

Pete Wishart MP
House of Commons
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16th December 2022

Dear Mr Wishart,

As Director of Strategy and Regulation at Arqiva, I am writing to introduce Broadcast 2040+, the national campaign to protect the long-term future of broadcast TV and radio services.

Arqiva owns and operates Great Britain's broadcast infrastructure – the network of transmitters providing broadcast radio and Freeview TV to homes and businesses through an aerial. The Broadcast 2040+ campaign brings together a coalition of voices, including Age UK, Silver Voices, the Rural Services Network, the Voice of the Listener and Viewer, British Broadcasting Challenge, and the Children's Media Foundation, to champion the long-term future of UK broadcasting.

Freeview TV and broadcast radio are essential services that people across Scotland rely on.

Unlike internet streaming services, they do not require broadband connection or monthly subscriptions. These services are also often relied on the most by those who have the least – older people, those in more isolated rural and island communities, and people on the lowest incomes.

As a nation of the UK with greater than average rurality and a relatively older population, Scotland relies on these services.

Research commissioned by Arqiva from Ipsos showed that 90% of adults in Great Britain believe broadcast services should continue to be supported. In Scotland, most adults believe the continued provision of Freeview TV through an aerial is 'essential' or 'very important'.



Broadcasting is, of course, a reserved policy matter. At present, the UK Government has only committed to maintain these services into the 2030s. The Broadcast 2040+ campaign is asking the UK Government to make a longer-term commitment to these services – to 2040 and beyond.

Decisions are being made now that will affect the viability of broadcast services in the decades ahead. Ofcom has recently concluded a call for input on the UK's negotiating position for the World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC23), which will take place in Dubai next year. There, countries will negotiate the global allocation of spectrum for digital terrestrial television. This is a crucial moment to secure the long-term future of broadcast TV. Ofcom will be representing the UK at this conference. We believe it is vital that they represent the interests of the whole UK as they do so, including Scotland.

Scotland's greater rurality than the UK average, its island communities, and its comparatively older population, mean that broadcast TV and radio services are even more important to people in Scotland than to the UK as a whole.

I would be delighted to brief you in your capacity as Chair of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee on the Broadcast 2040+ campaign and discuss with you how we can ensure that the UK negotiating position at the World Radiocommunications Conference fully takes account of Scotland's specific interests. I would be very happy to find a time that suited you, in Westminster or virtually. If there is any other additional information that I or my team can provide in the meantime, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Patten', is written over a horizontal line.

Laurie Patten

Director of Strategy and Regulation,
Arqiva