

Sky

16.01.17

Dear Adam,

Herewith our response to Ofcom's consultation on amendments to Section 6.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal by Ofcom to amend Section Six (Elections and Referendums) of the Code and Ofcom's PPRB Rules to remove the concept of the list of larger parties.

Sky News is in favour of ending the concept of a list of larger parties, sometimes known as the major parties list.

We would welcome the greater editorial freedom to take decisions based on evidence of past and current support, particularly in relation to constituency reports where changes in the political landscape have turned the "major party" rules into a rather unsubtle instrument. In recent by-elections we have been forced by the rules to include interviews with candidates who went on to lose their deposit, or to receive a tiny percentage of the vote.

As a large news organisation we feel properly equipped to be able to make the right judgements.

However, we would envisage that political parties themselves may in future be more likely to challenge decisions. Therefore we would encourage Ofcom to ensure that it has the capacity for rapid response to disputes during an election campaign.

Despite the greater editorial freedom this would entail, we would like to accentuate our determination to continue approaching the issue with absolute impartiality and fairness, and mindful of the overarching requirements of Section 5 of the Broadcast Code on matters of political controversy and public policy.

I confirm that we do not need our response to be confidential. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Lowe
Managing Editor
SKY NEWS