

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS1354)

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Written Statement made by: **Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts (Ian Murray)** on 24 Feb 2026.

Updates to the regulation of TV and video-on-demand services

I am pleased to update the House on essential reforms the government is making to television and video-on-demand regulation. These measures mark an important step in the government's implementation of the Media Act 2024, and extend vital audience benefits and protections to previously unregulated services. To that effect, the government will shortly lay two statutory instruments:

- The On-demand Programme Services (Tier 1 Services) Regulations 2026; and
- The Regulated Electronic Programme Guide (Prescribed Description and Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2026.

We also intend to lay a statutory instrument, when parliamentary time allows, to designate the television selection services which will be captured by the new prominence regime also introduced by the Media Act.

The way in which audiences choose to watch TV has undergone significant change over the last decade. The growth in popularity of on-demand services means there is now more choice than ever. While licensed television channels must comply with Ofcom's Broadcasting Code (which sets appropriate standards for audiences to ensure protection from harm and offence) and accessibility requirements (such as subtitles, audio description, and sign language), many of the most popular video-on-demand services used in the UK today are not regulated to the same extent as broadcast television, and some are not regulated at all.

Similarly, in general, only TV channels which appear on a regulated TV guide (referred to in legislation as "regulated electronic programme guides" (EPGs)) must comply with Ofcom's Broadcasting Code and accessibility requirements. Currently, the only regulated EPGs – set at the point the UK left the European Union – are Freeview, Freesat, Sky, Virgin Media, and YouView. The proliferation of smart TVs and growth in the number of unregulated EPGs means that audiences are exposed to an increased risk of encountering harmful content, and are unable to complain to Ofcom if they do.

Legislation is therefore required to ensure vital audience protections and accessibility features apply to newer services that are increasingly popular for audiences. However, regulation must be proportionate to ensure industry is not subject to unnecessary regulatory burdens.

The Media Act 2024 introduced a new regulatory framework for VoD services, including powers for the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to designate 'Tier 1' services, which will come under enhanced, TV-like regulation by Ofcom. These services will be required to comply with a new video-on-demand standards code that will set appropriate standards to protect

audiences from harmful content, and a new accessibility code, which will set minimum requirements for accessibility features.

Through the On-demand Programme Services (Tier 1 Services) Regulations 2026, the government will designate video-on-demand services with more than 500,000 UK users as Tier 1. We estimate this will bring over 20 of the most popular video-on-demand services (including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+) within scope of the regulations. In designating services with more than 500,000 UK users, the government has taken a proportionate approach that balances the need for audience protections and accessibility features being available on the most popular services, without placing a disproportionate burden on smaller services which reach fewer people, who may be less able to comply with Tier 1 obligations. Following designation, Ofcom will consult on the new codes, which will be an opportunity for the public and providers to set out their views on the new rules.

The government will also lay regulations to update the meaning of a regulated EPG, extending vital audience protections and accessibility requirements to newer TV guide services, like Sky Glass and Freely. Any TV channel which can be accessed through a regulated EPG will also be within Ofcom's remit and therefore required to have a broadcast licence. Furthermore, the regulations will address a regulatory loophole in the existing framework where some TV guide services fall outside regulation despite being easily accessible through regulated services. We estimate that there are ten EPGs and approximately 70 new TV channels that will be in scope of Ofcom regulation as a result. This measure also supports our public service broadcasters, by extending prominence rules that apply to regulated EPGs to previously unregulated services.

Finally, to support the future sustainability of our public service broadcasters, the Media Act also introduced a new prominence regime which will require particular TV platforms to carry and give appropriate prominence to designated public service broadcaster video-on-demand apps. Once commenced, this new regime will ensure UK viewers can continue to find the public service media content they value on-demand.

In order to be captured by the new prominence framework, a TV platform must be designated by the Secretary of State via statutory instrument, following advice from Ofcom. Ofcom issued their draft advice on 22 July 2025, which they consulted on and issued their final Statement on 16 December 2025. I can confirm, having thoroughly reviewed Ofcom's advice and considered all stakeholder responses, that I am minded to agree to Ofcom's recommended list of designations set out in their [final report](#).

My Department intends to lay a statutory instrument, when parliamentary time allows, to make these designations.

Taken together, these measures will ensure the UK remains at the forefront when it comes to content standards and audience protections, in a rapidly evolving media landscape. However, given the pace of change today and our increasingly fragmented media landscape, we recognise that legislation must continue to adapt to keep pace.

2026 marks 100 years since the advent of television. Yet, despite the vital changes we are making today, much of the legislation which underpins the media landscape was written in an analogue age. The government will therefore consider what further reforms are necessary to futureproof our regulatory regime, to ensure it continues to serve audiences, support our public service media providers, and allow our world-leading creative industries to thrive, driving growth and innovation across the UK.