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7 November 2023

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP  
Chair of CMS Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

INT2023/10821/DC

Dear Dame Caroline,

## **INCLUSION OF THE MEDIA BILL IN THE FOURTH SESSION**

I am writing further to the King's Speech today, which confirmed that the Media Bill will be introduced in the fourth session. That of course follows the publication of the Bill in draft in March of this year, and the very constructive process of pre-legislative scrutiny that your Committee undertook. Given that you and the Committee have called for the Bill's introduction, I am pleased to be writing today to confirm its inclusion in the programme.

Publication of the Bill in draft allowed my Department to lead technical engagement sessions with key industry stakeholders to ensure the Bill would deliver the right outcomes for them, and for viewers and listeners across the UK.

I would also like to thank you, and your Committee, for the pre-legislative scrutiny you undertook and for the subsequent reports and recommendations that you have published. The work of the Committee looked at a wide range of measures in the Bill and I am grateful for your well-considered recommendations. Today, I am sharing the Government response to the interim report on the radio measures and the final report, for consideration by the Committee.

I hope you will be pleased to see that we have accepted the majority of your recommendations. The Committee's work has added particular value to improving the drafting of the Media Bill in a number of areas. In particular, we have:

- Added new drafting to refer to "an appropriate range of genres" in the public service remit for television;
- Exempted news and sports on-demand programming from the 30-day requirement, which says that content must be available on-demand for 30 days to count towards the fulfilment of the public service remit;
- Closed the streaming loophole, extending the protections the regime offers for live listed events coverage in line with where audiences choose to watch it;



- Amended the prominence agreement objectives to ensure they better reflect how deals are made by relevant parties in practice. Additional clarity has been added to the explanatory notes to explain this further;
- Clarified that Ofcom will be able to take into account technical feasibility and other factors when designating and de-designating under the prominence regime, which will address concerns about so-called legacy devices;
- Added a requirement that Ofcom must be consulted before regulations are made on localness requirements for radio;
- Agreed to keep in-car infotainment systems under review in the context of Part 6 of the Bill;
- Added a requirement that Ofcom must be consulted before regulations are made to amend the definition of a radio selection service; and added a new power to amend the definition of an internet radio service to give the regime greater flexibility, and;
- Without undermining the core principle that UK stations may specify a default route to the listener, the Bill has been amended to make it clear that a station's request for a particular route must be reasonable.

Alongside introduction of the Media Bill, and in line with recommendations in the Committee's report, the Government will also announce a package of mitigations to accompany the removal of Channel 4's publisher-broadcaster restriction. These measures will safeguard Channel 4's important role driving investment into the independent production sector, in the event they do choose to start a production business.

There are a number of other recommendations the Government has accepted, and a much smaller number we have been unable to accept, for which our justifications are set out in the Government response. I trust you will discuss these matters with the Committee in due course ahead of your publication of our response.

Many thanks again for the work of the Committee and I look forward to further engagement on the Media Bill as it goes through passage in this session.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP  
**Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**