

Broadcasters' Liaison Group (BLG) – Teleconference 28 May 2024

Note of conclusions and action points¹

Present: Tabby Karamat (BBC) Ric Bailey (BBC) Alice Hickey (BBC), Tim Burke (BBC), Alasdair MacLeod (BBC Scotland), Chris Hagan (UTV), Gwyneth Jones (BBC NI), Ailsa Chalk (ITV), Meriem Anou (Channel 4), Siôn Pugh (S4C), Mark Sunderland (ITV), Martin Forward (BBC Wales), Arif Ansari (BBC), Joan Darroch (STV), Rhy Evans (BBC), David Powell (Local TV Network), Eileen Weinert (Channel 5), Kathryn Richardson (Channel 5) and Jo Vale (ITV).

Craig Westwood (Electoral Commission – observer member).

The BLG agreed to convene a teleconference to discuss plans in light of the UK Government's announcement to hold a general election on 4 July 2024.

1. Contact with Parties

The BBC has already written to parties in respect of its provisional plans. Other broadcasters were intending to write to parties shortly in respect of their own plans on allocations and scheduling which are made independently of each other and of the BLG.

It was noted that the public, parties and broadcasters had slightly more notice of the snap general election in 2019. Given the time pressure, some parties had pushed back in respect of the three working day deadline, as set out in the BLG production guidelines, for delivery of their PEBs to broadcasters.

2. Allocation and Scheduling

There was a general discussion on the qualifying threshold for a PEB in each nation in accordance with Rule 15 of Ofcom's rules on Party Political and Referendum Broadcasts which states that registered parties should qualify for a PEB if they are contesting one sixth or more of the seats up for general election in each nation.

The BLG discussed the unique challenge of scheduling PEBs during the coverage of UEFA European football and Wimbledon tennis championships as well as being mindful of Ofcom's rule on the daily time slot when PEBs can be carried on television or radio. The broadcasters discussed their own approaches to the batting order of parties' PEBs in each Nation.

3. Production Guidelines

It was noted that the recently updated production guidelines would be in use for the upcoming election.

¹ These notes do not represent a full record of the meeting, only the conclusions and actions points.