

WaveLength the National Charity using media technology to bring comfort and companionship to isolated and lonely people welcomes this opportunity to respond to this consultation.

We would counsel against the movement of public service broadcast content to purely online, taking into consideration online services by their very nature are text rich environments requiring the ability to read and write, have access to computer technology and the internet, and the ability to use them.

It is a misnomer that all accessibility needs will be met by Voice Recognition and Speech Technology, and/or the ability to change size, colour or type of font, for example if somebody has auditory dyslexia or an autistic condition particularly sensitive to colour spectrum. This means it will be particularly difficult for people to locate and watch programmes on line.

It should also be appreciated that there is a qualitative difference between watching programmes on a television set as opposed to a Tablet. The social ,family and personal ritual around, say, the 6 o'clock news within a designated area of the home helps set a timeframe and structure to the day for many. These are areas of familiarity and stability for many people which may be lost.

The lack of quality high speed internet connectivity across the country means that many people will not be able to access programmes. Putting whole sets of programmes for online consumption only also alters the very consumer proposition in terms of delivery and consumption; where one originally needed just a television, licence and aerial, with the online model one needs to purchase a product with internet capability and internet connectivity as well as the licence.

There also seems to be a distinct inequality emerging between licence payers who are able to afford the hardware and technology to access public service broadcasting (PSB) for example through through online and high definition formats. WaveLength is concerned that some of those most in need of the window on the world that PSB provides are funding services they cannot access and so benefit those who are better off.

WaveLength is also particularly concerned with the indications of Pay to View developing across PSBs, particularly within catch-up and programmes which have been commissioned with the licence fee.

We would like these points taken into account and mitigated for within any further developments of PSB. WaveLength as always is happy to advise and would ask that consultations such as this we are directly informed about.