

December 2025: LumoTV submission to Ofcom's [call for input](#) on the review of broadcast regulation

We welcome Ofcom's review of broadcast regulation and its intention to ensure that content standards rules apply fairly to content wherever it is shown. This comes at a hugely important moment for people who use British Sign Language – and we believe regulation should be updated to better reflect the needs of this community.

LumoTV is the world's only deaf-led content commissioner dedicated solely to sign-presented programming. Our shows are created by deaf people, for deaf people, in their first language – BSL, rather than adapted from spoken-language programmes.

However, across mainstream TV and streaming, BSL users still struggle to find content that speaks to them in their own language. Many providers rely solely on sign-translated content, ignoring independent research which clearly shows that deaf people prefer sign-presented content for most types of programme because it offers a far richer and more authentic viewing experience.

While sign translation enables deaf audiences to follow spoken-language programmes, it does not show deaf people leading, telling stories, or shaping culture on equal terms. It can play a role, but it doesn't deliver the same accuracy, immediacy, cultural depth, or authenticity. In most cases, it feels added on at the end rather than designed with deaf audiences in mind.

By contrast, in sign-presented programming, deaf people and BSL are central to the storytelling. It's authentic, creative, and empowering, and is exactly what a modern, inclusive media landscape should be offering. It also gives deaf viewers the chance to see themselves represented, not just accessing someone else's content.

The current regulation is complex and applies unevenly to broadcasters of different sizes. For the most-watched channels, no differentiation is made for sign-presented versus sign-translated content.

Furthermore, we are concerned that smaller channels are increasingly being allowed to bypass their quota requirements for sign-presentation by simply applying sign-translation to existing content.

This isn't just an access issue, but a representation one too. Deaf people are being denied a role in national storytelling – and, as technology develops, there is a possibility that sign-translation will be done by Artificial Intelligence, further distancing the deaf community from content. Without clearer regulatory expectations, the default risks becoming cheaper, less authentic, and less accurate forms of signing, rather than content that truly reflects deaf lives and language. That would undermine both audience trust and the purpose of the regulation itself.

We believe reviewing content standards would present a valuable opportunity for Ofcom to reaffirm the distinct value of sign-presented content, and to update and clarify regulation so that BSL users can reliably find content that speaks to them in their language across all platforms. This aligns with Ofcom's broader aim of ensuring that content standards protect audiences fairly across platforms and reflect how people actually consume media today. It is essential not only for access, but for genuine representation and cultural inclusion – ensuring deaf people can participate fully in the stories that shape our society.