



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Ian Maxwell, Chief Executive,
Scottish Football Association

27 June 2025

Dear Mr Maxwell,

Sporting Events of National Interest

The Committee heard from the BBC Director General and BBC Scotland at our meeting on 23rd January 2025 and subsequently from Ofcom and then from BBC Scotland at our meeting on 29th May 2025.

During those meetings Members raised the coverage of the Scotland men's and women's international football teams on the main free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters.

The Committee notes that the Broadcasting Act 1996 gives the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport the power to draw up a list of sporting events of "national interest". We note that the current list of Group A events which requires full coverage to be offered to free-to-air broadcasters includes the finals of the men's and women's football world cup and European championships but it does not include the qualifying matches.

At the same time we recognise that there is a need to strike the right balance between accessibility, and the ability of sporting organisations to generate revenues to invest in their sports at all levels.

We also note that the BBC has secured an exclusive deal to broadcast Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland men's international football in the run-up to next year's world cup, which is a total of 41 live matches over the next 15 months.

While recognising that this is ultimately a matter for the UK Government, the Committee invites you to set out the SFA's view on potentially including expanding the specific Scottish events covered under the listed events regime, to include in Group A, not just the Scottish FA Cup final but also Scotland's World Cup and European Championship qualifiers.

Clare Adamson MSP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Adamson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Convener