

Small Screen: Big Debate Consultation

The Future of Public Service Media

Consultation response

Consultation title	Small Screen: Big Debate – the future of Public Service Media
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Confidentiality

Your details: We will keep your contact number and email address confidential. Is there anything else you want to keep confidential?	Nothing
Your response: Please indicate how much of your response you want to keep confidential.	None
For confidential responses, can Ofcom publish a reference to the contents of your response?	NA

Note: None of my responses to the questions in this consultation are confidential.

Question 1

Do you agree that a new regulatory framework for PSM delivery should support a more flexible ‘service neutral’ delivery approach that is more outcomes focused? p 39

Yes, I think a more flexible ‘service neutral’ delivery approach makes sense. It sounds like it will give public service media (PSM) organisations the flexibility on how they want to deliver content. Of course, Ofcom’s accountability measures would need to accommodate the content-delivery mechanisms that these organisations choose.

Question 2

Do you agree with our proposals for a clear accountability framework? p 39

I think the of nature of creative industries is that it's not always clear which content (TV programme, podcast, etc.) is going to be successful. A BBC science programme may not have huge audience ratings, but may change the lives of some people who watch it, and who then decide on a course of study or career as a result of the programme. Their contributions to society can be immeasurable. Or someone may value something they watched, read or listened to, which has deep personal meaning or comfort to them. There are intangibles that are of immense personal value to people.

What flexibility will Ofcom have, given the nature of creative industries?

Stepping in and setting specific requirements sounds punitive. I'd like examples of how this might work. Will this curtail freedom of speech? I'd like more details.

Will Ofcom's monitoring result in large amounts of paperwork?

Question 3

What do you think should be included in the PSM 'offer'? p 43

Question 4

What options do you think we should consider on the terms of PSM availability? p 43

Question 5

What are the options for future funding of PSM and are there lessons we can learn from other countries' approaches? p 52

I believe that for the time being, the licence fee is the best funding mechanism for the BBC.

The government's own consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion identified many positives of the licence fee. For example:

"The Government also recognises that the current enforcement regime has safeguards which allow the courts to mitigate the impact of fines and prosecution on the most vulnerable. Sentencing guidelines currently allow courts to consider individual circumstances and ability to pay, alongside the severity of the offence including whether it is a first-time offence, in deciding how to apply the sanction. These may not be available under a civil enforcement regime."

I would suggest that any funding mechanism follows the European Broadcasting Union guidelines that you've included in your consultation document, and in particular that the BBC or any public service broadcaster/media is independent from political interference.

UK governments have already top-sliced the licence fee. This is damaging to the BBC. Forcing the BBC to pay the licence fee of people over 75 years of age is particularly egregious. Any funding mechanism for the BBC must prevent this type of incursion from a UK government.

Question 6

What do you think about the opportunities for collaboration we have referred to? Are there other opportunities or barriers we haven't identified? p 54

How would a portal for UK public service broadcasters/media work? Is there a danger of BBC content getting mixed up with highly commercial content from one of the commercial public service broadcaster/media organisations?

I'm not sure I would like to see the BBC form strategic partnerships with commercial organisations. This could potentially blur the BBC's public service role with commercialism, causing people to lose trust in the BBC.

Female, 22-24, Dundee's comment on page 54 is not right, at least not with regard to the BBC: both BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds provide a search for content using genres.

Question 7

What are your views on the opportunities for new providers of PSM? p 60

I think using new providers for public service media could blur and confuse the distinction between public-service versus non-public-service content. How would a viewer/listener/content-consumer know which content is public service content? I like knowing that the BBC will have high-quality non-commercial content, produced according to its public service ethos.

I do not want money taken from the BBC to fund 'new providers' of public service content.

Your consultation seems disproportionately skewed towards younger people. You provide 18 quotations from people aged 39 and younger, compared to 3 quotations from people 40 and older. Do you take into account how people's viewing/listening habits change as they grow older? Do older people's opinions count?

The BBC has served this country for nearly 100 years. I value its intellectual depth and breadth. It has introduced fresh voices and new ideas to the public service landscape. More recently, it has promoted on-screen and off-screen diversity.

I don't want to see the BBC weakened by a government agency's search of 'the new' or 'the latest'. I don't want the BBC to be weakened by the government's hunt to satisfy the viewing habits of 16-24-year-olds.

This country has a very successful public service broadcasting/media ecosystem. Whilst it's interesting to look at what New Zealand has done, we have our own unique public service broadcasting/media environment, which should be celebrated and supported.

The BBC has served this country well during the pandemic. It adapted quickly by providing children's education and news about COVID-19. How would fragmented public service broadcaster/media organisations perform? Do you take into account the BBC's soft power around the world? Do you take into account how trusted the BBC is around the world? As a licence fee payer, I want the BBC to be supported, not diminished.