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Stephanie Peacock MP
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Dear Stephanie,

Thank you for your insightful and engaging contributions at yesterday's debate. I promised to write to you following your question on why provisions on adequate live coverage for multisport events within the listed events regime were not included in the Draft Bill published in March 2023.

As I set out in Committee yesterday, since publishing the draft Bill in March 2023, we have heard from stakeholders that the approach to widening the scope of services that can qualify may inadvertently harm the ability of PSBs and non-PSBs to work together, in partnership, to deliver multi-sport events to UK audiences. Partnerships help ensure that rights holders can extract maximum value, both in terms of income and access to a broad audience base, while ensuring that all audiences still have access to the most incredible moments of multi-sport events. Where partnerships deliver great outcomes for audiences, we want that to continue. We have therefore introduced the concept of adequate live coverage for events that involve different sports—multi-sport events like the Olympics—and will require Ofcom to set out in regulations what the threshold for this coverage will be.

That is necessary because previously to receive automatic authorisation for live coverage partnerships between PSBs and non-PSBs had to be arranged so that both held the same rights to show coverage on the services in scope of the regime. That concept worked when there were only a handful of TV channels, but it is now outdated in an age when dozens of sporting events can be taking place concurrently and can all be broadcast live across different distribution channels. Ofcom's new regulations on adequate live coverage will set out how this will work in practice and will help to ensure that the regime does not deliver suboptimal outcomes for audiences.

Following receiving feedback post publication of the Bill in March 2023, my officials have spent the time between publication and introduction ensuring we understood the issue at hand, and drafting legislation that will offer a solution to it. We let stakeholders know in our engagement with them in November 2023, ahead of introduction, that we had worked on this and would be including something in the Bill at introduction, and that we welcomed their views on it

I hope this answers your question.

Yours ever

John

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