



# MEDIA

ALL THE HOT GOSSIP ABOUT MEDIA POLICY AND IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVES.

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Welcome to the November issue of the Media Times! I would like to dedicate this edition to celebrating the Royal Assent of the long-awaited Online Safety Act, which officially came into law on 26th October. The significant amends to this piece of legislation will help to achieve a safer online environment, which is a collective goal shared by the entire media industry.

Since the last issue of this newsletter, the Digital

Markets, Competition and Consumers (DMCC) Bill Committee, of which I was a member, has completed its work and reported the Bill with amendments to the House in Session 2022-23. Following an announcement in the King's Speech, scrutiny of the DMCC Bill will resume in the next parliamentary session, and I look forward to keeping up to date with its progress.

We can also look forward to

a new Media Bill, which will make long-term changes to ensure viewers and listeners across the UK can continue to access public service television and radio content as technology changes. I look forward to discussing these important pieces of legislation with colleagues on the APPG and with industry in the weeks and months ahead.

Andy Carter MP  
Chair of the Media APPG

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## ONLINE SAFETY ACT ACHIEVES ROYAL ASSENT

The Online Safety Act has now received Royal Assent, putting rules to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online into law. The Act places legal responsibility on tech companies to prevent and rapidly remove illegal content, like terrorism and revenge pornography. They will also have to stop children seeing material that is harmful to them such as bullying, content promoting self-harm and eating disorders, and pornography.

As the regulator, Ofcom has set out [plans](#) for putting these laws into practice. On illegal harms duties, they have published draft codes and guidance for services which can be found [here](#). Child protection duties will be set out in December, and draft codes of practice can be expected in Spring 2024. Ofcom plan to issue a call for evidence regarding their approach to these duties in early 2024 and a consultation on draft transparency guidance in mid 2024.



## GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NEW PLANS TO BRING TV SERVICES UNDER OFCOM RULES

The UK Culture Secretary, Lucy Frazer, has proposed extending Ofcom's content regulations to include more online TV services, aiming to protect young and vulnerable audiences from potentially harmful programming. Currently, over 70% of UK households have smart TVs, providing access to around 900 unregulated internet-based channels.

Frazer's plan, outlined at the Royal Television Society Cambridge Convention, involves a [consultation](#) to bring these services under the scope of Ofcom's Broadcasting Code. The move aims to establish consistent standards across traditional and online broadcasters, addressing concerns about inappropriate content and lack of regulatory oversight for streaming services. Additionally, a research program has been launched to analyse the future of TV distribution, exploring evolving viewing habits and technologies to inform long-term strategies for the UK's TV landscape. Frazer emphasises the need to balance regulatory measures with the preservation of media freedom and fostering fair competition in the global battle for viewership. More information can be found [here](#).

## UK FORMS NEW TELECOMS COALITION

The UK is joining forces with leading nations to strengthen coordination on telecoms security, resilience and innovation under a new global coalition, the Global Coalition on Telecommunications (GCOT).

Together with Australia, Canada, Japan and the US, the UK will use the coalition to help ensure communications networks can remain resilient and adaptable when confronted with challenges ranging from supply chain disruption to cyber attacks, strengthening the country's ability to stay connected at the most critical times.

It will also explore opportunities for closer coordination in areas such as research and development, information sharing and international outreach. More information can be found [here](#).

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## TOGETHER TV DISCUSS THEIR LATEST EVENT AND CHALLENGES FACING THE SECTOR

Recently, Together TV, celebrated a significant milestone - 25 years of dedicated work connecting communities through the power of partnerships.

Their event welcomed esteemed peers, MPs, media supporters from the public service broadcasters and platform operators, cooperative members, filmmakers and beneficiaries to discuss the unique role of Together TV, the challenges facing the sector, and the importance of coming together to create meaningful change in the media industry. For more information you can find Together TV's guest blog article [here](#).



## THE MEDIA BILL IS FORMALLY INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT

The parliamentary process for the new Media Bill has [started](#) just hours after being introduced in the King's Speech. This formal introduction and first reading, which took place on Wednesday 8th November, marks the beginning of the legislative parliamentary process of the Bill required for it to become law.

The Bill will mean audiences can more easily access and enjoy quality British content, and will also refresh a raft of regulatory measures in order to meet the demands of an internet streaming age. It will, amongst other measures, seek to modernise the "mission statement" statement for public service broadcasters and protect children by bringing "streaming giants" subject to the same standards as PSBs. The Bill also contains new reforms to guarantee access to UK radio on smart speakers and cut red tape on commercial stations.

MPs will next consider the Bill at Second Reading on Tuesday 21 November 2023.

## GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ACTION TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Government has [announced](#) plans to enhance broadband connectivity for 100,000 homes and businesses in remote parts of the UK. Despite the government's commitment to achieving gigabit-capable broadband for 85% of premises by 2025, some rural areas, labeled as 'Very Hard to Reach Premises,' face challenges due to isolation, low population density, and limited infrastructure. The proposals include reviewing and updating the Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) and developing policies to improve connectivity for these hard-to-reach areas. Additionally, the government aims to support rural communities through housing initiatives and technology-driven improvements in local transport. These measures build on previous efforts to boost rural connectivity, including the Project Gigabit program and investments in the Shared Rural Network and energy efficiency for rural households.



# EVENTS

## PAST EVENTS

### DISCUSSING THE NEW SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE REQUIREMENTS IN THE DMCC BILL

On Tuesday 5th September, the Media APPG hosted an event chaired by Andy Carter MP in collaboration with international law firm Taylor Wessing to discuss the changes proposed in the new DMCCB with respect to subscription services. After a warm introduction from Andy Carter MP, MPs, Peers and industry figures engaged in a lively discussion led by a panel of industry and legal specialists. A rundown of the event can be found [here](#).

### BRIEFING FROM THE BBFC AND NETFLIX ON AGE RATINGS AND AUDIENCE PROTECTION

On Wednesday 13 September, the Media APPG joined forces with Netflix and the BBFC to host a briefing on their pioneering partnership on age ratings. Chaired by Andy Carter MP, the event provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear how Netflix and the BBFC have established a best practice approach to ensure that all Netflix content in the UK is classified with an appropriate age rating based on the BBFC's trusted standards.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### EVENT ON DEVELOPING SKILLS AND GROWING TALENT IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The Media APPG will be hosting a roundtable event discussing skills within the creative industries, how these can be developed and potential reforms to the apprenticeship levy.

### MEDIA APPG ANNUAL RECEPTION

The Media Group will be hosting its Annual Reception on Wednesday 7 February 2024. The hottest event in the media industry calendar, the reception is the perfect place for media companies to network with engaged policy influencers!



## Get in on the action: Support our APPG

Get yourself a seat at the table and a platform for your views - become a sponsor of the Media APPG.



### Benefits of membership include:

- ◆ Access and influence media policy with parliamentarians & policymakers
- ◆ Organise events in parliament with the Group
- ◆ Attendance and visibility at all Group events
- ◆ Six invites to the industry event of the year: the Group's annual reception
- ◆ Acknowledgement on all Group digital and print materials
- ◆ Opportunities to contribute to our blog and feature on this newsletter
- ◆ Parliamentary engagement supported by the Group's Secretariat
- ◆ A listing in the Parliamentary Register of APPG

The All-Party Parliamentary Media Group: enriching and informing debate and policy.

To find out more information or to support our group, email [hello@appgmedia.org](mailto:hello@appgmedia.org) and follow us on Twitter @APPGMedia

Feel free to forward this on to anyone you think would be interested. We welcome guest blogs and enquires about upcoming events.



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