



Department for Culture Media & Sport

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Roger Darlington

I am writing to thank you for the invaluable advice and input the Consumer Expert Group has provided to successive Governments over the past decade on TV switchover and the Digital Radio Action Plan. It has been important to ensure that the views of consumers – particularly those of the most vulnerable groups - have been heard and incorporated in shaping the development and delivery of the digital TV switchover programme and the design and delivery of the TV switchover help scheme. The Group has also played an important part influencing the direction of the Action Plan.

As you know, in December 2013 I set out the Government's plans for digital radio. We have always been clear that any future switch to digital must be listener-led and whilst digital listening has been growing steadily we do not believe that now is the time to commit to a switchover. Nonetheless, we believe it is important to maintain the positive momentum developed by the Digital Radio Action Plan and I announced a package of measures on coverage, cars and content to support the next phase of digital radio's development and provide consumers with greater choice.

During this next phase the main focus for DCMS will be on funding (together with the BBC and commercial radio) and monitoring the further roll out of local DAB network coverage and Ofcom's small scale DAB feasibility study. We do not envisage that there will be a requirement for a specific piece of work from the Consumer Expert Group during this time, but I hope all the Group's members will continue to engage with the Communications Consumer Panel (CCP) and Consumer Forum on Communications (CFC), which have agreed to monitor digital radio as part of their future work programmes. DRUK have also indicated they will keep the organisations belonging to CEG regularly updated on progress with the digital radio tick scheme and other areas as part of their on-going stakeholder engagement programme over the next few years in the run up to the switchover listening and coverage criteria being reached.



Once the listening criterion has been reached the Government will need to look at issues in relation to decisions about a future radio switchover including a potential help scheme for vulnerable consumer and it makes sense to bring the organisations currently on the CEG into a new consultative group at the appropriate time.

Finally, I would like to say I am grateful for all your hard work and dedication in the role as Chair of the Consumer Expert Group over the past 3 years and to the members of the group, namely - Robert Clark, Gordon Drury, Carole Garfield, Margaret Grainger, Tim Leech, Fiona Lennox, Joff McGill, Ruth Myers, Dan Pescod, Jack Turner and others in the past including Leen Petre and Gretel Jones - for their contribution to the Digital Radio Action Plan and before that to the Digital TV switchover programme.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ed Vaizey', written in a cursive style.

Ed Vaizey MP

Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries