



# Ministry of JUSTICE

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Philip Davies MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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*Zee* September 2012

*Dear Philip,*

## Parliamentary Question

I recently undertook to write to you with further information about access to Sky TV in contracted prisons, following your Parliamentary Question:

*To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of how many prisoners have access to Sky TV in their prison cells [Official Report 11 September, 2012 col 201w]*

Before I do so, I wish to apologise for a small error in my original answer to you. You may recall that I referred to the position of the recent digital switchover and said that each eligible prisoner in a public sector prison has access to nine free-to-view channels in-cell. One of the nine channels quoted in my answer was "Sky News Sport". However, Sky News Sport is no longer part of the free-to-view system. In the majority of prisons I understand that the channel has been replaced by "ITV4", another free-to-view channel. However, as I explained in my original answer, Governors have discretion to change any of the pre-determined channels to other free-to-view channels locally.

Turning to the issue of the number of prisoners that have access to Sky TV in their cells in the contracted estate; as in public sector prisons, access to in-cell television for prisoners in contracted-out prisons is dependent on a prisoner's status under the Prison Service's Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme. The Scheme is described in Prison Service Instruction 11/2011.

As part of the recent digital switchover, all eligible prisoners have access to the locally-determined free-to-view channels in their cells. In addition, as at 14 September 2012, an estimated 2976 prisoners in contracted-out prisons were eligible to access subscription channels provided by British Sky Broadcasting. The Sky channels that may be accessed vary between establishments: it is the Director's responsibility, having regard to the population of the prison, to ensure that any channel to which access is provided is suitable for viewing by prisoners.

I hope you find this additional information helpful. I am placing a copy of this letter in the House Library.

Yours ever,

Jeremy

**JEREMY WRIGHT**