

Your response

Overview

We welcome the opportunity to respond to Ofcom's call for input on UK preparations for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23). Our response is focused on Section 5: Broadcast TV & Support Applications.

Our group operates 20 local TV services which broadcast on DTT (channel number 7 or 8) and is a shareholder in the local multiplex operator, Comux UK. We hold a DTPS licence and broadcast our core 'iconic TV' brand, That's TV, on DTT (channel number 65) on the COM6 multiplex operated by Arqiva. We also recently acquired the geographic interleaved multiplex which provides additional DTT services in the Greater Manchester region using a transmission system located at Arqiva's Winter Hill site.

We are therefore strongly committed to the future of DTT and believe that it is critical that there is no change in the spectrum made available for national, local / geographic services that rely upon it.

Our position

We are advocating for a 'no change' position on WRC-23 agenda item 1.5 "*Review of the frequency band 470-960 MHz with potential IMT identification*". Decisions taken at this World Radiocommunication Conference will have a lasting and wide-ranging impact on UK broadcasting.

The case for DTT services

Local and national DTT and radio services delivered via an aerial enjoy broad support, across all age groups and regions. Research undertaken by Ipsos on behalf of Arqiva shows that 90% of adults across Great Britain believe broadcast services should continue to be supported. More than 8 in 10 (85%) believe government or local MPs should actively support continued provision of these services.¹ A significant change in the UK's spectrum arrangements could put these services at risk.

DTT is free at the point of use – delivering a diverse range of content, including local and national public service channels. This provides access to affordable and reliable programming that has a clear impact on personal wellbeing and community cohesion.

Conclusion

We are delighted to respond to this call for input and look forward to working with Ofcom as it continues its preparations for WRC-23. It is important that the right decisions are taken at the Conference and that Ofcom protects the UK's interests by safeguarding the future of DTT and radio broadcasting for decades to come. We would like to reiterate our support for a 'no change' position on the 'review of the frequency band 470-960 MHz with potential IMT identification'.

¹ Ipsos (2022). *The Importance of Digital Terrestrial Television and Broadcast Radio*
https://www.arqiva.com/Importance_of_Broadcast.pdf