



Dear Sir Keir,

Traditional terrestrial TV received via free-to-air services in people's homes via an aerial is a lifeline for millions across the UK. Its universal reach ensures access to live, free-to-air news, sports, entertainment, and major national events – including occasions like the King's Coronation last year. It is there for everyone. And it is especially valued by those who have the least – people on lower incomes who cannot afford superfast fixed broadband and who often rely on mobile internet instead, people in rural areas, and older people who are familiar with terrestrial TV, people in rural areas, and older people who are familiar with terrestrial TV.

This national asset must be protected for the long term – but without urgent action from politicians, it risks being permanently switched off, excluding millions from TV.

Recently, the regulator Ofcom published a report that raised the prospect of a decision being taken in the coming years to move to turn off terrestrial broadcast TV. This followed advocacy from the broadcasting and telecoms industries, who favour a streaming-only future. A future government will need to decide whether to protect these essential services.

We have been grateful to Labour shadow ministers in the House of Commons and House of Lords for their engagement with the Broadcast 2040+ campaign and their recognition of the importance of this issue. As a candidate to become the next Prime Minister, we are asking you to go one step further and reject any plan that would see terrestrial TV turned off. When it looked like the banks were going to let cash and local bank machines disappear, the government stepped in to protect access to cash for millions across the country. We now need the same action for traditional terrestrial TV.

Despite the introduction of streaming services, millions continue to enjoy the quality and reliability of free-to-air terrestrial TV. Ofcom reports that 17.9 million households watch traditional TV channels, and 3.3 million households rely solely on terrestrial broadcast TV. Individuals who rely solely on broadcast TV are more likely to be from a lower socioeconomic group, have a disability, or be over 55 years old.

Broadcasting is also the primary way many Britons access public service content – broadcast TV accounts for 82% of the BBC's viewing. With broadcast TV playing a key role in so many people's daily lives, it is unsurprising that 90% of adults in Great Britain believe that broadcast services should be continually supported.

Abandoning terrestrial TV and radio services and relying on fixed broadband alone would risk saddling taxpayers, or vulnerable consumers directly, with the ongoing burden of paying for high-speed fixed broadband provision. It would also undermine the resilience we currently enjoy through a diverse and mixed delivery of television services and isolate the millions of people who cannot afford superfast fixed broadband.

We cannot put off a decision to protect this crucial service enjoyed by millions and a lifeline for many. As a coalition representing diverse interests across British society, we urge you to show leadership and commit to protecting the future of terrestrial broadcast TV for the long term for those reliant on it now and for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

The Broadcast 2040+ Coalition

