

30 March 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

Further to my letter of the 23rd January, I am writing on behalf of UKCoD and TAG, to express our frustration at the lack of progress toward the introduction of modern relay services for deaf people and to offer our proposals to unlock what is rapidly becoming a stalemate. We believe that the time for deaf people to have functionally equivalent access to telephone systems is long overdue and are sure you are as frustrated as we are by the limited engagement by the telecommunications companies and delays in publication of Ofcom's relay services report.

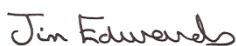
We are aware the telecommunications companies are seeking to engage the wider business sector in the debate, claiming that responsibility for funding relay services should lie with all businesses. Whilst we agree that it is appropriate for wider society to share the cost burden, having individual businesses introduce their own VRS for customers is not viable and would not achieve the objectives of the EU telecommunications regulatory framework. We believe there is a simple way of resolving this issue which would involve telecommunications companies financing a central fund and passing the cost of such provision to their business customers through their billing arrangements.

With your leadership, we hope that the telecommunications companies will recognise the benefits of this model and work together with deaf people's organisations to establish a viable way forward. When we last met, you indicated that you would hold a further round table with the deaf sector and telecommunications companies. We believe that this is an opportune time to agree a date and invitation list for such a meeting.

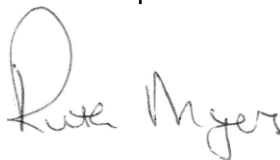
We remain committed to providing you with any support you may need to move this debate forward but as I am sure you can imagine we are increasingly frustrated that our legitimate aspirations for deaf people to access the telecommunication network in an equivalent fashion to their peers is being thwarted.

We look forward to your reply at your earliest possible convenience

Yours sincerely



Jim Edwards
Chair of UKCoD



Ruth Myers
Chair of TAG



Please address further correspondence to:

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