



Broadcasting Act 1981

1981 CHAPTER 68

PART I

THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

The Authority

2 Function and duties of Authority.

- (1) The function of the Authority shall be to provide, in accordance with this Act and until [^F131st December 2005], television and local sound broadcasting services, additional in each case to those of the BBC and of high quality (both as to the transmission and as to the matter transmitted), for so much of the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands as may from time to time be reasonably practicable.
- (2) It shall be the duty of the Authority—
 - (a) to provide the television and local sound broadcasting services as a public service for disseminating information, education and entertainment;
 - (b) to ensure that the programmes broadcast by the Authority in each area maintain a high general standard in all respects (and in particular in respect of their content and quality), and a proper balance and wide range in their subject matter, having regard both to the programmes as a whole and also to the days of the week on which, and the times of the day at which, the programmes are broadcast; and
 - (c) to secure a wide showing or (as the case may be) hearing for programmes of merit.
- (3) Without prejudice to the powers conferred on the Authority by this Act, the programmes broadcast by the Authority shall, so far as may be consistent with the observance of the requirements of this Act, be provided not by the Authority but by persons (referred to in this Act as “programme contractors”) who, under contracts with the Authority, have, in consideration of payments to the Authority and subject to the provisions of this Act, the right and the duty to provide programmes or parts of programmes to be broadcast by the Authority, which may include advertisements.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects
 for the Broadcasting Act 1981, Section 2. (See end of Document for details)*

- (4) The following provisions, namely subsections (2)(b) and (3) of this section and sections 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9, have effect subject to the provisions of sections 10 to 13 (special provisions relating to the Fourth Channel); and further modifications of the provisions of this Act are contained—
- (a) in section 14(5) and Schedule 3 as respects teletext services; and
 - (b) in section 50 and Schedule 6 as respects the Fourth Channel in Wales.
- (5) For the purpose of extending or further extending the duration of the function of the Authority under subsection (1) the Secretary of State may by order substitute for the date specified in that subsection, as for the time being in force, [F2 any later date].
- (6) Any order under subsection (5) shall be made by statutory instrument; but no such order shall be made unless a draft of it has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words substituted by virtue of [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 \(c. 46, SIF 96\), s. 45\(1\)](#) and [S.I. 1987/673, art. 2](#)
- F2** Words substituted by [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 \(c. 46, SIF 96\), s. 45\(2\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** [S. 2\(2\)](#) modified by [Broadcasting Act 1990 \(c. 42, SIF 96\), s. 129, Sch. 11 Pt. II paras. 1\(3\)\(a\)\(4\), 5\(1\)\(a\), Pt. IV para. 1\(3\)\(a\)\(4\)](#)
- C2** [Ss. 2\(2\)\(a\)\(b\), 3\(1\)\(a\)\(b\)\(3\)\(4\)\(7\), 4, 5, 8, 9, 14\(1\), 15, 16\(1\), 42, 61, 62](#) extended (*prosp.*) by [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 \(c. 46, SIF 96\), ss. 44\(1\), 51\(1\), 59\(4\), Sch. 4](#)
- C3** [S. 2\(2\)\(b\)\(c\)](#) excluded by [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 \(c. 46, SIF 96\), s. 37\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- C4** [S. 2\(3\)](#) extended by [Broadcasting Act 1990 \(c. 42, SIF 96\), s. 129, Sch. 11 Pt. II paras. 2\(1\), 4](#)
- C5** [S. 2\(3\)](#) modified by [Broadcasting Act 1990 \(c. 42, SIF 96\), s. 129, Sch. 11 Pt. IV para. 2\(2\)](#)

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Broadcasting Act 1981, Section 2.