



Mr Adam Baxter
Ofcom
Riverside House
2A Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

2 February 2016

By email and post: adam.baxter@ofcom.org.uk

Dear Adam

Re: Responding to the Major Parties 2015 Consultation

ITN welcomes that Ofcom is intending to hold a wider consultation on the rules for reporting Elections.

ITN has raised concerns for some time now about the present system, in particular the issue of major parties and the rules on constituency reporting.

As it stands in a constituency report, if one candidate of a major party is interviewed there must be interviews with the candidates of all the other major parties. There may also have to be interviews with candidates not part of a major party who have significant support - such as an independent candidate.

Whilst this rule may in the past have been fit for purpose, in 2016 with more parties defined as larger parties, the rule raises significant issues for broadcast news reports.

For example, in Wales and the London Assembly there are now five major parties. It will be difficult, given the time constraints in a news report, to include five different interviews. The danger is that a news service may avoid reporting constituency issues due to the inflexible nature of the rules.

The prescriptive rules are not workable in the present day given the number of parties and also the differing types of elections, including PCC Elections and Referendums.

Our contention is that the principle of due impartiality should be the overarching test that should be applied.

We would like to be included in the forthcoming consultation to set out our concerns.

Yours sincerely

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

John Battle
HEAD OF COMPLIANCE

dt: 020 7430 4766
email: john.battle@itn.co.uk