

# 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.

## About Together TV

Together TV is the UK's social purpose broadcaster. We inspire positive change through our media platforms, our changemaking campaigns and through our network of media partners.

Together TV is dedicated to improving the wellbeing and sense of connection for our viewers, motivating them to make positive changes in their lives and to help others. We are the world's only national for-purpose broadcaster owned as a cooperative in the form of a charitable Community Benefit Society.

Together TV runs a television channel on Freeview, Sky, Virgin and freesat, a streaming service available on a number of mobile, tablet and OTT devices, and an engagement platform which powers our public behavioural change campaigns.

Our programming focusses on factual content, factual entertainment series that focus on gardening, homes, cooking and travelogue, with documentary content looking at history, heritage, community, relationships and social affairs. We know how essential representation, diversity and inclusion are, and fund the BAFTA-winning Diverse Film Fund.

We also work with leading charities and community groups to promote their work, help bring together their beneficiaries through our change campaigns and offer onward activations to the public for activities and local groups they can get involved with where they are.

As a result of watching our channels and engaging with our campaigns, our viewers learn more, change their attitudes, improve their wellbeing and connection to those around them. Ultimately they go out and do more in their community thanks to us.

Born in 2000 as The Community Channel and relaunched in 2018 as Together TV, we launched on Freeview in 2002 and consider DTT to be vital to the continued success of the television industry and its ability to offer universality of access.

## Our position

We are strongly 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 decision to reallocate DTT frequencies to mobile operators at previous WRC conferences has had a damaging impact on many TV channels, with several ceasing broadcast due to COM8 and COM7 closures over the last two years.

At Together TV we have moved due overnight hours on COM5 due to the constraints on DTT capacity, resulting in a huge decline in Freeview audiences (c.95% compared to fuller COM5 hours) which are not being offset by any connected-TV viewing, which something millions of older, more vulnerable and regional/rural viewers do not and will not do.

We are seeing the impact daily that the loss of DTT coverage has – hundreds of viewers have written in to complain they can no longer receive the channel and that their TVs are not connected or capable of running the IP-delivered version of the channel.

### **The case for DTT services**

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.<sup>1</sup> A significant change in the UK's spectrum arrangements could put these services at risk.

As we stated in our response to the House of Lords Communications Committee ([here](#), 1.6), DTT is free at the point of use – delivering a diverse range of content, including public service broadcasting. This provides access to affordable and reliable programming that has a clear impact on personal wellbeing and community cohesion.

As per our response to Ofcom's Small Screen Big Debate consultation, we recognize the value that universal and free public service media delivers to the national fabric of UK life - culturally, economically and democratically, and argue that the UK should treasure and invest in free-to-access public service broadcasting to grow its impact and sustainability at a local, national and global level.

However, given that many poor, old, isolated and vulnerable families are unlikely to switch to IP only TVs and/or have high speed broadband in the very near future, we emphasized the need for the current Freeview DTT distribution networks to be maintained for the foreseeable future, and emphasized the need for universally-affordable high speed broadband before any IP 'Digital Switchover' could take place.

### **Conclusion**

Together TV is delighted to respond to this call for input and looks forward to working with Ofcom as you continue your 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'.

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<sup>1</sup> Ipsos (2022). *The Importance of Digital Terrestrial Television and Broadcast Radio*  
[https://www.arqiva.com/Importance\\_of\\_Broadcast.pdf](https://www.arqiva.com/Importance_of_Broadcast.pdf)