

Certain requirements for free TV licensees to broadcast positive programmes temporarily relaxed

The following is issued on behalf of the Communications Authority:

The Communications Authority (CA) announced today (March 24) its decision to temporarily waive, for a period of three months from March 25, 2022, to June 24, 2022, the requirement relating to documentary programmes, current affairs programmes, and arts and culture programmes broadcast by domestic free television programme service (free TV) licensees being wholly of Hong Kong origin (the "wholly of Hong Kong origin" requirement) (see Note 1), and the first-run requirement relating to positive programmes (the "first-run" requirement) (see Note 2). Notwithstanding the waiver, the broadcasting hours of the respective positive programmes to be provided by a licensee will remain unchanged and the frequency of repeated programmes for fulfilling the programme requirements will be limited to not more than once in any week.

On March 9, 2022, the CA received an application from Television Broadcasts Limited for waiving the "wholly of Hong Kong origin" and "first-run" requirements relating to positive programmes on the grounds of the disruptions to TV programme production caused by the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the latest pandemic situation and the operational difficulties faced by free TV licensees, the CA decided to approve the application and extend the waiver to the other two free TV licensees (viz. HK Television Entertainment Company Limited and Fantastic Television Limited).

Note 1: Pursuant to the relevant licence conditions of the free TV licences, unless otherwise approved by the CA, a licensee is required to broadcast a minimum number of hours of documentary programmes, current affairs programmes, and arts and culture programmes each week which are to be wholly of Hong Kong origin.

Note 2: Pursuant to the relevant licence conditions of the free TV licences, a licensee is required to broadcast a minimum number of hours of positive programmes (viz. documentary programmes, current affairs programmes, programmes for children, young persons and senior citizens as well as arts and culture programmes) daily/weekly. All of the above programme requirements shall be fulfilled by first-run programmes unless otherwise approved by the CA.