



Culture, Media and Sport Committee

03 November 2025

Raphael Pendergast Acting Head of Sport at Channel 5

Dear Raphael Pendergast,

Earlier this month, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee took evidence on funding for elite deaf athletes and the forthcoming Deaflympics which is due to start in November in Tokyo. We heard from Chris Ratcliffe, Chief Executive of UK Deaf Sport and from Nathan Young and Henry Hughes who will be representing the UK in Tokyo.

This session was part of our State of Play inquiry, which looks at issues that have not received the interest from Parliament or Government that they may need. During our session, we heard that the lack of awareness of the Deaflympics also extends to sports broadcasters in the UK, who do not appear to be covering this part of the Olympic family, which has existed for over a century.

While there will be daily highlights packages on a YouTube channel, it appears no UK broadcast has applied to show coverage of the games. This is in contrast to coverage of the Paralympics, in which deaf athletes can't compete without another Paralympic classification.

The impact of broadcasting recent Paralympic Games has had a considerable impact on the representation of disabled athletes in the UK and the public's perception of disability. [Research](#) carried out by Channel 4 after Paris 2025 found that 76% of viewers said the Paralympics gave them a new perspective on the challenges disabled people face, and 86% agreed that having disabled presenters on-screen helps people understand disability more. Coverage and greater visibility of the Deaflympics in Tokyo 2025 could have a similar impact.

During our [evidence session](#), Nathan and Henry demonstrated just how vital it is for deaf children to have visible deaf role models, something the two deaf athletes present never had when they were growing up. The witnesses that we heard from could be exemplary role models for the deaf community.

Given the transformation of the Paralympic Games in the public consciousness since London 2012, the Committee would like to understand the reasons for deciding not to apply to broadcast the Deaflympics. I would welcome your answers to the following questions:



Culture, Media and Sport Committee

- What consideration did you give to applying to broadcast the Deaflympics in Tokyo 2025?
- Do you plan to show any highlights or clips as part of your sports coverage?
- Do you plan to cover the Deaflympics as part of your news or other outputs?

The lack of broadcasting for this major international event is a missed opportunity to celebrate British athletes and improve the representation of the deaf community in public life. We hope all our sports broadcasters will reflect on this choice.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee