

Access to communications for disabled people in the UK

Katie Hanson, Senior Consumer Affairs Manager, Ofcom

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Phone and broadband accessibility

Telecoms providers must offer:

- Access to an approved **text relay** service
- **Free directory enquiries** for disabled customers who cannot use a printed directory
- **Priority fault repair** for people who depend on the telephone because of illness or disability
- **Third party bill management**, enabling a friend or relative to help manage a disabled person's account
- Bills and contracts in **formats such as large print and Braille** on request

This will be extended from 2018

These requirements will be extended to broadband:

- **Priority fault repair**
- **Third party bill management**
- Bills and contracts in **formats such as large print and Braille**

New principles-based regulation

Regulated Providers must establish, publish and comply with clear and effective policies and procedures for the fair and appropriate treatment of consumers whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Such policies and procedures must include, as a minimum:

- a) practices for ensuring the fair and appropriate treatment of consumers who the Regulated Provider has been informed or should otherwise reasonably be aware may be vulnerable due to circumstances such as age, physical or learning disability, physical or mental illness, low literacy, communications difficulties or changes in circumstances such as bereavement;
- b) how information about the needs of consumers who the Regulated Provider has been informed or should otherwise reasonably be aware may be vulnerable will be recorded and the different channels by which these consumers will be able to make contact with, and receive information from, the Regulated Provider; and
- c) how the impact and effectiveness of the policies and procedures are monitored and evaluated.

Regulated Providers must provide to Ofcom, on request, any information considered by Ofcom to be necessary to demonstrate compliance with this Condition.

Regulated Providers must ensure that all staff are made aware of the policies and procedures and appropriately trained, including (if applicable) on how to refer consumers to specialist teams or members of staff who have received additional training.

Text relay for deaf and speech-impaired people

Before 2014

- Needed a textphone
- Hard to use on the move
- Couldn't interrupt



Since 2014

- Uses an app on a PC, smartphone or tablet
- Calls are faster and easier
- Users with some hearing can listen to the call and read the captions to support what they are hearing
- Users can use their own voices if they wish
- Incoming calls no longer require a prefix

Feedback from users



Simon Stevens 
@simonstevens74

Next Gen Text Relay - Utterly amazing - I can reclaim the phone once more!

1:50 PM · 8 Oct 14



Ian Bartrop 
@Laidbackian

Fantastic to see NGT app make such a huge difference to hearing impaired staff. Fantastic use of technology.

3:27 AM · 8 Oct 14



Frankie McLean 
@frankie_mclean

Called @ThreeUKSupport via Next Generation #textrelay directly from mob. Couldn't have done this last year, brill tech. Oh, & 3 were great.

2:48 AM · 20 Nov 14

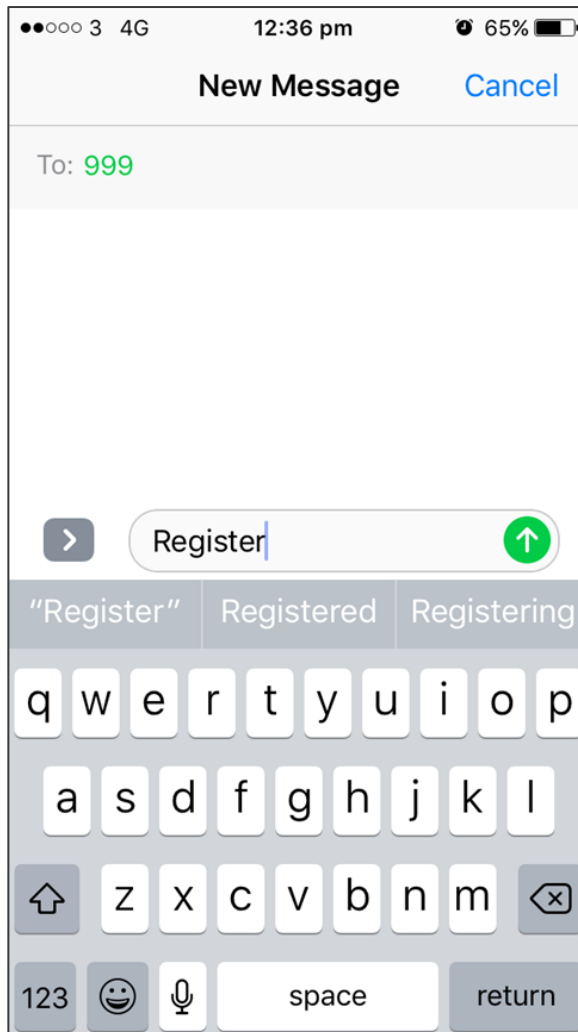


Pierre Fachon 
@pfach

Just made my 1st smartphone call using the NGT app. Works like a charm!

4:48 AM · 1 Oct 14

Emergency SMS

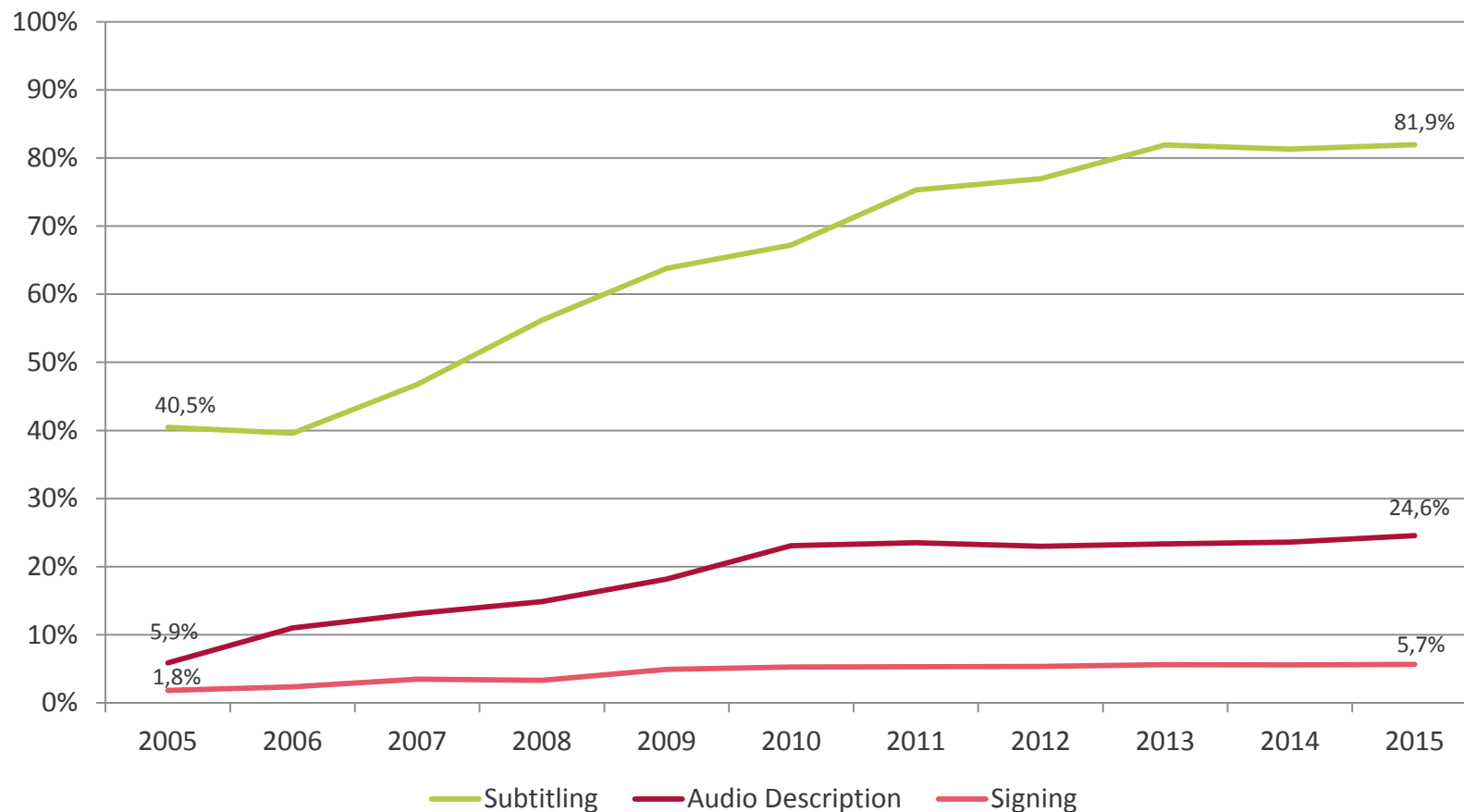


Why registration?

- It is a criminal offence to make hoax 112 calls
- Recordings of hoax voice calls can be used as evidence in court
- Hoaxers using emergency SMS waste police time and consume resource at the text relay centre, but are hard to identify
- Registration means that people who abuse the service can be barred
- Registration is quick and easy

Television Access Services: live TV

Proportion of qualifying hours*

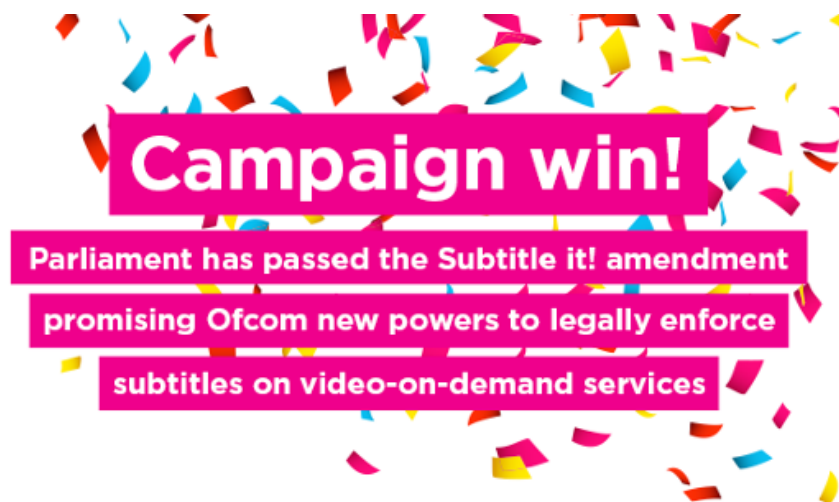


Source: Ofcom / Broadcaster returns

*Qualifying hours include all hours required by Ofcom under the Code on Television Access Services

Television access services: on-demand TV

- The law requires subtitles on live TV, but just gives a ‘duty to encourage’ for on-demand TV
- In 2015 the charity Action on Hearing Loss launched a major campaign:



- **Success!** The 2017 Digital Economy Bill was amended to give new powers to Ofcom to set subtitle quotas for on-demand TV

The Minister announced this on Twitter



Matt Hancock

@MattHancock



Delighted to confirm that our [#DigitalEconomyBill](#) will require on-demand TV to have subtitles

9:23 AM · 23 Jan 2017



Matt Hancock

@MattHancock



We've worked closely w/ Ewing Foundation & [@ActionOnHearing](#) to make this a legal requirement, not just something encouraged by the regulator

9:24 AM · 23 Jan 17

Any questions?

katie.hanson@ofcom.org.uk