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19 June 2012

Ed Vaizey MP
Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
2 – 4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Dear Mr Vaizey,

Re: Communications Review

I am writing to welcome your recent commitment to explore the improvement of broadcast access services for people with sensory loss in the Communications Green Paper. UKCoD is aware of the correspondence between yourself and Alan Campbell MP on the issue where you confirmed the Government is keen to see progress on access services for on demand content.

UKCoD is keen to ensure that deaf and dual sensory impaired people are able to fully benefit from and access any growth and evolution in the telecommunications and broadcasting sector. We welcome the commitment to improve the availability of access services. There is a concern that deaf people are consistently left behind by developments in technology and so access services remain vitally important, particularly as broadcast of content and communications increasingly happens across platforms and from multiple devices. Subtitles, audio description and sign interpretation are too often absent from video on demand content, for example. A person's choice should not be restricted because of a lack of access or relay services.

UKCoD, along with other organisations working with people with both hearing impairments, would welcome confirmation that the improvement of access services will be covered in both the recently announced seminars, and the planned Green Paper. People should not be prevented from accessing catch up or on-demand services because of a lack of access services.

We look forward to taking part in the consumer perspective seminar on 4 July. We have contacted the department as outlined on the website to express our interest.

Along with others who are working with people with sensory impairments, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your officials to discuss the issue of access services in more detail and to identify how any Government initiatives in this area can best meet your desire to see progress on access services for people using on demand services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Edwards".

Jim Edwards
Chair of UKCoD