

14 July 2010

Ministerial Statement

The Government's Response to Ofcom's Television Access Services Review

Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey said:

"The Government recognises the importance that visually impaired people place on the audio description services delivered by broadcasters in the UK. These are highly valued services and help those with a visual impairment get the most out of a wide range of television programmes.

I am extremely pleased that a significant number of major broadcasters have already made voluntary commitments to audio describe at least 20 per cent of their programming. Indeed, ITV plc has just informed me that it has also committed to achieving this level of audio description across its programmes by the end of the year.

I very much welcome ITV's undertaking to do this and I hope that other broadcasters will follow their example and commit to increasing to this level of audio description in their programming as soon as possible. This would be a significant improvement to the television services they provide to visually impaired people and would be a major step forward.

Ofcom will play an important role in assessing the success of these developments and I have asked that they continue to closely monitor and report on actual levels of audio description services."