

UK PUBLIC CALLS ON POLITICIANS TO COMMIT TO PROTECT BROADCAST TV AND RADIO UNTIL WELL BEYOND 2040

- New report by over-60s campaign group Silver Voices reveals strong support amongst the British public for broadcast TV and radio services to be protected until well beyond 2040.
- Older viewers and listeners are concerned about the impact of any reduction of broadcast services, including being left behind due to a lack of high-quality broadband.
- The report's author, Silver Voices - and its fellow Broadcast 2040+ coalition partners - are calling on the UK government to listen to the voices of listeners and viewers and act now to protect broadcast services, beyond the current commitment of 2030s.

[25 October, London]: A new report published by over-60s advocacy group Silver Voices has today revealed the extent of the British public's support for the protection of broadcast TV and radio for the long-term.

According to the *Safeguarding Universality: The Future of Broadcast TV and Radio* report's findings, over 80% of respondents believe broadcast TV and radio should be protected well beyond 2040 - to at least 2051, with some going further and calling for them to be protected until 2079. This is far in advance of the UK Government's current commitment to protect these services until 2034.

Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents believe that the partial or total removal of broadcast services in the future risks leaving behind significant portions of the population, with almost half (46%) concerned about the potential impact of digital-only services on their broadband bills.

The report also analysed the views of those over the age of 60, who were most concerned about the exclusionary impacts of a potential reduction of broadcast services. This includes being left behind due to a lack of access to broadband services (84%) and being less technically able than the rest of the population (70%). Over 90% of respondents over 60 consequentially believe that any future legislation put forward should include a commitment to protect TV and radio broadcast services.

The report includes five recommendations to secure these services for generations to come.

1. That the government provides a clear commitment to the long-term protection of broadcast services including a date well beyond current commitments.
2. That the government ensures that TV and radio broadcasting, and the broad range of services delivered through it, are protected for the long-term within any ongoing and future legislation.
3. That the spectrum used by broadcast TV is protected at the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC23) and at future international spectrum conferences.
4. That there are ongoing requirements for Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) to continue to support universal broadcast services and the rich public service content delivered through them, including through a commitment within the next BBC Charter period.



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5. That the voices of the listeners and viewers, and in particular those groups most heavily reliant on broadcast services, are put at the centre of the debate and any decision-making by government or Ofcom, the sector regulator.

Dennis Reed, Director, Silver Voices said:

“The report Silver Voices has published today highlights an incredibly important issue that many of our members are worried about – the potential switch-off of broadcast TV and radio. The removal of broadcast services risks isolating our members further and no one should be left behind, ignored, or neglected.

“The government must step up and take action – including by implementing the recommendations we have set out today – to protect the future of these vital services that are not only an essential national asset but something millions of older and vulnerable people across the country rely on day in, day out.

“We are a proud member of the Broadcast 2040+ campaign which aims to protect the future of broadcast TV and radio services. Over the past year, the campaign has gained significant traction, especially with the Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer vowing to protect these services in a speech at the Royal Television Society. The widely anticipated introduction of a Media Bill in November’s King’s Speech will provide further opportunities to protect the future of these vital services.”

- **ENDS** -

The report was celebrated by the Broadcast 2040+ Campaign’s coalition partners, including:

Colin Browne, Chairman, Voice of the Listener & Viewer, said:

“VLV has long argued that public service broadcasting must remain universally available so that it can deliver its societal benefits. This report provides important evidence that UK citizens want broadcast TV to remain as accessible as it is now. VLV fully supports the recommendations in this report.”

Elizabeth Anderson, CEO of the Digital Poverty Alliance, said:

“For the millions living in digital poverty in the UK, TV and radio broadcast services are vital sources of news, public education and entertainment. The universality of access to broadcast services must be paramount. Whilst many services have seen a rush to digital only delivery, applying this to TV and radio when so many lack the devices, skills and connectivity packages to access internet based media would simply push millions of people deeper into financial and social exclusion.”

A spokesperson on behalf of the Local TV Network said:

“The Local TV Network joins the broadcasting sector in welcoming the recommendations made by the ‘Safeguarding Universality: The Future of TV and Radio’ report. Whilst there are multiple benefits to streaming television content online, many audiences rely on broadcast television for their news and entertainment, including through local TV.

“We are pleased to see the report’s emphasis on calling on the government to ensure that TV and radio broadcasting receive protections in the future through legislation. We look forward to the government’s response to this timely and considered report.”



Alexander Kann, Chief Executive at Together TV said:

“Digital terrestrial television is the only access to TV for millions of people in the UK and it is often the only companion for those affected by social isolation. As the TV broadcaster for positive change, our commitment is to ensure these people won’t be left behind. This report confirms the need of long-term protection for TV and radio broadcasting both at UK and international level.”

Mel Byron, Talking Pictures, said:

“It’s essential for us at Talking Pictures TV that the future of broadcast services is made secure. Our audience is predominantly made up of the underserved over-60s, for whom free access to our channel is an essential part of their day. We bring nostalgia and comfort to so many in this demographic and their voices must be heard in the debate on the future of television.”

Phil Riley, CEO of Boom Radio, said:

“Boom Radio’s audience is predominantly 55+, and whilst many of them are digitally savvy, quite a few aren’t - and rely on the simplicity of broadcast radio to find us and tune in. Those that aren’t digitally aware are also less likely to make their voices heard in the online world too - so they need speaking up for. That’s why we are firm supporters of Broadcast 2040+.”

A spokesperson for WorldDAB, said:

“The success of digital stations such as Boom Radio targeting the UK’s 14m+ Baby Boomers, and the variety of other innovative services on DAB+, demonstrates listeners continued love of great radio. DAB+ offers a firm foundation for radio’s digital future, and we’re therefore keen for the UK government to ensure that broadcast radio is protected for the long-term.”

Louise Reed, founder and CEO of Brighouse-based charity Focus4Hope, said:

“This report from Silver Voices as part of the Broadcast 2040+ campaign demonstrates once again how important free-to-air TV and radio are to our most vulnerable people.

“I’m delighted to support the Broadcast 2040+ campaign because it aims to protect TV for the people we work with who are elderly, lonely and isolated. TV and radio are often their lifeline to the outside world and must be protected at all costs.”

Michelle Cooper, CEO of County Durham Community Foundation, said:

“There are a huge number of older and isolated people in our communities living off next to nothing, for whom Freeview TV and radio services bring a lot of company and entertainment without further straining the budget. The Silver Insights report reinforces this and is a valuable piece of work.

“I strongly support the protection of services that are free at the point of use. I know from my role at the Foundation that people living in merciless hardship year after year will be the ones to miss these services.”

Andy Beeforth, Chief Executive of Cumbria Community Foundation said:



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"A commitment to terrestrial TV is especially important in a county like Cumbria where we have large numbers of vulnerable people who live alone. For those living in isolation, television and radio through an aerial are important for many to feel connected. A move to online-only services would be unthinkable for the many older and vulnerable individuals who rely on broadcast TV and radio services."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The full report can be found [here](#).

About Silver Voices

Silver Voices is the UK-wide campaign organisation for the over 60s. With over 6,000 paid-up members, and thousands of others supporting their social media channels, they campaign on issues which have a major impact on older generations, including pensions, health and social care and retirement housing. They led the successful campaign in 2022 to restore the Triple Lock on state pensions and continue to call for free TV licences to be restored to the over 75s. Members of Silver Voices determine their policies through regular surveys, and they are the only representative organisation wholly run by older people, for older people.

For more information about Silver Voices, see here: <https://silvoices.co.uk/about-us>

About Broadcast 2040+

The Broadcast 2040+ campaign brings together over 30 organisations with one key ask: that the UK Government provide a public commitment to safeguarding broadcast TV and radio to 2040 and beyond. Under the Government's current policy, these services are only guaranteed until the early 2030s. This lack of certainty about the long-term future of broadcast services is likely to have a detrimental impact on the millions of people who rely on them, including vulnerable older people who are less likely to have a superfast broadband connection, the digital skills to use streaming apps, or the budget to afford subscription costs.

In February 2023, the campaign supported over-60s campaign group Silver Voices' launch of a Parliamentary petition calling on the Government to guarantee access to broadcast TV (Freeview) and radio beyond 2040. It received over 29,000 signatures with representatives from every constituency in the UK.

To date, members of the Broadcast 2040+ campaign include:

1. Silver Voices
2. Age UK
3. Childrens Media Foundation
4. Rural Services Network
5. Arqiva
6. British Broadcast Challenge
7. The Voice of the Listener and Viewer
8. Digital Poverty Alliance
9. The Campaign to End Loneliness
10. Citizens Advice Cornwall



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11. Churches 4 Positive Change
12. County Durham Community Foundation
13. Age UK: North Tyneside
14. Cumbria Community Foundation
15. Focus4Hope Brighthouse
16. World DAB
17. Frontier Smart Technologies
18. Fix radio
19. Communicorp UK
20. Boom Radio
21. The Local TV Network
22. PBS America
23. Talking Pictures TV
24. Together TV
25. United Christian Broadcasters
26. Age of Concern North Norfolk
27. Age UK North Yorkshire and Darlington
28. National Federation of the Blind UK
29. The British Entertainment Industry Radio Group (BEIRG)
30. Better Media
31. Age UK Shropshire
32. Age UK Mid Mersey

Longstanding members of the Broadcast 2040+ coalition include Silver Voices, Age UK, the Rural Services Network, the Children's Media Foundation, the British Broadcasting Challenge, and the Voice of the Listener and Viewer. The campaign champions the long-term future of UK broadcasting and is calling for a firm commitment from the Government to protect these services to beyond 2040.

- Ipsos research: Launched last year, Ipsos research revealed the significant negative impact of the potential loss of broadcast TV and radio, particularly for those who are vulnerable. 9 in 10 people (90%) across Great Britain want to see continued support for broadcast services. https://www.arqiva.com/Importance_of_Broadcast.pdf
- A quarter of people (25%) said that they would be "very lonely" if they lost their Freeview services, rising to more than 2 in 5 (44%) of those who are 65 and older and living alone.
- For more information about the Broadcast 2040+ campaign, see here: <https://www.broadcast2040plus.org/>