

Members have been sent an independent report by Prof Stephen Cushion of Cardiff University examining how the main TV news providers (the PSBs and Sky) reported devolved policy issues on their flagship bulletins.

Professor Cushion and his team supplemented detailed content analysis of broadcasts in June and July 2021 with interviews with senior editors from each broadcaster to better understand the editorial choices they made. The key findings from the report are:

- Largely as a consequence of Covid-19, **coverage of devolved issues has improved** compared to similar studies in 2015 and 2016.
- Interviews with senior news editors revealed that **newsrooms have become increasingly conscious of reporting devolved policy differences in network news.**
- There was **agreement among all editors of the need for signposting in reports so audiences understand if an issue is relevant to only in one or some of the UK nations.** However, they also acknowledged the challenges of capturing the complexity of devolution with time limited bulletins.
- The analysis done by Professor Cushion's team showed that **devolution was a potentially relevant factor in approximately 40% of the news items assessed during the study. Of these, roughly 3 in 5 reports made some reference to devolution, while 2 in 5 contained no signposting about relevance in different parts of the UK** – e.g. an interview with the Secretary of State for Education about covid measures in schools made no reference to the fact these rules applied only in England.
- **BBC TV news reporting supplied far more references to devolved powers than other network news providers,** while BBC online news more explicitly signposted the relevance of devolved issues than television news.
- Overall, despite an increase in the coverage of the devolved institutions since 2015, **missed opportunities to explain different Government decisions remain.**

The report has been published online here:

[Network News report - Ofcom](#)