (a monthly talk for Deaf people to attend and learn/discuss various health issues). There is currently lack of access to vital health information out there in the Deaf community and as a result of this, the life expectancy for Deaf people is shorter than that of their hearing peers.
- BSL documentaries and informative programmes such as *Who Cares?*, *Snapshots* etc. are very important but there are not enough such programmes due to the minimum signing requirements being so low.
- I think ten years is such a long time for increasing 30 minutes a month to 75 minutes a month, considering that there should have been increases over the last seven years. I therefore think that the increases should go to at least 120 minutes a month or more.

QUESTION 5:

Do you consider that transitional arrangements set out in Figure 4 would be appropriate if relevant channels are made subject to rising obligations? If so, do you agree that consequential changes should be made to the Code, as set out in Annex 4?

- No, the proposed increases should happen straight away in 2015 as the Ofcom review is long overdue.
- I have noticed that there is more audio-description and subtitling on TV so this should be reflected in sign-presented programmes.

QUESTION 6:

Do you consider that minimum contributions by relevant channels to alternative arrangements should remain fixed at £20,000 a year (adjusted for inflation) or should rise progressively over a ten-year period to £50,000 a year (also adjusted for inflation)? Please explain reasons for your preference.

- As mentioned in my previous comments, I think that contributions should go up progressively over a ten-year period, if not over a five-year period.
- I want to see more programmes made in BSL, especially in 2015 when there will be a General Election so that Deaf people can participate in a more informed way.
- There are lots of important health information that Deaf people do not currently have access to, so there are lots of informative programmes to be produced for Deaf people. Increasing the costs over a ten-year period is a very long wait, and can be too late in many cases.
- There should be fewer repeats – and more new programmes. We need more children's programmes in particular.

