

2024 Accessible EPG Report

Everyone TV: Freeview, Freesat and Freely

1. Introduction

About Everyone TV

- 1.1 Everyone TV is the joint venture leading the operations and strategy of the UK's two main free-to-air TV platforms, Freeview and Freesat, along with a new streaming service Freely, which launched this year. Owned and supported by the UK's leading public service broadcasters – the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 – we are the champions of free TV.
- 1.2 We have historically been the organisation (formerly known as Digital UK) responsible for running Freeview, the UK's largest TV platform. Freeview originated as a broadcast TV service delivered by aerial (digital terrestrial television, or 'DTT') and has evolved to also offer a hybrid broadcast/ on-demand TV service, Freeview Play, now built into most connected TVs sold in the UK. This year, Freeview or Freeview Play was the main TV platform in 10.5 million homes, and present in an estimated 14.6 million homes in total (around 50% of TV households).¹
- 1.3 We are also the organisation responsible for providing free-to-air broadcast TV services by satellite (digital satellite television, or 'DSat'), under the Freesat brand. Freesat is the main TV service in around 1 million homes via set-top boxes and select TVs (e.g. Samsung, LG and Sony).
- 1.4 The consumer propositions for Freeview and Freesat include mobile applications (for iOS and Android) and websites, which provide searchable TV channel guides and give audiences access to both live and on-demand programmes by linking to the channels' own TV websites and apps.
- 1.5 In April 2024, Everyone TV launched Freely, a new IP-delivered free TV platform available on some of the next generation of smart TVs (i.e. models from 2024 and later). Freely enables audiences to stream live TV channels alongside on-demand content for free via their smart TVs, removing the need for a dish or aerial. As of November 2024, Freely is available on certain smart TV models from Bush, Hisense, Panasonic, Sharp, TCL and Toshiba, and will be on Amazon Fire TVs later this year (see Annex B).
- 1.6 We are responsible for day-to-day operational platform management, including the electronic programme guides (EPGs) for Freeview, Freesat and Freely. We also lead on developing platform strategy, working with our broadcast partners and industry.
- 1.7 Everyone TV holds two Ofcom EPG provider licences for Freeview: a Digital Television Additional Services (DTAS) licence which covers service information (EPG data) that is broadcast via DTT, and a complementary Television Licensable Content Service (TLCS) licence for the enhanced service information delivered over IP for Freeview Play receivers. In addition, Everyone TV holds two TLCS licences for Freesat and Freesat HD.
- 1.8 Following the launch of Freely, Everyone TV now offers free TV platforms suitable for all households, whether their TVs are connected to aerials, satellite dishes or broadband.

¹ Source: BARB Establishment Survey for 2024 Q3. These figures are based on the DTT universe of homes with an aerial.

Background to Statement

- 1.9 Given their scale and universal availability, Freeview and Freesat aim to cater for the widest possible range of audience requirements, and Everyone TV is committed to delivering improvements in the accessibility of both platforms over time, both in terms of their technical capabilities and availability across devices.
- 1.10 The launch of Freely extends the availability of our platforms further, in particular to the 19% of homes that are IP-only and do not have TVs connected to an aerial or satellite dish.² The accessibility provisions on Freely at launch match those on the Freeview and Freesat platforms, and over time the expectation is that they may improve further.
- 1.11 In the case of **Freeview**, our work on accessibility is done in collaboration with our partners. We do not produce our own devices, but rather operate within a horizontal market with regards to Freeview-compatible TVs and set-top boxes. We define product operating rules for devices that include Freeview or Freeview Play, and then device manufacturers own the development of their native user interfaces (UIs), including EPGs.
- 1.12 This means that our approach to driving improvements is through careful cooperation and engagement with a range of partners. These partners include manufacturers of receivers and content providers who make their channels and services available to our audiences. Our partnerships also increasingly include third-party operating system (OS) providers to whom manufacturers may choose to outsource UI design.
- 1.13 By contrast, **Freesat** developed its own range of Ultra HD set-top boxes and is now the main supplier of devices after the withdrawal from the market of some older devices made by third-party manufacturers (some older HD devices are still available from third-party manufacturers and independent retailers). For the current range of 'G3' devices, this gave us greater control through our direct control of the software and hardware (whereas we do not have control over the UI of earlier G1 and G2 devices, which were made by third-party manufacturers). This enabled us to roll out a major software update with new accessibility features on G3 devices this year.
- 1.14 The **Freely** model is different again. It has one similarity with Freeview, in that the platform is available on compatible TV sets from third-party manufacturers. But the Freely model is unlike that of Freeview, for which we solely defined product operating rules and device manufacturers owned the development of their native UIs and EPGs. By contrast, our level of functional control on Freely is greater: it is an "operator app" (built on common HbbTV standards) that is more closely integrated on compatible TV sets, with Freely's EPG being, in most cases, the main one on the device. As we are responsible for product development of the UI and EPG, we can issue Freely updates and enhancements independently of our TV or Operating System partners (within hardware parameters, naturally).

Off-Platform Accessibility

- 1.15 We aim to provide our viewers with accessible services across all customer touchpoints. For Freeview and Freesat, these include the platforms' consumer websites and mobile apps, as well as support services such as our Advice Line. The provision of accessibility features within these services means viewers have an alternative way of discovering content alongside the TV guides on their TVs and set-top boxes.

² Source: 3Reasons Analysis, Autumn 2023

- i. The linear TV guides for Freeview and Freesat are available on their mobile and web platforms, with flags for each programme indicating whether they offer audio description ("AD"), subtitles ("S"), and sign language ("SL") on Freeview.
 - ii. The websites are built to the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 standard. The Freeview site's online EPG includes an accessible view, which allows users to highlight which programmes offer audio description, subtitles, or sign language.
 - iii. Accessibility, inclusive design and search engine optimisation (SEO) best practice form a key part of our Business As Usual continuous improvement work sitewide. We also regularly benchmark site performance against Google's Core Web Vitals (CWV) metrics to ensure the best possible user experience via loading experience (LCP), interactivity (FID), and visual stability (CLS) of web page content.
 - iv. The Freeview and Freesat mobile apps are compatible with Apple and Android in-built magnification and high contrast display features. The TV Guide in both apps can become a talking EPG if the user switches on iOS Voice Over or Android TalkBack. Freeview's mobile app is designed to work with "Dark Theme" which is recognised as an accessibility feature.
 - v. Our support services include telephone advice lines and webchat, online FAQs/how to videos and online diagnostic tools. Our contact centre staff have received disability awareness training to better support those with accessibility requirements and have been fully trained to support the Accessible TV Guide (ATVG) via the advice line, social media and email channels.
- 1.16 For Freely, the linear TV guide is available on its web platform, with accessibility flags for each programme indicating whether they offer audio description ("AD"), subtitles ("S"), and sign language ("SL"). As with the Freeview site, it is built to the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 standard and includes an accessible view that allows users to highlight which programmes offer audio description, subtitles, or sign language. A Freely mobile app is currently in development and is expected to launch in 2025.

Future Development of Everyone TV platforms

- 1.17 The launch of Freely this year represented a major milestone for Everyone TV. As an IP-delivered service, Freely complements the existing Freeview and Freesat offerings, and futureproofs live TV over the long-term. Between June and October 2024, more than 70% of new TVs sold had an Everyone TV product in them (Freeview Play or Freely).
- 1.18 Freeview and Freesat will both remain important platforms that together will be used by millions of households for years to come. Regarding future product developments, we will continue to support all three platforms – Freeview, Freesat and Freely – so that customers have access to a high-quality free TV platform regardless of the distribution technology.
- 1.19 The Ofcom priority accessibility requirements are now fully implemented on the Freeview Play ATVG, and we completed the successful roll-out of new accessibility features on Freesat this year. Our view is that the most effective use of our future development resources for accessibility services is to focus them on Freely, as the most future facing of our platforms and the one with the most advanced technical capabilities that will allow more ongoing enhancements to accessibility provision.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Everyone TV firmly believes in the need to provide UK viewers with fit-for-purpose, accessible TV on its platforms. This is the first joint Accessible EPG Report covering Freeview/Freeview Play, Freesat and Freely.

Freeview Play

- 2.2 Our award-winning Accessible TV Guide (ATVG) is the centrepiece of our accessibility provision. This additional programme guide is available on connected Freeview Play devices via channel 555 and is designed to comply with the four priority accessibility requirements outlined in Ofcom's EPG code: magnification, filtering, high contrast and text-to-speech (TTS).
- 2.3 Working with device manufacturers, we have succeeded in ensuring that the full or modified ATVG is now available on 100% of connected Freeview Play devices. Of these, 80% offer the full version of the ATVG (up from 75% a year ago), with the other 20% offering a modified version that excludes text-to-speech as we cannot retro-fit this feature on some older devices.
- 2.4 Following the success of the previous Instagram influencer campaign, Everyone TV and partner Hisense launched a second campaign at the end of 2023 (with the results coming after the submission of our previous report). This campaign featured seven influencers from the deaf and blind community, and featured videos promoting the ATVG and channel 555. The engagement rate for the videos was an impressive 42%, significantly higher than for the first campaign.
- 2.5 We expect all future Freeview Play devices to meet Everyone TV's conformance requirements and provide access to the full ATVG. There should also be a small but gradual ongoing increase in the proportion of connected Freeview Play devices that offer the full ATVG as older devices offering the modified ATVG are replaced.

Freesat

- 2.6 Turning to satellite homes, accessibility services on Freesat devices – subtitling, signing and audio description – are provided through their native user interfaces.
- 2.7 Prior to a recent software update, the Freesat EPG supported two of the four priority accessibility requirements outlined in Ofcom's EPG code: a high contrast UI and, in a more limited way, easy discovery of programming with appropriate access services (with metatags in the EPG descriptions but without filtering capabilities).
- 2.8 The major new software update, which we released in October 2024, brings additional accessibility features to all Freesat current 'G3' set-top boxes, via the 'LIST' button when on the native TV Guide. This includes a filtered view to show only programmes with Subtitles or Audio Description (or both), and an option to increase the size of the TV Guide text by 125 or 150 percent. Programme recommendations that appear on Home and On Demand screens can be made smaller or larger via the Settings Menu.
- 2.9 Having successfully rolled out the new software update, G3 Freesat devices now offer three of the four priority accessibility requirements in Ofcom's EPG code. No further feature updates to the Freesat UI are planned, given the age of the platform.

Freely

- 2.10 When we came to the development of the new Freely platform, it was in our organisation's DNA to ensure from the outset that the requirements for the new platform should include the ATVG (even though it is not a regulated EPG).
- 2.11 The intention was that the accessibility services on Freely should match the full set of high-quality accessibility services on Freeview Play devices. We have therefore incorporated the same ATVG into Freely as we created for Freeview Play: it is a second, additional programme guide that appears to viewers as a channel accessed by keying 555 on a remote control (chosen, as with Freeview Play, due to the raised node that often appears on the number 5 button of the remote control).
- 2.12 All Freely-compatible TV sets include the full ATVG that complies with the four priority accessibility requirements outlined in Ofcom's EPG code: magnification, filtering, high contrast and text-to-speech (TTS).
- 2.13 A number of initiatives to enhance accessibility on Freely are already in development and will come on stream in the coming 24 months. These include extending various accessibility features to additional parts of the Freely UI, including the Freely TV Guide and Freely Mini Guide. Everyone TV is also looking at an initiative to work with stakeholders (including Accessibility agencies / device manufacturers) to create Accessibility Specification for TV devices, akin to W3C standards.
- 2.14 Over the coming years, as it becomes available in more new smart TVs, Freely will represent a gradually larger proportion of all free TV platforms. Our intention is that the platform overall will keep improving over time, and within that the accessibility services will also improve.

3. Freeview Play

Overview

- 3.1 The “Accessible TV Guide” (ATVG) is the centrepiece of our accessibility provision in Freeview homes. Everyone TV developed and launched this accessible EPG solution in response to Ofcom’s 2018 amendments to the EPG code, which added four priority accessibility requirements. The ATVG is a second, additional programme guide – separate from the standard linear EPG – that is available on internet-connected TV sets and set-top boxes with Freeview Play. By offering a consistent approach across devices that meets all Ofcom’s requirements, the ATVG is our preferred means to deliver accessible EPG services to our viewers.
- 3.2 In recent years we have focused our resources on supporting and enhancing the ATVG service as the optimal means to deliver accessible EPG services to our viewers. Compatible Freeview Play TVs and set-top boxes are widely available across a range of prices and device features, and in 2023 we reached our target of 100% of connected Freeview Play devices offering the full or modified ATVG.
- 3.3 The ATVG is not available on Freeview-only devices, as it requires an internet connection. Therefore, in addition to offering the ATVG on Freeview Play devices, we encourage our partners (manufacturers of TVs and set-top boxes and third-party operating system providers) to provide accessibility features on their own native user interfaces – although we do not control these UIs and cannot guarantee implementation.

The Accessible TV Guide (ATVG)

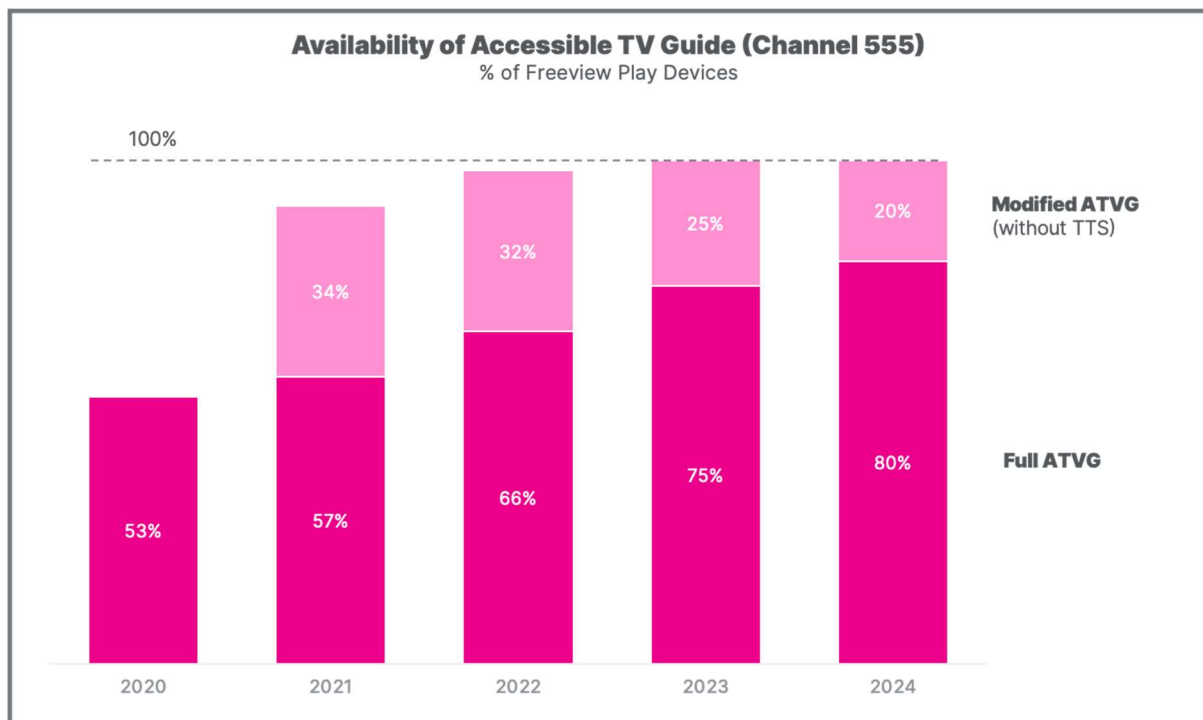
- 3.4 The ATVG launched in 2020 as an application built using HbbTV technology. It appears to viewers with connected Freeview Play devices as an additional channel accessed by keying 555 on a remote control. This channel number was chosen due to the raised node that often appears on the number 5 button of a remote control.
- 3.5 The ATVG was designed in collaboration with accessibility groups specifically for those with accessibility needs. It complies with all four priority accessibility requirements set out in Ofcom’s EPG code:
 - i. Magnification,
 - ii. Filtering (for easy discovery of programming with appropriate access services),
 - iii. High contrast user interface, and
 - iv. Talking EPG: text-to-speech (TTS).
- 3.6 We worked in close collaboration with accessibility user groups such as RNIB, DAC and AbilityNet throughout the development process to ensure the ATVG is effective in each of these areas. For more detail on how the ATVG meets these four requirements and to see accompanying visuals of the ATVG user interface, please refer to our website <https://www.freeview.co.uk/555>.
- 3.7 As part of our work with partners to boost availability of the ATVG, we took a pragmatic decision to launch a modified version of the ATVG that excludes text-to-speech. Technical implementations of Freeview Play vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, and TTS poses specific technical challenges that make it especially hard to implement.

We felt strongly that the complexity around the implementation of TTS should not prevent consumers from being able to access the other components of the ATVG.

- 3.8 As with any accessibility interface that involves highlighting or filtering content, the success of the ATVG is reliant on the availability and accuracy of the metadata associated with the accessible content that is supplied by content providers. We continue to monitor the provision of metadata by channel providers that enables us to populate the accessibility flags to ensure comprehensive coverage, and alert channel providers if we detect any gaps in metadata provision.

Current State of Play

- 3.9 Availability of the ATVG almost doubled between 2020 and 2023, by which time it had become available – in full or modified form – in all Freeview Play devices. Having reached our original 100% target for the ATVG last year, in 2024 we saw continued growth in the availability of the full ATVG.



When the ATVG launched in October 2020, it was available on just over half (53%) of all connected Freeview Play devices. This jumped to over 90% of devices a year later, once the modified ATVG became available. Over the last three years, we have worked with device manufacturers to overcome technical and commercial challenges and plug the remaining gaps. As a result of this successful initiative, by October 2023 (when we released the previous Accessible EPG Report), the full or modified ATVG was available in 100% of connected Freeview Play devices. In the last year, availability of the full version of the ATVG has grown further, from 75% to 80% of devices, with the other 20% of devices offering the modified version of the ATVG without TTS.

- 3.10 Consumers can see a full list of compatible devices on our website (see also Annex A), listed by manufacturer brand. The list differentiates between those models with and without TTS to enable consumers to make informed purchase decisions based on their specific accessibility needs.

- 3.11 Recognising the need to drive awareness of the service amongst potential users – both of its existence and how it works – we committed to improve the user journey by producing a demo video to help consumers understand the product functionality. The video is available on YouTube and on our website at <https://www.freeview.co.uk/555>.
- 3.12 Following the success of the Instagram influencer campaign described in last year's report, Everyone TV and partner Hisense launched a second campaign at the end of 2023 featuring seven influencers from the deaf and blind community to promote the ATVG, with prominent references to channel 555. The videos were posted across the Instagram channels of the influencers, Hisense and Freeview.
- 3.13 The campaign reached over 68,000 people on social media with almost 120,000 engagements (video views, likes, comments, shares, etc). The engagement rate for the videos averaged an impressive 42%. By using nano and micro influencers³, the second campaign outperformed the first one in terms of the reach of the Reels (short videos on the platform), while total engagements more than doubled and the engagement rate was more than three times higher. (See Annex C for details.)

Future Development

- 3.14 With the ATVG now available on 100% of connected Freeview Play devices – meeting our original target – the only scope for future growth is to increase the availability of devices with the full, as opposed to modified, ATVG.
- 3.15 The limited power or configuration of most older TV sets that do not currently allow TTS means that it is not possible to upgrade these devices to enable TTS. We do not therefore expect to be able to convert the remaining devices without TTS to the full ATVG. Over time, we expect the number of devices with the modified ATVG to naturally decline as older devices are replaced with more recent models that include full ATVG functionality. For each of the last two 12-month periods (from November to October), more than 3.5 million TV sets were sold with Freeview Play functionality. Sales in the year from November 2023 to October 2024 were 3.7 million, 4.4% up on the previous 12 months. As a result, more people will have access to the full ATVG for the first time through the replacement cycle of their TV sets (namely the subset of total sales comprising buyers whose old TV sets either did not have the ATVG at all or only the modified ATVG). By this process, we expect a small but gradual ongoing increase in the proportion of connected Freeview Play devices that offer the full ATVG – as we saw in 2024.
- 3.16 The ATVG has been part of the Freeview Play conformance process (the device test that manufacturers must take before we give new device models the Freeview Play trademark) since January 2021. New device models may be rejected if they are unable to support this feature and provide access to the full ATVG. We will continue to update the list of compatible devices on our website accordingly as a resource for users.

³ Nano influencers are typically defined as those with between 1,000 and 10,000 followers, while macro influencers have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers.

4. Freesat

Overview

- 4.1 Freesat is our free-to-air broadcast TV solution for homes with satellite connections. The platform provides the same access service capabilities for linear TV channels – subtitling, signing and audio description – as on Freeview. The Freesat platform does not offer an equivalent of the Accessible TV Guide (ATVG) that is available on channel 555 on connected Freeview Play devices and is instead reliant on Freesat devices’ native user interfaces for accessibility provision.
- 4.2 Everyone TV is the main supplier of the Freesat platform, on owned and third-party devices, which enables us to provide consistency in functionality across the range of available devices. In October 2024, we released a major software update that adds significant additional functionality on all Freesat third generation (‘G3’) set-top boxes, following which these devices now offer three of the four priority accessibility requirements in Ofcom’s EPG code.

Current State of Play

- 4.3 Prior to the software update released in October 2024, the Freesat EPG supported two of the four priority accessibility requirements outlined in Ofcom’s EPG code: a high contrast UI and, in a more limited way, easy discovery of programming with appropriate access services (with metatags in the EPG descriptions but without filtering capabilities).
- 4.4 The recent software update was applied to all Freesat ‘G3’ devices, namely all models of the Freesat Recordable 4K TV Box, and Freesat 4K TV Box.
- 4.5 This update provided the following additional accessibility features for the first time on Freesat, via the ‘LIST’ button when on the native TV Guide:
- Magnification: an option to increase the size of the TV Guide text by 125 or 150 percent.
 - A filtered view to show only programmes with Subtitles, Audio Description or both.

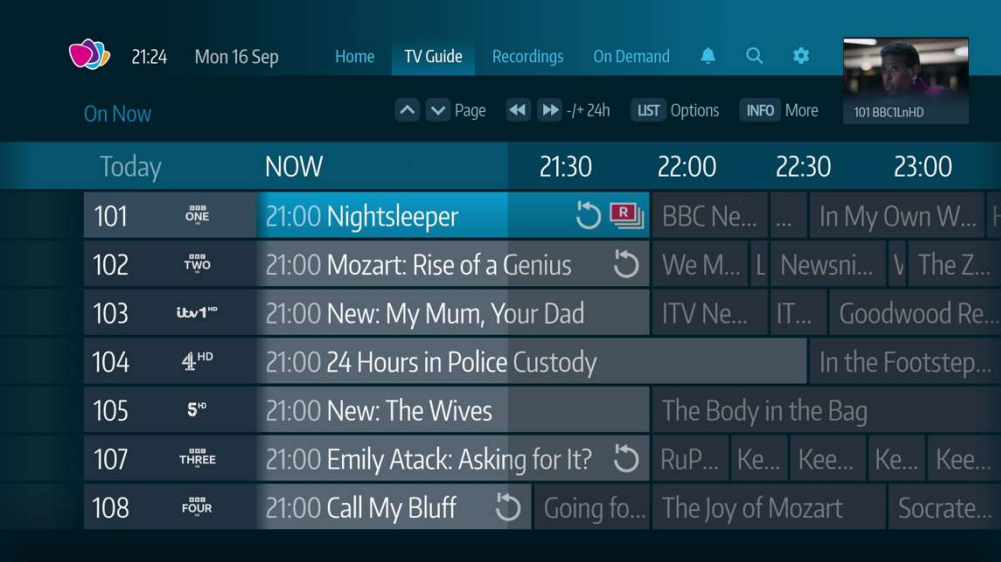
In addition, programme recommendations that appear on Home and On Demand screens can be made smaller or larger via the Settings Menu.

- 4.6 As a result of these changes, these G3 devices now offer three of the four priority accessibility requirements in Ofcom’s EPG code (see table).


Accessibility feature	All Freesat devices in market	All G3 devices post-upgrade
Magnification	No	Yes (TV Guide and recommendations)
Filtering / discoverability	Partial (S/AD/SL flags)	Yes (S and AD)
High contrast user interface	Yes	Yes
Talking EPG: text-to-speech	No	No

- 4.7 Screen shots of the new magnification and filtering features in the Freesat EPG are shown below.

Screen shots of implementation of new Freesat accessibility features



Magnification (150%)



Filtering (Sub and AD)

- 4.8 The reliability and usefulness of the services on the platform are reliant on the availability and accuracy of the accessible content metadata supplied by content providers. We continue to monitor the provision of metadata by providers which enables us to populate the accessibility flags to ensure comprehensive coverage, and alert providers if we detect any gaps in metadata provision.

Future Development

- 4.9 Having successfully rolled out the accessibility updates to G3 devices, no further feature updates to the Freesat UI are planned. The age of the platform means it is unfeasible to develop further accessibility features on G3 devices, while we do not have control over the UI for earlier (G1 and G2) devices. As an organisation, we are focusing future development resources for accessibility services on the Freely platform.

5. Freely

Overview

- 5.1 As an EPG that launched post-Brexit, Freely has not yet been designated as a Regulated EPG. In particular, it is not subject to the same formal accessibility requirements as those platforms, nor is Everyone TV obligated to produce an annual Accessible EPG Report for Ofcom.
- 5.2 Everyone TV sees its accessibility provisions as a positive and valuable component of its customer propositions that we wish to deliver as strongly as possible. That is why in recent years we put so much effort, working with our partners, in the development of the “Accessible TV Guide” (ATVG) for Freeview Play. And it is for the same reasons that, when we came to the development of the new Freely platform, it was in our organisation’s DNA to ensure from the outset that the requirements for the new platform should include the ATVG as part of the Freely EPG.
- 5.3 As part of our commitment to accessibility provision, we have also taken the decision voluntarily to produce an annual Accessible EPG Report for Freely, starting with this report for 2024, which comes just over seven months after the launch of the new platform.

The Accessible TV Guide (ATVG)

- 5.4 While some Freely homes will be new to free TV platforms (not having previously had an aerial or satellite connection to their TV), the expectation is that over time many will be TV homes that previously used Freeview Play. In these homes, people who used the Freeview Play accessibility services will have become familiar with the ATVG, and so one of our objectives for Freely was to make sure these people could transition to the new platform as easily as possible. In practice, this meant building essentially the same ATVG into Freely as we had created for Freeview Play.
- 5.5 From a user perspective, the Freely ATVG thus operates in the same way as the Freeview Play ATVG, as set out in Chapter 3. It is a second, additional programme guide – separate from the standard linear EPG – that is available on all Freely-compatible TV sets. It appears to viewers as an additional channel accessed via keying 555 on a remote control. This channel number was chosen due to the raised node that often appears on the number 5 button of a remote control.
- 5.6 The full ATVG is available on all Freely-compatible TV sets and complies with all four priority accessibility requirements set out in Ofcom’s EPG code:
 - i. Magnification,
 - ii. Filtering (for easy discovery of programming with appropriate access services),
 - iii. High contrast user interface, and
 - iv. Talking EPG: text-to-speech (TTS).
- 5.7 The original ATVG (on Freeview Play) was designed in collaboration with accessibility groups specifically for those with accessibility needs. As we developed the Freely ATVG, we likewise worked with accessibility groups that reviewed the requirements and execution. In particular, we asked the Digital Accessibility Centre (DAC) to review the accessibility elements of the Freely user interface (see Annex D for details).
- 5.8 As with any accessibility interface that involves highlighting or filtering content, the success of the ATVG is reliant on the availability and accuracy of the metadata

associated with the accessible content that is supplied by content providers. The Freely ATVG is reliant on the same metadata tags as the Freeview Play ATVG. It therefore has the same level of comprehensiveness as the Freeview Play ATVG and does not place an additional burden on channel providers (IP-delivered channels inherit the metatags from their corresponding DTT channels). We continue to monitor the provision of metadata by channel providers that enables us to populate the accessibility flags to ensure comprehensive coverage, and alert channel providers if we detect any gaps in metadata provision.

- 5.9 For more detail on how the ATVG meets the four accessibility requirements and to see accompanying visuals of the ATVG user interface, please refer to the Freely website: <https://www.freely.co.uk/products/accessible-tv-guide>.
- 5.10 A full list of Freely-compatible TV sets, all of which include the full ATVG, is presented in Annex B.

Future Development

- 5.11 The launch of Freely this year represented a major milestone for Everyone TV. Our intention is that the platform overall will keep improving over time, and within that the accessibility services will also improve.
- 5.12 Initiatives to enhance accessibility on Freely in the coming 24 months include the following:
 - i. Highlighting or Filtering content within the Freely TV Guide
 - ii. User experience enhancements to the Access Service toggling feature in the Freely Mini Guide (turning Subtitles/ Audio Description tracks on and off as well as more clearly signposting which programmes have the various access service tracks) on linear channels (both DTT and IP; Freely works with both inputs)
 - iii. Creating a High Contrast UI theme
 - iv. Text to Speech (Screen Reader) capability across the Freely experience.
- 5.13 Everyone TV will continue to work with various accessibility agencies - such as the DAC and AbilityNet - for user research to allow us to inform all feature developments going forwards, especially those that are focused in enhancing users with specific access needs experience of Freely. In November 2024 we completed user research survey with the DAC to inform us how best we can develop a new feature that will allow users to highlight / filter programmes with access services (Subtitles / Audio Description / Sign Language) on the Freely TV Guide.
- 5.14 Everyone TV is also looking at an initiative to work with stakeholders (including accessibility agencies and device manufacturers) to create an Accessibility Specification for TV devices, akin to W3C standards. This work will begin in 2025.
- 5.15 The ATVG is part of the Freely conformance process (the device test that manufacturers must take before we give new device models the Freely trademark), and all new Freely TV sets that come onto the market are expected to have the full ATVG.

ANNEX A: Freeview Play Device Models with Accessible TV Guide

The table lists Freeview Play devices with ATVG as of October 2024 – live list of compatible models can be found at www.freeview.co.uk/help/accessible-tv-guide.

Brand	Full ATVG	Modified ATVG without text-to-speech
Altimo	All Freeview Play TVs	
AntteQ	All Freeview Play TVs	
Avtex	All Freeview Play TVs	
Bauhn	All Freeview Play TVs	
Blaupunkt	All Freeview Play TVs	
Bush	Some 2018 TVs; All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / some 2018 TVs
Celcus		All Freeview Play TVs
Cello	All Freeview Play TVs	
CHiQ	All Freeview Play TVs	
Digihome	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
EDUK		All Freeview Play TVs
EGL	All Freeview Play TVs	
EKO	All Freeview Play TVs	
ElectriQ	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
Emotion	All Freeview Play TVs	
Emtronics	All Freeview Play TVs	
Eternity	All Freeview Play TVs	
Ferguson	All Freeview Play TVs	
Finlux	2019 TVs	2016 / 2017 / 2018 / 2020 TVs
Hisense	2016 TVs; All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2017 / 2018 TVs
Hitachi	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Humax	All Freeview Play Boxes	
JVC	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs; All Freeview Play TVs from 2021 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Laurus		All Freeview Play TVs
LG	All Freeview Play TVs except 2022 K8LP models	2022 K8LP models
Linsar	Some 2018 TVs; some 2020 TVs	2016 / 2017 / some 2018 / some 2020 TVs
Loewe	All Freeview Play TVs	
Logik	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
Luxor	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
M&B	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2017 / 2018 TVs
Manhattan	All Freeview Play Boxes	
Marlin	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2018 TVs

Brand	Full ATVG	Modified ATVG without text-to-speech
Medion	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs	2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Metz	All Freeview Play TVs	
Mitchell & Brown	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs; 2022 TVs	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Netgem	All Freeview Play Boxes	
Nordmende	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs; 2023 TVs	2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Panasonic	2015 / 2016 / some 2017 / some 2018 / 2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs; 2021 / 2022 / 2023 TVs	Recorder box; Some 2017 / some 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
Philips	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2017 / 2018 TVs
Polaroid	Some 2018 TVs; All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / some 2018 TVs
QBELL	All Freeview Play TVs	
RCA	All Freeview Play TVs	
Rediffusion	All Freeview Play TVs	
Sharp	All Freeview Play TVs from 2018 onwards	2017 TVs
Smart Tech	All Freeview Play TVs	
Solas	All Freeview Play TVs	
Sony	All Freeview Play Android TVs	All Freeview Play non-Android TVs
TCL	All Freeview Play TVs	
Technika	All Freeview Play TVs	
Techwood	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
Telefunken		All Freeview Play TVs
Toshiba	2019 TVs; 2020 non-Android TVs; All Freeview Play TVs from 2021 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs; 2020 Android TVs
UMC	All Freeview Play TVs	
Veltech	All Freeview Play TVs	
Visitech	All Freeview Play TVs from 2020 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
Vispera	All Freeview Play TVs	
Walker	All Freeview Play TVs from 2019 onwards	2016 / 2017 / 2018 TVs
WeByLoewe	All Freeview Play TVs	
Westinghouse	All Freeview Play TVs	

ANNEX B: Freely Devices with Accessible TV Guide

The Freely platform was developed with the ATVG as a core requirement, and so all Freely TVs have the full ATVG. The table lists the available Freely devices (all with ATVG) as of October 2024.

Brand	Full ATVG
Bush	All Freely TVs
Hisense	All Freely TVs
Panasonic	All Freely TVs
Sharp	All Freely TVs
TCL	All Freely TVs
Toshiba	All Freely TVs

ANNEX C: Freeview Play Accessible TV Guide Influencer Campaign

The Challenge

The Accessible TV Guide (ATVG) is a unique resource to Freeview Play and not available on most competitors services, but we do not tend to regularly promote it in our mass advertising.

In last year's report, we reported on an Instagram influencer campaign that Everyone TV launched to raise awareness in the Deaf and Blind community, and to promote the ATVG to new audiences and highlight its range of functionality. This campaign ran from November 2022 to January 2023.

A year on from that first campaign, we wanted to go deeper, this time working with nano- and micro-influencers with smaller follower numbers than the macro/celebrity influencers that we worked with in the first campaign, but who are more engaged within their communities.

The ambition was to grow the engagement levels that the first campaign generated.

This campaign was run in partnership with our TV partner Hisense, who promoted the videos on its Instagram channel. As with the first campaign, we chose Instagram as the main platform. It advantages from having a large and diverse audience demographic with a wide range of age groups – from young adults all the way up to those aged 60 and above (by contrast, Facebook tends to skew older while TikTok skews younger).

The Campaign

The campaign ran from October to December 2023, just under a year after the original one. We worked with seven Instagram nano and micro influencers (defined as those with up to 100,000 followers) who are active in the Deaf and Blind communities:

- Claire Sisk,
- Toby Addison,
- Reece & Sophy (AKA blindandblonde_),
- Toyosi Alexis,
- Liam O'Dell,
- Seren Jaye and
- Jazzy Whipps.

The aim of their videos was to be informative about accessing the ATVG, with key messaging around functionality and how to find the guide on channel 555. They produced longer-form videos than the ones used in our normal campaigns, allowing more detailed information to be provided on how the ATVG works.

The seven Reels created by the influencers for the campaign were posted across Instagram Reels and Stories and reposted on the @freeviewtv and the @hisenseuk accounts. Examples with screen shots of the Reels are shown below, along with links to the full Reels.



freeviewtv and hisenseuk
Global Genius • Deck The Halls (Jazz)

freeviewtv 47 w
@jazzywhipps 's favourite cosy winter nights in – made easier with Freeview's accessible TV Guide, available on hundreds of televisions, including her @hisenseuk QLED 4K TV.

Just press 555 on your remote, select whatever accessibility options are right for you, then sit back and enjoy.

liamodelluk 47 w
Yes @jazzywhipps! 🙌🙌

1 like Reply

View all 1 replies

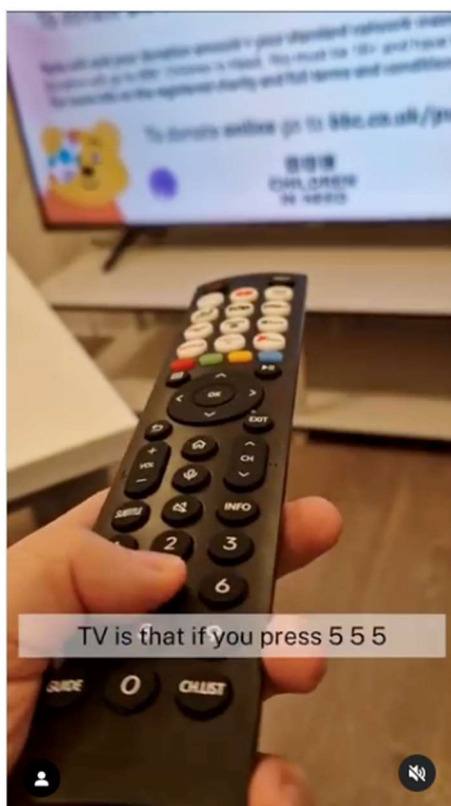


16 likes

6 December 2023

Add a comment...

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0glfQ1lygp/>



freeviewtv and hisenseuk
Original audio

freeviewtv 46 w
Wind down after a long day with comfy fits and Freeview Play. Just like @otters.have.pockets - who's enjoying a relaxing night in with the help of our accessible TV Guide, available on Freeview-compatible televisions, such as her @hisenseuk QLED 4K TV.

Simply press 555 on your remote and the guide will appear with different options to support your television watching experience.

funky_funky_beat 26 w
Wooooosh 🙌

Reply

markobondo 46 w



31 likes

8 December 2023

Add a comment...

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0mLhJZor-G/>



blindtobes and 2 others
Original audio

blindtobes 52 w
AD Using the accessible @freeviewtv TV guide was so incredible, giving me a great sense of independence. This could positively impact so many lives.

I used the amazing Hisense E7K PRO 144Hz 4K QLED TV to access the guide.

#Freeview #accessibility #blindtok
#FreeviewPlay #FreeviewTV
#FreeviewAccessibleTVguide
#MyHisenseHome

karima.agg 51 w
👍👍
Reply

hisenseuk 52 w

👍👍👍

336 likes
30 October 2023

Add a comment...

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CzCCxhGIHkg/>



canseecantsee_ and 2 others
Paid partnership with freeviewtv, hisenseuk
Original audio

canseecantsee_ 52 w
Sitting down with some awesome snacks and watching TV is one of my favourite things to do, especially during the winter months.
With Freeview's Accessible TV Guide, its become a complete game-changer. With high-contrast interfaces, screen magnification, text-to-speech, and customisable accessibility options like audio description and subtitles, it's a whole new world of inclusive entertainment. Simply Press 555 on your remote or use the voice command to unlock accessible TV. Join us in making TV truly accessible for everyone. Discover the incredible experience with the Hisense E7K PROV 144Hz 4K QLED TV. #Freeview #FreeviewPlay

👍👍👍

531 likes
27 October 2023

Add a comment...

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cy6JFvRIIsQE/>

Campaign Impact

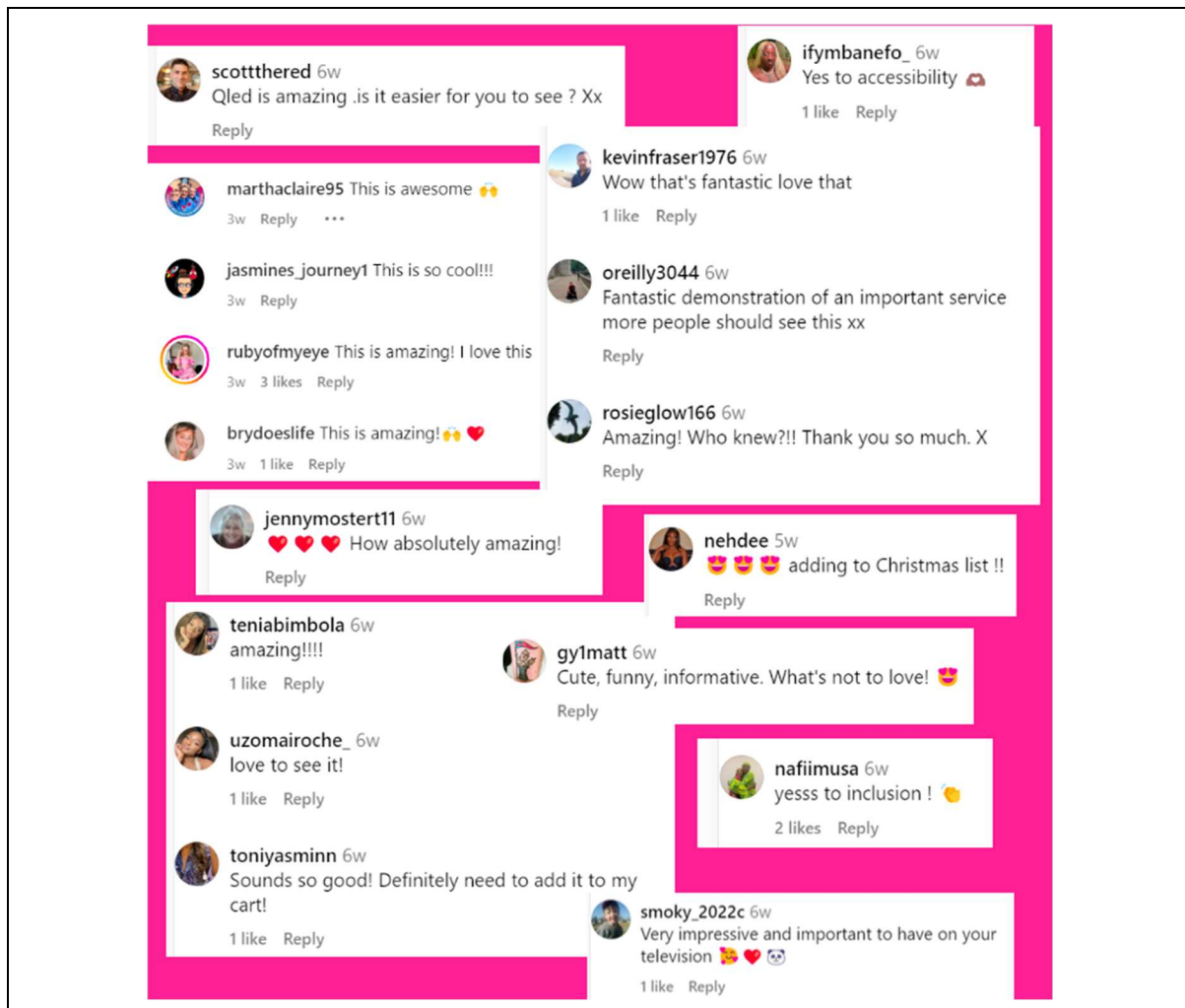
The campaign reached over 68,000 people on social media with almost 120,000 engagements (video views, likes, comments, shares, etc). The engagement rate for the videos averaged an impressive 42%.

Despite deliberately using influencers with smaller follower numbers than in the first campaign, this campaign succeeded in outperforming the first one on several metrics. Total reach of the Reels was higher than in the first campaign; total engagements more than doubled; and the engagement rate was more than three times higher. Hisense reported that this was their top-performing influencer campaign of 2023, in terms of engagement metrics.

Of the individual Reels, Seren's post was especially impactful: it had the highest number of engagements, at almost 50,000 (almost double her follower numbers), and the highest engagement rate (174%).

Beyond the engagement metrics, a standout area of the campaign was the number of positive comments received across all videos. The ATVG was widely praised, with people stating how useful, necessary and important the service is for those with disabilities.

Examples of user comments:



ANNEX D: Freely usability and accessibility review

The Challenge

As an entirely new platform, Freely underwent extensive testing of the user experience ahead of its launch in April 2024. It was important for us to put Freely in front of real users to get detailed feedback, which would enable us to focus product development priorities post launch.

As part of this, we asked the Digital Accessibility Centre (DAC), a specialist organisation that audits digital platforms in relation to accessibility, to review the new product from an accessibility perspective.

The Research Study

The key research objectives were to:

- Investigate whether users could use the Freely user interface (UI) and if they would have any difficulties navigating and watching TV,
- Investigate whether users were able to change the settings to suit their accessibility needs, and
- Ensure that Freely provides an inclusive experience to its users, regardless of age and/or ability.

The DAC was asked to review the overall Freely TV app UI, including the remote control unit; subtitling and audio description functionality; and Zoom support.

An expert reviewer from the DAC examined Freely from the perspectives of users who are Blind, have low vision, a mobility impairment, colour blindness /dyslexia, are Deaf or have a learning difficulty.

Feedback was then gathered from specific user groups:

- **Blind and Low vision:** Testing was undertaken to ascertain the issues found by those who may have moderate to severe Visual impairments.
- **Cognitive Impairments:** Ensuring that users with cognitive difficulties may understand and navigate the interface.
- **Dyslexia and Colour blindness:** Issues with layout, colour contrast and font style that would affect users with Dyslexia and Colour blindness were assessed.
- **Mobility:** Some users with mobility impairments have difficulty making precise movements required when using a remote control unit.
- **Deaf and Hard of hearing:** Testing was undertaken to ascertain the issues found by those with hearing impairments.

Study Results

The study reported broadly positive findings across the main areas of accessibility provision:

- The inclusion of the **Accessible TV Guide on channel 555** allows users to find linear content that's right for them using the filter feature. This is enhanced by the text-to-speech (TTS) functionality.
- There is good **Subtitle and Audio Description** support across Freely.
- The **high contrast user interface (UI)** across the Freely product is preferred for many partially sighted people.
- **Search** is easily available to quickly navigate to programmes of choice.

- There is good **focus colour and outline** on buttons and content tiles across Freely.
- The **synopsis being available from the MiniGuide and TV Guide** allows users to gain more information about a particular programme with ease.

The report also highlighted areas where UI improvements would further enhance the accessibility of the Freely platform. These included:

- Providing **Text-to-Speech (screen reader)** functionality across the Freely product,
- Provide a **consistent focus** on the 'Episode List' and 'More Episodes' areas to create a better experience for users, especially those that are visually impaired, and
- **High Contrast** UI theme.

These recommendations will inform Everyone TV's development priority list for accessibility enhancements to come on stream over the next 24 months.