Title:

Forename:

Surname:

Name withheld 2

Representing:

Self

What additional details do you want to keep confidential?:

Keep organisation confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Additional comments:

TV manufacturers should look into making talking TV's, this would give a blind person the chance to set them up independently, use the EPG and use the smart features. This should be spread across all platforms, including terrestrial, satellite, IPTV and cable. For PVR's, there should be audio to help the user set up and manage recordings. On Satellite and Cable platforms, there is no audio description on ITV +1 and all ITV, STV and UTV regions aren't shown in the EPG as blind people may want to find out about what is happening in other areas of the UK. Also all HD Channels should have a +1 service and this should be active in all areas of the country. ITV Channel Islands should launch a +1 service, including STV +1 for viewers in Scotland and UTV +1 for Northern Ireland. If ITV was available in Scotland and Northern Ireland, STV and UTV could start broadcasting in Gaelic and Northern Irish respectively, with continuity for ITV coming from London and only opting out for regional programmes in English. BBC3 should not be taken online as it will upset blind viewers, so it should remain as a TV channel.

Question 1:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that apps for mobile devices have the potential to be useful for those people with visual impairments who feel confident using touch-screen technology and can afford a suitable mobile device? If not, why not? :

Not many people don't know about the iPhone or it's sister iOS devices and don't even know how to turn on VoiceOver, Zoom or any other accessibility aid available. Nobody is aware that a shortcut can be set for anytime activation from anywhere within the operating system. Nobody is also aware that if blind people can't type on the touchscreen, they can purchase a wireless keyboard from Apple and connect it via Bluetooth. Not many people don't even know that the operating system and apps have to be updated at all times and people are worried that this can lead to damage of the device.

Question 2:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that apps for mobile devices are less likely to meet the needs of the majority of visually-impaired people who are 65 or older, both because they are less likely either to own a suitable mobile phone and because touch-screen apps present a number of actual and perceived barriers to use. If not, why not?:

People over 65 aren't kept up to date with technology as much as people born in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Question 3:Do respondents consider that it would be reasonable for visually-impaired viewers to pay more than sighted viewers for the ability to use EPGs or substitutes for the same purposes as sighted viewers? If so why? :

As blind people, everything should be made free for us and we should be discounted when purchasing the equipment.

Question 4:Do respondents agree with Ofcom?s initial assessment that the speaking EPGs integrated into TVs and set top boxes may be easier for people with visual impairments to use than touch-screen apps? If not, why not? :

The touchscreen apps are useful for when out and about as they can help the user communicate with their TV's back home. Talking EPG's and TV's are useful for when people are in the home.

Question 5:Do pay TV service providers such as Sky, Virgin, Talk Talk and BT TV see additional obstacles that would prevent them from committing to including text to speech capabilities in the next planned upgrades to the receivers they offer to subscribers? If so, what are these obstacles? Absent regulation, would these obstacles make it impossible on commercial grounds to commit to the necessary investment?:

All providers should ask for a disability when purchasing equipment and pay services should also take into account that the TTS functionality has to be included in their boxes for all subscribers and that it can be easily turned on and off, depending if the user is blind or not.

Question 6:If the cost of providing speech-enabled receivers to all those who subscribe to particular pay TV services would entail a substantial delay to the roll-out of such receivers to all subscribers, would it be feasible, quicker and

more cost-effective to offer suitable equipment first to viewers with visual impairments?:

Blind people should be marked as high priority for pay TV subscriptions as training may be needed on how to make use of the TTS and this could take hours.

Question 7:Do respondents consider that it would be reasonable to expect visually-impaired viewers to pay extra for equipment that allows them to use EPGs or substitutes for the same purposes as sighted viewers? If so, why? :

Blind people should be given all functionality as part of the product and not make any extra purchases for additional software.

Question 8:Do licensors such as Freesat and Freeview see obstacles to using their leverage to require manufacturers to incorporate speaking EPGs in future versions of products authorised to use their brands, such as Freetime and Freeview Connect?:

The free to air platforms need some serious training on how to make all their features accessible to blind viewers.

Question 9:What are the main types of cost that pay TV service providers would face in incorporating speaking EPG features into the next generation of their set top boxes?:

It would cost millions of pounds to have the accessibility features built into TV's and boxes.

Question 10:What is the scope for connected platforms to avoid the need for specific TTS provision within consumer equipment by using cloud-based resources (e.g. speech files on a central server delivered to the device as required)?:

Not many people can get fibre-optic internet, which could easily affect how data can be brought down from the cloud into the TV or box.