



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sharon White

Chief Executive

Ofcom

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28.09.2018

CC: Hazel Noton, [eggprominence@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:eggprominence@ofcom.org.uk)

Dear Sharon,

**RE: Consultation: Proposed changes to the linear EPG Code and future of the prominence regime**

I am writing on behalf of the Shadow DCMS Team with regard to Ofcom's above named consultation which is currently ongoing. I would be grateful if Ofcom were to take the points set out in this letter into consideration when examining the submissions to this consultation.

As you will know, during the passage of the Digital Economy Act, Labour pushed repeatedly for the Government to include in that legislation provisions to examine and ensure PSB prominence in an increasingly digitally advanced future. During the passage of the Bill we argued that since PSB prominence was legislated in the Communications Act 2003, many gaps have emerged. The legislation had been designed for TV sets, but is not fit for purpose in a multichannel world, let alone a world in which new technologies such as voice activation and Smart TVs are increasingly used to access content. As such, we are keen to see that PSBs are not marginalised by large global players. Our public service channels should not be hindered from competing against big and agile businesses by an outdated legislative framework.

We are strongly of the view that the PSB regime is a positive influence on British broadcasting. PSB channels are the biggest investors in British content. The Labour DCMS team believes that the prominence of PSBs should be guaranteed on linear channels and associated VOD services, as well as on other significant user interfaces that access content. The ease of finding a PSB channel, whatever the platform used, is important to audiences as well as to the broadcasters themselves. Indeed, in the current climate, the public's ease of access to impartial and dependable broadcasting is of particular importance.

Likewise, as a Welsh MP, I understand the importance of national PSB channels, such as S4C, to the cultural and linguistic identities of the communities they serve. Those communities should be able to access this content easily, whatever interface they choose to use. S4C invested £83 million in the Welsh



in 2014/15 and calculations suggest every £1 of that investment almost doubles in terms of its economic value. EPG prominence will maximise these benefits and help further support indigenous languages.

Therefore, we welcome the steps that Ofcom are taking to address this issue. We were disappointed that the Government didn't take action when the appropriate legislative vehicle, the Digital Economy Act, was before the House. As such, we would support a recommendation by Ofcom of legislative change.

I would be grateful if you were to take this opinion into consideration. Please let me know if I can provide any further information.

Best wishes,

Kevin Brennan MP

Deputy Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport