

Consultation Response

Second Public Service Broadcasting Review – Phase 2 (Ofcom) 4 December 2008

About us

RNID is the charity working to change the world for the UK's 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people. Our vision is a world where deafness and hearing loss are not barriers to opportunity and fulfilment. We aim to achieve this vision by campaigning and lobbying vigorously, by raising awareness of deafness and hearing loss, by providing services and support, and through social, medical and technical research.

Deafness and Hearing Loss

We have approximately 38,000 members and our response will focus on key issues that relate to deaf people. Throughout this response we use the term 'deaf people' to refer to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people. RNID is happy for the details of this questionnaire response to be made public.

Comments

RNID welcomes the opportunity to comment on the second Public Service Broadcasting Review. RNID agrees that public service provision is an important part of any future system. It is extremely important to retain provision for non commercial broadcasting to ensure that all needs and interests are covered. However, our main concern is that the current level of accessibility must be retained, regardless of which funding method and model is chosen.

The new structure for public service broadcasting must ensure the continued improvement in accessibility of broadcasting services to enable the widest possible audience. Ofcom accept the increasing importance of digital platforms and paragraphs 3.78 and 3.79 highlight the BBC and Channel 4's desire to use a variety of platforms to fulfil their public service role. It is therefore necessary to ensure that people who are deaf are given equal access to these new and growing services. RNID therefore believes that targets need to be introduced for providing access services across all platforms, including video on demand and the 'red button' service. The BBC have shown that the technology is available to produce subtitles through the BBC iplayer, and we believe therefore that other broadcasters should follow suit. This will open up access to these services for the UK's nine million deaf and hard of hearing people.

Teletext is an important source of information for people who are deaf and we therefore agree with Ofcom's Advisory Committee on Older and Disabled People (ACOD) (paragraph 2.88) that Teletext should remain as a public service obligation.

Finally, we would like to stress that RNID would welcome the opportunity to be involved in the development of regulations regarding subtitling and signing across all broadcasting platforms.

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