

NADP response

Next Generation Text Relay: Approval of a text relay service

The National Association of Deafened People (NADP) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Next Generation Text Relay: Approval of a text relay service. NADP is a national support and campaigning organisation for people with a hearing loss who use spoken and written language for communication. In this response we will therefore concentrate on issues that are relevant to those people.

NADP welcomes the fact that BT has submitted an application for the approval of its Next Generation Text Relay service which shows that the development of this service is nearing completion and that users will soon be able to judge for themselves whether it delivers the desired and long awaited improvements.

NADP also recognises that this application is being assessed against the criteria that Ofcom set out in its statement of October 2012. NADP has made it clear in previous responses that we do not believe those criteria fully meet all that deafened people require from a relay service, especially with regard to the speed of transcription, and we therefore hope that the present criteria will be kept under regular review and will be developed and improved as technology changes. In other words NADP very strongly hopes this approval is not seen as fixed and unchanging but as a reflection of what exists at the current moment in time.

NADP welcomes the comment that this application does not preclude further applications for approval from other providers, which if suitable would allow users choice of relay service.

NADP also notes that any approval is conditional on the service meeting the criteria and KPIs on an ongoing basis and that this will be regularly monitored.

Bearing this in mind NADP supports Ofcom's judgment that the application meets and is capable of ongoing compliance with the criteria set out and therefore should be approved.

But we stress that we see this as only a stage in the continuing process, that the criteria must be regularly reviewed and improved and that user experiences of the new service will be closely monitored.

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