

RNIB's response to Ofcom's Media Literacy Strategy: A Positive Vision for Media Literacy

About us

RNIB is the largest organisation of blind and partially sighted people in the UK and welcomes this opportunity to respond to the consultation. With blind and partially sighted people at the heart of everything we do, our community of over 33,000 people brings together anyone affected by sight loss. More than three quarters of our Board of Trustees are blind or partially sighted. We support, empower and involve thousands of people affected by sight loss to improve lives and challenge inequalities. We engage with a wide range of politicians, organisations and professionals to achieve full inclusion through improvements to services, incomes, rights and opportunities.

We campaign for the rights of blind and partially sighted people in each of the UK's countries. Our priorities are to:

1. Be there for people losing their sight.
2. Support independent living for blind and partially sighted people.
3. Create a society that is inclusive of blind and partially sighted people's interests and needs.
4. Stop people losing their sight unnecessarily.

RNIB welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

RNIB response

**Question 1: Do you agree with our proposals in this section?
Please explain your reasons and provide any relevant supporting evidence.**

Outcomes: By 2027, there will be better understanding and measurement of media literacy, due to stakeholders using our research evidence for their policy development and activities. By 2027, there will be a deeper understanding of 'what works' for the delivery of media literacy interventions in relevant sectors.

- GOAL ONE: Continue to use our research to inform our policy development and media literacy interventions, and to encourage its use and further analysis by stakeholders
- GOAL TWO: Amplify the voices and testimony of a range of groups within society so that our research is useful to as many people and organisations as possible
- GOAL THREE: Share our knowledge on ‘what works’ in media literacy delivery
- GOAL FOUR: Support providers of media literacy initiatives to carry out evaluation, leading to a culture where best-practice approaches are developed, shared and used to develop more effective interventions.

RNIB agree.

Media literacy is important and encouraging evaluation, as highlighted in goal four, is needed to measure the effectiveness of initiatives. It is important that any evaluation measures the effect of interventions on people with sight loss and other print disabilities. Reaching these groups requires a bit more thought around accessibility so if the value to these groups is not specifically measured then they could end up being left out and the evaluation tool would fail to detect this.

Question 2: Do you agree with our proposals in this section for working with platforms? Please explain your reasons and provide any relevant supporting evidence.

Outcome: By 2027, online services will provide better media literacy support for their users, more evaluation of the impact of this support, and longer-term funding for initiatives that help provide this support.

- GOAL ONE: Build on work prioritising users’ media literacy on platform by promoting best practice.
- GOAL TWO: Ensure that platforms embed evaluation to build understanding of what works to promote media literacy.
- GOAL THREE: Work to ensure platforms’ funding of media literacy programmes.

RNIB agree.

As mentioned in our answer to question 1 any evaluation of effectiveness must specifically measure effectiveness amongst people with sight loss to be meaningful. We expect Ofcom to highlight this with platform providers and any assessment of evaluation methods must take this demographic into account if it is to accurately assess these evaluations.

Question 3: Do you agree with our proposals in this section? Please explain your reasons and provide any supporting evidence. We are particularly interested in any views and evidence about whether a Media Literacy Week would be impactful.

Outcome: By 2027, more people will have access to the skills and support they require to navigate content and safely flourish online, and educators and other priority workforces will be better enabled to deliver media literacy skills. By 2027, media literacy will be a greater priority for a broader range of organisations and sectors.

- GOAL ONE: Commission targeted interventions in the cohorts where the need is greatest and share best practice with the sector.
- GOAL TWO: Expand our training offer through partner organisations delivering continuing professional development (CPD) courses.
- GOAL THREE: Continue to build on the digital inclusion infrastructure, so that those new to technology can start and continue well.
- GOAL FOUR: Forge new relationships and expand our network to make media literacy a priority for a wider range of organisations.
- GOAL FIVE: Build on our role as a convenor of media literacy experts to co-create policy and practical recommendations.

RNIB agree.

Being media literate will likely require the ability to check the sources of information and research facts independently. This means that for blind and partially sighted people accessibility training is foundational for media literacy to enable them to choose what to read and not have that choice made for them. Media literacy partner organisations could link to national and local sight loss organisations to provide that support and media literacy interventions could include an accessibility strand.

Question 4: Do you agree with our assessment of the potential impact on specific groups of persons?

RNIB largely agree.

RNIB expects that the aim of the proposals, to improve media literacy, will benefit all parties and have no detrimental effect on any of the groups mentioned. As stated elsewhere in this response however, care needs to be taken to ensure that blind and partially sighted people can benefit.

- Information about Media literacy must be accessible,
- Toolkits and guidance provided to be used by others needs to reference the importance of accessibility,
- The ability to independently research is foundational for media literacy so media literacy training should signpost or work in partnership with organisations who can provide training in using access technology for blind and partially sighted people,
- Indicators of success should ensure that the media literacy of blind and partially sighted people is measured to ensure that this demographic is being well served.

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